
UNIT 1 CANADA : LAND AND PEOPLE

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to :

- be acquainted with a background to Canada, its people, its history, geography, economy, political and social systems so that it helps you to understand its literatures in general and English Canadian literature in particular; and
- be acquainted with a brief history of the development of Canadian literature; its trends, movements, period, etc.

1.1 BASIC GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Canada till recently, was invisible to the rest of the world, despite being the second largest nation (after Russia) of the world, mainly because it was overshadowed by its southern neighbour, the United States of America. Covering only seven per cent of earth's surface, this huge land mass of 9,970,610 square kilometers, spanning across six time zones, consists of at least six major geographical regions : Atlantic and Gulf Region, the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Canadian Shield, the Interior Plains, the Western Cordillera, and the North. It is a country of few people as the estimated population of Canada as of July 1998 was enumerated to be 30,300,400. The growth rate of population since the census of 1996 is a little below 1%.

Northrop Frye, the great Canadian literary critic once said that there would be nothing distinctive in Canadian culture at all if there were not some feeling for the immense searching distance, with the lines of communication extended to the absolute limit, which is a primary geographical fact about Canada, and has no real counterpart elsewhere. He added that everywhere we turn in Canadian literature and painting, we are haunted by the natural world, and even the most sophisticated Canadian artists can hardly keep something very primitive and archaic out of their imaginations.

Geography

When you look at the map of Canada, you may surmise that it is perhaps the most awkwardly designed country with so much of nature and so little population, which is just around 30 million.

The population of Canada is unwieldy and dispersed as a large part of the population lives in four major cities. Canada is larger than China, with a population smaller than that of Ethiopia's. Less than seven percent of Canada's population is squeezed into less than one per cent of the country's land area- nearly all of it hugging the United States border. Of its 125 cities, 102 are within 300 kilometers of the American boundary. Most of its hinterland broods silent and is inaccessible.

The Atlantic and Gulf Region usually referred to as Appalachia straddles two national territories. The Appalachians, comprising ancient rounded hills and plateaus with a few large fertile areas such as the Annapolis-Cornwallis valley in Nova Scotia, encompass most of the Atlantic region of Canada. There is a variation of climate and vegetation within the Appalachian region. While the island of Newfoundland forms part of boreal forest, most of the Maritime Provinces are part of the Arcadian forest region. Most of the Maritimes (80%) is forested, whereas only 36% of Newfoundland is forested.

The Atlantic Region is populated in the coastal region and also along the St. John River. The region's First Nations primarily lived by hunting and fishing rather than farming as only 1% of the land surface in Prince Edward Island and none in Newfoundland, is classified as prime farmland.

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Lowlands comprising Southern Ontario and Southern Quebec have fertile soil and have provided key transport routes and trade links to the inhabitants of the region because of the lakes and rivers in this region. The First Nations, even before the European settlements, had established continent wide trade links using the waterways available in this region. The aboriginal population increased steadily because of the availability of fish, fowl, deer, rabbit and wild berries in plenty. Some First Nations used good soil and favourable climate for planting crops in this region, which developed itself into a great magnet for the European settlements also.

However, the Canadian Shield that includes 40% of Canada's landmass, mostly covered by Precambrian rock, proved inhospitable to the European settler farmers. The comparatively cool summer and abundant game within the forests supported the disperse Native populations, before the commercial interest started developing the region because of its minerals and forests. Generation of hydro-electricity from the rivers in the region has contributed to the industrial development of this region in the twentieth century.

The Interior Plains region comprising Saskatchewan and Alberta first came in prominence because of the fur trade of the Europeans. Afterwards, the region attracted the settlers because of its good to excellent soil for farming. Though the winters in this region are harsh, the growing season is short and uncertain; still it is one of the largest producers of wheat in the world.

Western Cordillera, a region consisting of a series of six mountain ranges of British Columbia and Southern Alberta, is interspersed with rivers, plateaus and valleys. The temperate coastal climate and the southern interior of the Cordillera provide a marked contrast to the Interior Plains region and particularly to the North. Because of its climate and coastal and hilly regions, it has attracted a huge population of the Natives and Europeans.

The North consists of many sub-regions of the Cordillera and Interior Plains, and the Arctic region that is home to the Inuit. It is an area of no trees, little soil and long and harsh winter. Permafrost, which is found everywhere in the region, does not allow construction of building.

1.2 NORDICITY

Most Canadians see themselves as northerners in a northern country. The national anthem of Canada sings praises of the North. The perception of 'Nordicity' as a source of strength and freedom highlighted in the national anthem may be called the Canadian Imaginary. It is expressed as an illusion, a myth or a Utopia in the Canadian imagination.

One view of the North is that it is a weird and terrible land where there is nothing but snow, ice and the polar bear. It is a 'while hell', a howling wasteland and the land that God gave to Cain. This view of the North as a flat and formless land of ice and snow is an 'The Arctic of the Mind'. This view has been rejected by the Canadian national anthem, which celebrates the true North.

The myth of a Northern hero, a product of colonialism, is perhaps the strongest Canadian myth. It is this white Canadian hero who conquers the land and then attempts to assimilate the Native in the Canadian nation only after colonising his mind fully. This view of the North, like the former view, is also no more popular.

The North as a Utopia is a popular dream with such Canadian writers as Gabrielle Roy, Margaret Atwood, Henry Kreisel and Yves Theriault. The North in this view is projected as the only place in the Western world where man can yet pursue a personal dream - where he can hope to be an individual in pursuit of a personal Utopia. This utopia dream is placed in opposition to the American intrusion into Canada.

To most Canadians the North is less a place than a direction - the ultimate reflection of how they view themselves in relation to the land. The famous Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood says that the North is at the back of Canadian minds, always. The North focuses their anxieties. Turning to face North, they enter our their unconscious. Always, in retrospect, the journey north has the quality of dreams. Thus the image of Canadians to a large extent is based on the contours and colours of the North.

While no single factor forms a nation's character, winter's dominance and the North symbolize this in Canadian literature and art. Geography (nature) thus is not a background; it's a character in Canadian fiction. W.L. Morion, eminent Canadian historian said that because of its origin in the northern frontier, Canadian life to this day, is marked by a northern quality. The line which marks the frontier from the farmstead, the wilderness from the base land, the hinterland from the metropolis, runs through every Canadian psyche. It is this psychology of Nordicity and Frontiers that has dominated the Canadian art and literature. Margaret Atwood in her novel *Surfacing* best captures this.

1.3 CLIMATE

Besides the elephantine geography of Canada, which defines Nordicity, climate helps the Canadians in defining their identity, as it is six months of winter followed by six months of bad shedding. It gets cold - even in the large cities. Regina has recorded temperatures of- 50°C, and temperate Vancouver, generally without snow, once hit - 20° C. Only the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaator is colder as a capital than Ottawa.

However, there are climatic variations in Canada, ranging from the permanently frozen ice caps north of the 70th parallel to the lush vegetation of British Columbia's west coast. Canada has four very distinct seasons, particularly in the more populated regions along the US border. Daytime summer temperatures can rise to 35° C and higher, while lows of-25°C are not uncommon in winter. More moderate

temperatures are the norm in spring and fall. Over the years, Canadians have adapted extremely well to the colder periods of weather by installed heat in housing and cars, and by having heated public transportation systems, and in some instance, in walkways to and from buildings of Schools.

1.4 HISTORY

The land's moods, seasons and weathers are the chronometers by which Canadians measure their lives. There is nothing benign about the Canadian landscape. The Canadian epics of civilising the contours are mostly about hard lives and anguish of pioneering families. Yet it is the land that anchors the sense of who the Canadians really are. Northrop Frye said that to enter the United States is a matter of crossing an ocean; but to enter Canada is a matter of being silently swallowed by an alien continent. Turning of this alien continent into a country as a favourite destination for an immigrant is the story of Canada.

It is a land with such innovations as the architecture of the Inuit Igloo, birch wood canoe, the device of a toggle head on an Inuit seal harpoon. Scholars have identified at least fifty cultures and twelve languages among the first peoples of Canada. The types of societies of these Amerindians (a term used to group together all the tribal societies across North America) in the sixteenth century were varied, as the Athapaskan tribes of the Arctic region were egalitarian, while some of the tribes on the west coast were stratified and slave owning. Though these societies were diverse, they, however, shared some common features. Spirituality and an understanding of the natural world and environment are two such features.

Unlike the Judaeo - Christian view in which man, made in the likeness of God, is destined to dominate the world. Native people believe that divinity resides within all living creatures and man has no superior claim to this. The Europeans could, not comprehend this all-encompassing spirituality, a common feature of all the Amerindian religious and beliefs, at the same of contact between the two.

Before their contact with the European traders different Native groups to trade among themselves had established the lines of trade. Copper, iron, flint, the ivory of walrus, bird features, and birch wood canoes were traded among the tribes in the north. Similarly, the hunters in the woodlands traded furs for corn and tobacco grown by the peoples in the Great Lakes regions. However, the Native peoples' understanding of the world of nature and environment came very handy for the European traders and settlers who used it for exploiting the natural resources for commercial purposes. It is estimated that by 1600 about one thousand ships were engaged in commercial activities of fur, ivory, hides and cod oil trade in Canada's northwestern coastal waters. Eventually it was the fur trade that became the main activity of exchange of goods between Amerindians and Europeans.

As far European in roads into Canada, the Portuguese were the first to explore the new world to expand their trade and territories ... Spaniards followed them by establishing an overseas empire by conquest. The French and the English were not to be left behind in this race to find gold, spices and other valuables from other parts of the world.

Henry VII, the first Tudor King, commissioned John Cabot, an Italian explorer who landed on the Atlantic coast of North America in 1497 and claimed it for England. Cabot's discovered led to England's interest in what is now Atlantic Canada, the fishery.

Jacques Carrier took possession of the territory in the name of the king of France by planting a cross on the shores of Gaspé Peninsula in his first voyage in 1534. This very soon became a fishing port and supply centre for New France. During his subsequent visits he made contact with the Indians of Stadacona (Quebec) and took two Indians by force to France. In 1608 John Champlain established a fortified trading post at Quebec, a perfect location to foster fur trade and to service it as a base for its founder's idea of colonising the remote country for France. King Louis XIV of France made New France a royal colony in 1663.

Having established their colonies in various locations in Newfoundland, Quebec and Montreal, both the British and the French got themselves engaged in fishery and fur trade. However, Quebec fell to the British army at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and with this also fell New France forever. At the end of Seven Year's War between England and France, New France became a British Colony and is called Quebec in 1763. The Quebec Act passed in 1774 extended Quebec's borders and guaranteed the French language and Catholic religion. Thus, all the colonies in Canada came under the control of Great Britain and were ruled by the governors appointed by England.

The fur trade was essentially a northern enterprise. It drew the Europeans across the continent along the water routes that provided access to the most desirable fur-bearing lands. It brought Northern First Nations into regular contact with the world of European commerce and technology. It also ensured that northwest would become a British territory rather than American. Without signing treaties the European newcomers simply came to visit and decided to stay forever.

By eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it became imperative to move further northwest in search of beaver and other furs. By 1789, the North West Company had reached Lake Athabasca and had explored the Mackenzie river fully. It reached the Pacific by 1793. This was done with the help of the Native peoples who taught the use of canoe to the white explorers and settlers. This enormous line of communication of 3,500 miles from British Columbia to Montreal was made possible by the birch-wood canoe that the Amerindians had used for centuries.

At the close of eighteenth century, British North America consisted of seven political units: Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Lower Canada, Upper Canada and vast western domain under the nominal control of the Hudson's Bay company. Tied in various ways to Great Britain, the seven had much in common. None enjoyed political independence. The British imperial centre had a great control over them. Their economies, being part of the pre-industrial world, were dependent upon the Empire.

The United Province of Canada (comprising Upper Canada and Lower Canada), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia formed a federal union under the new name of Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867. It was soon expanded to with the addition of Manitoba and North West Territory 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873 and Newfoundland in 1949.

Thus, the years from 1867 to 1919 were the formative years for the transcontinental nation-state. The dependent colonial existence now gave way to a nationhood rooted in Canadian dynamism that was manifested in its achievements during the First World War. Within a decade of the formation of Confederation. Canadian nation expanded dramatically to stretch from sea to sea. RUPART'S LAND was purchased from the colonial Hudson Bay Company in 1868-70 to carve out Manitoba and North Western Territories. Soon British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Saskatchewan also joined the Confederation.

It was during the time of Sir John A. Macdonald, the first federal Prime Minister that the expansionist National Policy was followed showering Canadian Pacific Railway with cash and land grants to complete their project by 1885. This

government built tariff wall to shield the Canadian industry from foreign, particularly American competition a high protective custom -. This policy, however, did not take into account the specificity of the French Canadians as also of the Catholics. His overriding preoccupations were unity and prosperity, which he summed up in his 1860 speech as follows: "One people, great in territory, great in resources, great in enterprise, great in credit, great in capital."

Canadian politics marked a turning point when Wilfrid Laurier, a Liberal Party leader, became Canada's first French Canadian Prime Minister in 1896. An advocate of national unity, Laurier launched his policies of compromise that kept him in power for many years. He was instrumental in the creation of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and their entry into the Canadian Confederation the same year. Under Laurier's leadership Canada continued its industrialization and urbanisation and was strengthened by the addition of two provinces and two million inhabitants. Despite the British pressure, Laurier continued the National Policy of nation building, national unity and Canadian diplomacy started by Macdonald. He particularly highlighted economic nationalism of Canada made possible through the expansion of railways and development of mining. Never in their history had Canadians experienced such a run of prosperity. It is in this vein that their Prime Minister told them: "the twentieth century shall be the century of Canada and of Canadian development"

This dream of Laurier, however, did not materialise immediately as the following decades proved to be real difficult for Canada due to the two world wars in which Canada had to participate because of its status as a dominion of the British empire. The Canadians lost 60,661 people; as many returned hopelessly mutilated in mind or body during the First World War. Conscription became a contentious issue between English and French Canada. National unity was also threatened because of the economic crisis.

The sacrifice of thousands of Canadian soldiers in the service of the Empire did bring reputation and honour to Canada. It made Canada a nation state rather than a colony of the Empire. Canada thus honourably joined the League of Nations in 1919 as a full and independent member.

The great Depression of 1929 that took a heavy toll in the U.S., was not so bad for Canada. It was not the crash of Wall Street that depressed Canadian economy; it was the enormous 1928 wheat crop, which could not be sold because of the glut and tough competition in the international market. Canada Managed to survive the Depression years.

The General mood of Canadians during World War II was isolationist: keeping Canada isolated from War. This mood, however, did not last long and Canada had to participate in it. The financial cost of Canadian war effort was astronomical. As many as 42042 soldiers lost their lives. However, the economy was strengthened and its manufacturing capacity much diversified. National confidence and national pride were enhanced. Canada became a middle power in her own right.

The history of Canada, in a way, is the story of the effect of communications on Canadians. While the European fur traders settled in Canada through the communications of the canoe developed by Amerindians, the canals on the great St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers developed the Toronto - Ottawa - Montreal region and railways connected the entire nation from coast to coast. Up until World War II, most immigrants came from the British Isles or Eastern Europe. Since 1945, however, Canada's cultural make-up has been enhanced by increasing numbers of southern Europeans, Asians, South Americans and people from the Caribbean Islands, with the greatest numbers of immigrants arriving from countries in the Asia Pacific region. Today, the country is made up of 10 provinces and three territories, most of which are populated by Canadians who can trace their ancestry from virtually everywhere in the world. A recent census showed that over 11 million Canadians, or 42 per cent of the

population, reported having an ethnic origin other than British or French. The literacy rate in Canada is 96%.

1.5 ECONOMY

Canadian economy first grew in response to the demands of the European empires for its natural products. Thus fish, fur and timber grown in Canada became the staples for the economy of colonial Canada. Expansion of trade in these products provided sustenance to such companies as Hudson Bay Company and created many elaborate trading organisations. Harold Innis and D.G. Creighton, political-economists at University of Toronto emphasized the contribution of the staples to Canadian economy in 1920s and 1930s. They highlighted the importance of what they called "staple products" — fur, fish, timber, wheat metals — whose markets were abroad and related this to Canada's distinctive geography - the Canadian shield and the great lakes - St. Lawrence system and argued that there existed an interaction between geography, resources, foreign markets and the inflow of people and funds from abroad, which has helped develop Canada a "staples economy".

A single transcontinental trading economy was created because of fur trade. This happened after Confederation in 1867 when labour and finance started moving freely among various regions. However, in the middle to the nineteenth century the Canadian colonies on the St. Lawrence, united politically in 1840, had laid the foundation of a unified commercial economy, based upon the exploitation of the timber resources, the production of wheat, the construction of a uniform system of inland waterways, and the development of an elaborate network of commercial credit around Montreal, the point where the commerce of the interior and the commerce of the North Atlantic met. With improvement of transportation – the railways between 1867 and 1915 and the highways and pipeline systems after 1945 - helped tremendously in the building of Canadian economy. The provinces also became important markets and suppliers for one another so that an investment boon in one region could create a nation wide boom.

In 1988, Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) was an estimated \$688.3 billion up from \$643 billion in 1997. Canada ranks among the ten leading manufacturing nations and has also experienced tremendous growth in the high technology and services industries. Most of Canada's manufacturing industry is in Ontario and Quebec, where motor vehicle production comprises the largest sector within the industry. Other important manufacturing sectors include food and beverages, paper and allied products, primary metals, fabricated metals, petrochemicals and chemicals. The Atlantic, Prairie and Pacific regions of Canada have more natural resource-based economies. The Atlantic Provinces focus on fishing, forestry and mining, while Prairie Provinces are dependent on agriculture and mineral fuels. British Columbia's primary sectors are forestry and mining, as well as tourism. Major exports are automobile vehicles and parts, machinery and equipment high-technology products, oil, natural gas, metals, and forest and farm products. Major imports are machinery and industrial equipment including communications and electronic equipment, vehicles and automobile parts, industrial materials (metal ores, iron and steel, precious metals, chemicals, plastics, cotton, wool and other textiles), along with manufactured products and food.

1.6 GOVERNMENT

Since the Confederation in 1867, when Canada first came into being as a nation, she has been a constitutional monarchy and a federal state with a democratic parliament represented by the Prime Minister of Canada as the head of the government. The national flag of Canada with Maple Leaf as its emblem was unfurled for the first time

on February 15, 1965 through a Royal Proclamation under Lester Pearson as Prime Minister.

The Electorate:

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms grants every Canadian citizen the rights to vote in a federal or provincial election. At the federal level, Canadians elect members of Parliament to the House of Commons to make decisions and enact laws on their behalf. The maximum duration of a parliament according to the Constitution is five years. Canada's electoral system is based on political parties. Official party status is conferred on parties with at least 12 seats in the House of Commons.

In June 1997, Canadians exercised their right to vote in Canada's 36th General election. Voters returned a Liberal government, although with a reduced majority. They also brought in a new official opposition, the Reform Party of Canada, which replaced the Bloc Quebecois. The number of parties with official standing in the House of Commons increased from three to five as the Progressive Conservatives and New Democrats regain official party status. The five parties with official status are far from the only parties from which Canadians can choose. At the 1997 general election, there were 10 registered political parties at the federal level. Candidates without party affiliation, usually designated "independent", may also run for election.

1.7 IMMIGRATION

Immigration has been central to the history of Canada. It may be said that all Canadians are either immigrants or their children. First it were the Natives whose ancestors migrated to Canada across the Bering Strait from Asia thousands of years ago. Then came the French to settle in New France in the 17th and much of the 18th century. The English and the Scots established their colonies in Halifax in 1749. New England planters arrived in Nova Scotia in 1759-67. During 1769 St. John's Island was granted the status of a colony. After the conquest of the New France by the British, the Acadians were allowed to settle in Nova Scotia. Thus besides the First Nations peoples, the English and the French claimed themselves as the founding nations of Canada.

The Loyalists

The English-speaking Protestant United Empire Loyalists displaced by American Revolution down South were the next settlers. Some of them came to Canada because they were loyal to the British Empire and many of them came because of fear of retribution on account of their support to the Empire. In a way they were refugees in Canada. For them Canada was a land of second choice, first being the American Colonies of the Empire. The imperial authorities and military personnel helped these Loyalists with supplies and land distribution. The main waves of Loyalists came in 1783-84 and settled in the Maritime Provinces of today's Canada. A few moved to Quebec and Ontario. Another substantial settlement of these immigrants came up in the Niagara peninsula. The Loyalists were instrumental in establishing many educational, religious, social and governmental institutions. Conservatism, pluralism and heterogeneity may be attributed to the Loyalists who preferred 'evolution' to the American 'revolution'.

Canadian Pacific Railway used immigrant labour in laying their lines across Canada. While the British, American and European labour worked on the superior jobs in the construction of CRP, the Chinese were brought specially to do the grimmer jobs, sometimes endangering their lives even. Officially immigration was encouraged from England, Scotland and the US in the West to fill the better agricultural lands in the

colony. The colonial Immigration policy of finding settlers from the British Isles and the US, however, could not last long because the paucity of arable lands. The US with ample supply of free fertile land soon attracted the Anglo-Canadians and thousands of new immigrants.

Canada : Land and People

Irish Migration

The great Irish potato famine and a series of abortive European rebellions in 1848 sent waves of Irish immigrants to North America in a desperate search for new life. Because of their ethnic cohesiveness, they monopolised certain jobs of lumber camps, on the docks and within canal and railways camps from Lake Superior to Atlantic Ocean. Their arrival in Canada made major social and economic changes, as they did not reflect the religious, cultural or social values of the majority who were Protestants and not Catholics like the Irish immigrants. Having a bad experience of crop failures, these immigrants took to cities and towns. They supplied the base of working - class labour force needed for the construction of railways, bridges, canals, communications, commerce and industry. Colonial Canadian policy of settlement was tied to land. Because many Irish were not connected to land, they were rootless. This was followed by the settlements in the West mainly because of the bold immigration policies followed by Prime Minister Laurier.

Settlements in the West

Between 1945 and 1966, when Canada's population reached 20 million, average annual immigration was about 125,000. Immigration generally remained at that level through the 1970s and most of the 1980s. Only since 1990 has it been more than 200,000 annually. The nearly 256,000 immigrants in 1993 formed the second highest group of newcomers since 1913, although the number is nowhere near the 400,000 of that year.

Members of more than 100 different ethnic groups live in Canada. 152 languages are spoken in Toronto, the hub of immigration today. At the time of Confederation in 1867, approximately 90% of Canada's population was either British (60%) or French (30%). By 1981, the combined proportion had dropped to 67%. In 1991, it dropped even further: 55%. In 1996, 17% of Canadians reported British-only ancestry and 9% were French-only.

In 1995, out of about 212,000 newcomers, about 50% were economic immigrants: people selected for special skills or money to invest, or to fill specific kinds of jobs. Another 77,000 were closely related to Canadians living here and 28,400 were refugees. The main sources of immigrants were Hong Kong, China, India and the Philippines. More than half of all immigrants in 1996 settled in Ontario, 21% in British Columbia and 15% in Quebec. The target of the current policy of the government is to raise the immigration intake capacity to the level of 1% of Canada's population annually.

Immigration has strongly affected the size of visible minority groups in Canada. The term "visible minority" refers to the non-white and non-aboriginal population, both native born and foreign-born. The first "visible minority group" of the Black slaves was brought to New France in 1608 as slavery was practised in Canada both before and after European settlement, until 1834.

In 1996, about 3.2 million Canadians were members of visible minority groups: that's 11% of the population. Ontario accounted for more than half, followed by British Columbia (21%) and Quebec (14%). Current projections suggest that the visible minority population will increase to around 7 million by 2016, or about 19% of the projected total population. The largest visible minority groups in 1996 were Chinese, Vietnamese, South Asians and Blacks.

Immigration Policy

Canadian immigration policy has undergone many changes as it has been framed keeping the changing national objectives from time to time. Broadly speaking, there have been a few main shifts in this policy. The first shift from the Imperial immigration policy of allowing only British or French settlers in the colonies came when Laurier was the Prime Minister of Canada during 1896 to 1901. The chief planner of this policy was Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior in the Laurier government. Grounded in the principle of selective immigration, it was meant to promote massive agricultural immigration in Western Canada. The government aid \$5,000 per head for the farmer and \$2,000 per head for the other member of the family to immigrate to Canada from Britain, France, US and Northern and Western Europe.

'Whites only' Policy

This free-entry policy of 1896 was replaced with an Act in 1906 that restricted entry to Canada and the control along the US border was expanded. It was further tightened to exclude many more people in 1910 primarily to encourage farmers, farm labourers, and female domestic servants from the US, British Isles, France and Northern European countries. The purpose of this policy was to keep Canada for "Whites only". Hence a head tax was imposed on the Chinese labourers and a working agreement was made with the Japanese immigrants. Indians were debarred from entering Canada because of the "continuous journey" clause introduced in the legislation. The tragedy of *Kamagata Maru* the Japanese steamship carrying Sikh immigrants from Hong Kong to Vancouver was a consequence of this policy of keeping Canada White. The Act of 1919 further tightened immigration of the non-whites in Canada as it prohibited the entry of any one on the basis of nationality, race, class, economic conditions, political and social conditions, peculiar customs, habits, modes of life etc. Immigration policy, therefore, became highly subjective and restrictive.

Immigration virtually stopped during the First World War. The Great Depression of 1929, however, changed the focus of immigration from farmers and farm hands to other kinds of labour needed to run the industry and service the new townships and cities. All promotional money meant for getting the agriculturists was stopped.

There was no substantial change in the Canada for the White only policy till 1959, when Prime Minister John Diefenbaker proclaimed, "populate or perish" and consulted all the provinces to formulate a policy that should bring prosperity and win a place in the international community for Canada.

Canadian Bill of Rights 1960

The turning point in Canada's immigration policy was the adoption of the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960. For the first time in Canada's history, a federal statute barred discrimination on the grounds of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, and specified the fundamental freedoms of Canadians. Implemented in 1962, it resulted in a shift in the source of immigrants to Canada: a reduction in the number of Canadians who reported only British or French origins, and a large increase in the number of "visible minority" (mostly non whites) groups, especially people of Asiatic origin. Thus this policy and its subsequent amendment in 1967 Regulations and adoption of a points system for immigrant selection makes no provision for ethno cultural or racial preferences. This has resulted in zero discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion, sex or class.

This ten points (factors) immigration policy has now been re-written in Bill C-11 of the Parliament to make it more transparent and competitive to attract highly skilled professional workers, entrepreneurs and investors. This "human capital" in the form

of "designer immigrants"- namely self financed professional and skilled business immigrants are sought to achieve a competitive edge in the globalized economy for Canada. The current policy is considered as an element in "nation building" Emphasising the need for this, Elinor Caplan, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, while presenting Bill C-11 before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on March 1, 2002 remarked, "Immigrants and refugees built this country, and they will continue to do so if we are to grow and prosper in the future. They are vital to our social, cultural and economic richness. Their skills and talents, and their enduring desire to contribute to our great country, are in evidence all around us".

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, effective June 2002

The new immigration and Refugee Protection Act, effective June 2002, has a transparent marking system of 100 points, which admits an immigrant on the basis of the points that he/she gets in the following six factors: age, education, language proficiency, work experience, arranged employment in Canada, and adaptability. This Act aims to improve on the earlier policy by fulfilling the two objectives of: a) equality and freedom from discrimination and b) equal status of both the official languages of Canada.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Canada is a very vast country with a small population. It is strong on geography and not so strong on history. Its Nordicity is a part of its mental make-up. It became a Confederation in 1867. First, fur and timber are the staple products sustaining Canadian economy. The country has a parliamentary system. Immigration has been central to the history of Canada. Today multiculturalism is one of the pillars of Canadian policy.

1.9 QUESTIONS

1. Does Canada have a long history? How does geography shape the Canadian imagination?
2. What are the different stages of Canadian history from the First Settlers to the present age?
3. What sustains Canadian economy?

1.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 LITERARY BEGINNINGS

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 The Pre-Confederation Period
- 2.2 The Confederation Poets
- 2.3 Modernism/Nationalism
- 2.4 Post-Modernism/Post-Nationalism
- 2.5 Further Reading

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit proposes to give you some idea of the larger literary, social and geographical context in which Canadian literature has got written.

2.1 THE PRE-CONFEDERATION PERIOD

The first English Canadian writings are about the experiences in the New World mainly defined by Canada's location in the North and also by its climate: too cold in winter and too hot in the brief summer. For the earliest writers the Canadian experience was the experience of immigration to Canada, which began as an arduous voyage over the seas and oceans. Travel Reports therefore emerged as the first genre in which the writers living in the colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Upper and Lower Canadas expressed their sense of loss in the new place and dislocation from the old familiar locations. Sometimes there was an excitement about the new land. Most of these writers were Europeans who made Canada their temporary home and recorded their experiences of living in the wilderness.

Another theme that dominated this period was that of wilderness and civility of Canada. The colonial enterprise had a civilising mission. Canadian wilderness had to be civilised by turning the bush into a garden. Natives were to be civilised through Christianity and the wild emigrants were to be civilised so that they become members of a civil society. Canada was a cold place, which had to be made warm with the warmth of civility. When men went out to tame nature, women attempted to civilise their homes following the social codes set for the Gentle Ladies "back home". Mrs Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, 1769 is one of the earliest imaginative responses to the reality of Canadian wilderness. Living in a garrison produced a peculiar mentality, which Northrop Frye calls "garrison mentality"- a colonial mindset needed for controlling wilderness in Nature and in Man, particularly the Native Canadian so as to civilise them.

- **Frances Brooke: *The History of Emily Montague*:**

The History of Emily Montague is the first Canadian novel (in fact, the first North American novel) depicting the garrison life literally. Frances Brooke was already an established author in England before she joined her husband, who was the chaplain of the garrison in Quebec in 1763. She wrote this novel in the epistolary form of fiction made popular by Samuel Richardson, known as the first English novelist. Before coming to Quebec, Brooke was part of a literary circle in England to which Richardson also belonged. Her novel, thus, could be read as an extension of the English tradition of romantic comedies of Shakespeare as Quebec becomes an idyllic place for a romantic intrigue. Like the Forest of Arden in *As You like It*, Quebec

garrison life provides an escape for lovers who have come from England to return home eventually. They follow the social codes of aristocratic England acted out on the garrison stage with no attempt to adjust to life in the New World. It deals with the flirtations and courtships of Quebec society in an elegant and sentimental way, hardly mentioning the economic, theological or political questions posed by the Conquest of the French by the British forces in the New World.

Composed of 228 letters, this novel is a story of Ed. Rivers, a military officer who plans to settle in Canada. He, however, does not settle there because of his beautiful lover, Emily Montague, who does not want to settle in the backwoods of Quebec. Besides Rivers, the chief correspondent in the novel is Arabella Fermor, the clever 'coquet' who is Emily's best friend. The letters describe in detail the manners and customs of the Quebecois and the native Indians and the 'sublime' scenery of Montmorency Falls. These letters explore the French English relations in Canada.

Though *The History of Emily Montague* is the first Canadian novel, it has not been emulated in style or form by any Canadian novelist. However, it is important because it provides some of the earliest imaginative responses to Canadian landscape and insights into the experiences of the immigrants in the New World. Confinement of a life in a garrison, surrounded by an alien landscape and climate makes this an interesting place for the intrigues of loves lost and won. The French and the Native Indians come under a close scrutiny of the novelist. The roles of women different from those in the Old World are also observed and analysed. The novel makes a case for a new language, new metaphors and myths to define the New World, all this within the garrison world: a world defined by the social code of the Aristocratic England acted out in the backwoods of Canada with no attempt to adjust.

The History of Emily Montague, Northrop Frye says in his *The Bush Garden*, is a fit expression of "garrison mentality": a mentality that dominated most of the Canadian writing till about 1960s as "earlier Canadian writers were certain of their moral values: right was white, wrong black, and nothing else counted or existed". Garrison being a closely-knit society, though beleaguered, has a moral and social code, which is unquestionable as the British colonial institutional structures, provided a solid wall of protection to this society. When the centre of this society moves from a fortress to a metropolis, the garrison mentality changes correspondingly. It begins as an expression of the moral values generally accepted in the group as a whole, and then, as society gets more complicated and more in control of its environment, asserts Frye, it becomes more of a revolutionary garrison within the metropolitan society. Canadian society and its literature remained in this mould till about 1960s when it attempted to acquire an identity and character of its own.

In this colonial society in the garrison, one is either a fighter or a deserter. While the hero of *Emily Montague* is a deserter and goes back home, the Canadian writers who stayed back, like Susanna Moodie, had to prove their mettle as fighters to remain gentlewomen in the backwoods of Canada. The conquest of nature, therefore, is a major theme in their writings. However, it is a "conquest of nature by an intelligence that does not love it", asserts Frye. Hence, there is a "tone of deep terror in regard to nature" that defines most of early Canadian writings. Let us take a typical example of this period in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Rising Village: A Poem*.

- **Oliver Goldsmith: *The Rising Village***

He was the son of a British army officer, who settled in New Brunswick after fighting in the American Revolutionary War. Goldsmith wrote *The Rising Village: A Poem* (1825), which presents a counter point to *The Deserted Village* (1770), written by his namesake granduncle. While his granduncle's long pastoral poem eulogises the vanishing rural life, *The Rising Village* celebrates the emergence of a Canadian agrarian society, which will compensate the loss that Britain has undergone because of urbanisation. In this poem, the poet full of the colonial pride and arrogance

describes the sufferings the emigrants undertook to raise a village in wilderness for the progress and happiness of the future possessors of the village. Comparing his life in Acadia with the life in Britain, the poet remarks:

How chaste and splendid are the scenes that lie
Beneath the circle of Britannia's sky!
What charming prospects there arrest the view,
How bright, how varied, and how boundless too!
Cities and plains extending far and wide,
The merchant's glory and farmer's pride.

There men, in busy crowds, with men combine,
That arts may flourish, and fair science shine;
And thence, to distant climes their labours send,
As over the world their widening views extend.
Compar'd with scenes like these, how lone and drear,
Did once Acadia's woods and wilds appear;
Where wandering savages, and beasts of prey,
Displayed, by turns, the fury of their sway.
What noble courage must their hearts have fired,
How great the ardour which their souls inspired,
Who leaving far behind their native plain,
Have sought a home beyond Western main;
And braved the perils of the stormy seas,
In search of wealth, of freedom, and of ease!
Oh! none can tell but they who sadly share
The bosom's anguish, and its wild despair,
What dire distress awaits the hardy bands,
That venture first on bleak and desert lands,
How great the pain, the danger and the toil,
Which mark the first rude culture of the soil.
When looking round, the lonely settler sees
His home amid a wilderness of trees:
How sinks his heart in those deep solitudes,
Where not a voice upon his ear intrudes;
Where solemn silence all the waste pervades,
Heightening the horror of its gloomy shades;
Save where the sturdy woodman's strokes resound,
That strew the fallen forest on the ground.
See, from their heights the lofty pines descend,
And crackling, down their pondrous lengths extend.
Soon from their boughs the curling flames arise,
Mount into air, and redden all the skies;
And where the forest once its foliage spread,
The golden corn triumphant waves its head.
How blest, did nature's raggedness appear
The only source of trouble or of fear; (Russel Brown, 37).

The poem illustrates typical characteristics of the pre-Confederation poetry that reflects colonial imagination and is imitative in nature. There is the immigrant's sense of loss/ displacement, and also the settler's excitement of conquering nature for establishing a village and defining the new place for the British Empire. Written in the form of couplets of the period, there is, however, an unresolved comic tension in the poem, which one discovers when it is analysed fully.

In the last line of the passage, nature is "the only source of trouble and fear" for the coloniser who has conquered /vanquished the Native Indians of the area, but has yet to conquer nature, which is hostile to him. This terror of the hostility of nature, so well expressed in this poem, was perhaps the most important defining force on the

Canadian imagination till recently. Margaret Atwood constructs a theory of Canadian literature from this trait in her *Survival: a Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*.

She argues that every country has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core. If for England, it is the symbol of "the Island" and for America, it that of "The Frontier", she is of the view that "Survival, *la Survivance*" is such a symbol for Canada. Home as the castle of the Englishman is a popular form of the island symbol. Insularity therefore becomes a defining feature of this symbol. Similarly in America, The Frontier is a flexible idea that contains many elements dear to the American heart. Frontier is an ever-expanding line conquering territories, outer space, poverty or The Regions of the Mind. It holds on an unfulfilled hope – a utopia. Survival, for Canada, like The Frontier for America and The Island for England, is a multi-faced and adaptable idea. For the early Canadian settler and explore, it was 'bare' survival in the face of 'hostile' nature or Native Indians. Similarly, it was the 'cultural survival' for the French Canadians after the English took over.

Atwood offers a whole list of poems, novels, dramas, essays and short stories both from the English and French Canadian literatures illustrating her thesis of Survival. Canada, being a British colony for a long time and now a cultural colony of the US, is a collective victim that has evolved four victim positions. Atwood thus argues that Canadian literature is full of negative portrayals of victim positions that are largely true of the pre-Confederation period.

• **Susanna Moodie (1803-1885): *Roughing it in the Bush***

Susanna Moodie immigrated to Canada in 1832 with a young child and husband who had retired from the British army and was given free land to settle in the colony of Upper Canada. Settling in wilderness was not only tough; it was not what they had expected. As the full title of her book, *Roughing in the Bush or Forest Life in Canada* indicates, she had a double feeling for Nature: Wordsworthian awe inherited from the British Romantic tradition and "terror" that Nature evoked in her stark reality of the life in the bush. In contrast to the attitude of Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, her elder sister, wrote of the pleasanter aspects of nature in her *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836). Traill saw in nature God's benevolence and believed that in adversity the individual's duty is to self and God with strong-willed determination.

Moodie's book has a series of anecdotes, which the author tells with gusto like a great storyteller. She creates a large variety of characters to tell the stories about the places she lived in and people she met with. Moodies first lived in the bush for six years before they moved to a small town in Upper Canada. Their experience of clearing land and farming was not successful. Fire, sickness and poverty plagued them. The book, therefore, is written as a "melancholy narrative" with the hope of "detering well-educated people about to settle in this colony, not to settle in the Backwoods" and also to "point out the error of gentlemen bringing delicate women and helpless children to toil in the woods" states Moodie. Later in book, she affirms "the REAL benefits to be derived from a judicious choice of settlement in this great and rising country"(Qtd. in Brown, 70). Thus she has a love-hate relationship with Nature and also with Canada. Margaret Atwood finds Moodie as 'divided down the middle' that, according to Atwood, is an emblem of the "violent duality" of Canadian literature itself. Critics have traced this "violent duality" in the character of the unnamed protagonist in Atwood's *Surfacing* too.

Mrs. Moodie's double-minded attitude towards nature and Canada makes are ambivalent, which again is a typical of Canada. In the Foreword that she wrote for *Ambivalence: Studies in Canadian Literature*, Margaret Atwood remarked: "Ambivalence is a most appropriate title for a collection of essays about Canadian Literature, implying as it does the qualities of contradiction and doubleness, but also those of weighing and balance." It is these qualities of doubleness, of contradiction, of weighing and balance that mark Moodie's works.

Another characteristic, which makes *Roughing It in the Bush*, a typically Canadian text is the Anti-American feelings that the book expresses. Like the travellers and the immigrants in the 1840s, Moodie is really concerned with the "Yankeefication" of social manners or lack of manners.

Her Yankee neighbours like Emily S., Berry Fye, Uncle Joe etc. in *Roughing It in the Bush* are garrulous, borrowing, intrusive, insensitive, prying fellow-settlers who have no manners. Margaret Atwood in *Surfacing* has similar Yankees who come from the south to disturb the lake with their huge and loud motorboats.

Roughing It in the Bush has become a Canadian classic because it presents the quintessential Canadian reality giving a mythic character to Moodie. Margaret Atwood has responded to the Canadian chronicles of Moodie by writing a collection of poems, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1971), in which she makes a real pioneer out of Moodie who symbolised the spirit of Canada at that time and is a source of inspiration now.

Charles Sangster (1822-1893) was hailed as the 'first important national poet' in his own time by virtue of the two collections of poetry that he published in his thirties, mainly because he responded to the Canadian landscape like the English Romantic poets. Although he discards the neo-classical tradition followed by Oliver Goldsmith and other Canadian poets to follow Wordsworthian instincts to respond to his immediate environment, Sangster has not created a native idiom to do so. His poetry is mostly imitative, though located in the Canadian landscape. During 1850s he produced at least 450 pages of poetry including *The St. Lawrence and Saguenay* (1856) and *Hesperus* (1860). Sangster wanted to improve the world through his poetry.

The critics in England because of an anthology containing his poems noticed Sangster. Rev. Edward Hartley Dewart published it with the title, *Selections from Canadian Poets* in 1864. In his introduction to this anthology, Dewart stressed the need to create a national literature:

Sangster and his fellow poets and writers made a concerted effort at creating a national literature for Canada. Their attempt, though laudable, did not succeed because of the imitative nature of their work.

2.2 THE CONFEDERATION POETS

Dewart's call for creating a national literature was responded to by the Confederation Poets and others who are not considered members of this group. Malcolm Ross first applied the term "Confederation Poets" to the four poets who were included in his book, *Poets of the Confederation* (1960). Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman and Duncan Campbell Scott formed this first distinctly Canadian group of writers, who drew inspiration from Canadian nature and were serious craftsmen. Trained in the classics, they chose universal themes and subjects unlike their predecessors; they assimilated their borrowings from the British and American writers to make them Canadian. Born in early 1860s, these poets published their poems in 1880s and 1890s celebrating the Canadian landscape, the emergent Canadian national identity of the recently formed Dominion, use of the Native Indian myths, and a recognition of the French Canadian element in the formation of Canadian identity. All the four were good friends, helped each other in publishing their poems and formed a group with nationalistic thinking.

William Wilfred Campbell, George Frederick Cameron and Isabella Valency Crawford some times are also considered in this group. Besides being their contemporaries, these poets shared common features of their poetry that attempted to

create a national identity on the notion of Canada as a peaceful place, slow to change vis-à-vis the US, a revolutionary society, fast to a change and secondly, Canada as a bi-cultural society that is a mosaic of peoples rather than a "melting pot" popularised by the US. Confederation added a third contrary vision of energy and enterprise (more like that of the US) to the above two notions of a nation. Thus Canadian identity became tense with these contradictory notions, pulling it on the one hand towards a pastoral idealism and on the other hand, towards industrialisation and urbanisation. Much of Canadian writing of this period is marked by such contradictions between conservatism and change, poetic integrity and patriotism, and wilderness and technology.

Resolving contradictions fought on the battlegrounds of despair and hope is a major preoccupation of Isabella Valency Crawford, who marks the shift from the pre-Confederation poetry to Confederation poetry mainly because of the choice of subject matter and form. The central theme of much of her poetry including the narrative poem, 'Malcolm's Katie' is the dialogue of hope and despair. Her narrative poems follow a pattern of describing the world as a battleground of opposite forces of good and evil, and of darkness and light, which can be won through love and sacrifice. This vision is particularly expressed in such poems as 'A Battle' and 'Dark Stag'.

Though her poetry has affinities with Pre-Raphaelites, she however draws imagery and mythology from the Native Indian sense of the universe. She has a deep poetic sensitivity to the legends, myths and rhythms of the Native Indian peoples, which she seems have internalised to make them her own. Like the Native Indians, she mythologises changes of the seasons and measures time through experiences rather than through achievements.

Like Tennyson, Crawford used the form of the domestic idyll to describe the pioneer life. Besides the control over the long narrative poem, Crawford shows skill in handling the lyric form. Thus the qualities that she shared with the Confederation Poets are: indebtedness to English Romantics and Victorians, knowledge of classical literature and the concern with Canadian landscape to be mythologised through the Native Indian myths, legends and world-view. Though, she did not share the enthusiasm for Canadian nationalism and dream of her male contemporaries, she had the unique endowment of inner, creative intensity, which flashed in her poetry regularly. Her poetry celebrates an escape of the soul into a natural universe filled with love. Perhaps the best example is found in her poem, "Said the Canoe".

Bliss Carman and Charles G.D. Roberts, the two Confederation poets listed above, were cousins who started writing poems early. Archibald Lampman and Duncan Scott joined this group a little later.

Sir Charles G.D. Roberts was called the father of Canadian literature because of the international acclaim that he got for his poetry that inspired younger writers like Lampman into creativity. Also the inventor of the modern animal story along with the naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton, he was the first writer to mythologise the Maritime environment in his poetry and prose. He was successful in creating a sense of the past and consequent patriotism, including the struggle between the English and French Canadians, its New England heritage, fishing communities around Bay of Fundy, life in the remote forests of New Brunswick. Last but not the least, he was a professional writer who wrote fiction including historical romances, novels and stories and books of history, and anthologies of prose and poetry. Thus he has to his credit sixteen books of poetry, more than thirty works of fiction and a dozen anthologies and histories. In view of the voluminous work of Roberts, we will very briefly discuss the salient features of his poetry and fiction.

Roberts grew up in a beautiful area winding Tantramar River and its marshes in New Brunswick. In *Ave: An Ode for the Centenary of the Birth of P.B. Shelley* he wrote that the river "called me and compelled me from afar, / Shaping my soul with its

impetuous stress"(Profiles in Canadian Literature 7, p.27). He seems to have followed this call in his poetry, which like the contemporary Canada, was full of nature without much of the controlling technology of today. He did not like the narrative form in poetry, instead, he wrote lyrics and sonnets on themes of love, philosophy, landscape, cityscape, patriotism and war. His best sonnets are grouped together in the following collections, *In Divers Tones* (1886) and *Songs of the Common Day* (1893) that describe the changing seasons of the Tantramar farmlands. The pictorial effect, almost photographic is to be noted in these sonnets like the following, 'The Potato Harvest':

A high bare field, brown from the plough, and borne
 Aslant from sunset; amber wastes of sky
 Washing the ridge; a clamour of crows that fly
 In from the wide flats where the spent tides mourn
 To yon their rocking roosts in pines wind-torn;
 A line of grey snake-fence, that zigzags by
 A pond and cattle; from the homestead nigh
 The long deep summonings of the supper horn.
 Black on the ridge, against that lonely flush,
 A cart, and stoop-necked oxen; ranged beside
 Some barrels; and the day-worn harvest-folk,
 Here emptying their baskets, jar the hush
 With hollow thunders. Down the dusk hillside
 Lumbers the wain; and day fades out like smoke.

This well chiselled sonnet clearly delineates the activities of nature and birds in the sky and open space in the octave, while the sestet takes care of the human activity of potato harvesting down on earth. The sonnet is particularly rich in use of alliteration. Unlike English poets, Roberts has put the form of sonnet to paint landscape, as that was a peculiar Canadian preoccupation

Roberts wrote "Tantramar Revisited" when he was twenty-three. The elegy contains echoes of Wordsworth in search of an Edenic childhood and also in the painting of the landscape. Here the world of nature is a source of creativity in which time and memory play a significant role. This poem, however, is not an imitation of Wordsworth mainly because of a detailed depiction of the landscape in Roberts's own voice and diction. The poet is nostalgic about what he had experienced here in early childhood, he misses it now because of the "hands of chance and change". Yet there is earthly permanence that the poet finds in the objects of nature listed by him in the middle section composed in hexameters. Taking a synoptic view of the landscape, the poet dextrously weaves it into the skyscape: the people merge in land, land merges in sea, sea merges in sky and sky in the horizon and the space that is all around us. It is this kind of depiction of landscape that makes it a typically Canadian poem, in which space becomes a character almost. Landscape thus becomes a psychologically restorative space that need not be visited again physically. The final fourteen lines of the poem are like a sonnet. The poet refuses to go near the marshes any more because this would not be like the old time:

Ah, the old-time stir, how once it stung me with rapture, --
 Old-time sweetness, the winds freighted with honey and salt!
 Yet will I stay my steps and not go down to the marshland, --
 Muse and recall far off, rather remember than see, --
 Lest on too close sight I miss the darling illusion,
 Spy at their task even here the hands of chance and change.

Though influenced by the American Transcendentalists and English Pre-Raphaelites, he displays a Modernist vision in this poem when he sees man's belief in permanence as an illusion in a world that goes by "chance and change". In an essay 'Note on Modernism' published in 1931, he makes a claim for the authorship of the Modernist vision for Confederation poets including himself.

Similarly, Roberts wrote patriotic verse that became very popular in his time. 'Canada', a poem that he wrote in 1885, is one of the best in this genre. He implores Canada thus: "How long the indolence, ere thou dare/ Achieve thy destiny, seize thy fame, / Ere our proud eyes behold thee bear/ A nation's franchise, nation's name?" Here Canada is a teenager who will soon shed his colonial past to become worthy of his Saxon, Celtic and French heritage.

Historical romances about Canadian past, particularly dealing with the expulsion of Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755, is the staple of the three romances and two books of tales that he wrote. The setting of all these stories is in the Acadian landscape that attracts the readers as much as the love stories that are set against this background.

However, the most popular prose writings of Roberts are his animal stories. Along with Seton, Roberts changed the genre by avoiding sentimentalism and didacticism usually associated with them. Instead, Roberts made the animal story as a "psychological romance" of the natural science. These stories are told from the animal's point of view and express a Darwinian vision of survival of the fittest. Every creature in this world lives in danger. Survival in these animal stories depends upon what he calls 'woodcraft': resourcefulness, and not on nature, the divine source as in his nature poetry in which the intention of the writer is to take the reader back to nature to establish a kinship with earth. It is in this process of establishing a kinship that he captures the contradictions of civilisation and wilderness. These contradictions, however, are stark in the description of nature and animals. While he sees nature as a divine source in his poems, violence and destruction define his animal world depicted in his stories.

Archibald Lampman (1861-99):

Archibald Lampman was born in a small village near Lake Erie in an Anglican Loyalists family. He spent his childhood in wilderness that fascinated him through out his life, though he lived most of his adult life in city. He worked as a clerk in the Post Office, which did not satisfy him. He became a close friend of the poet Duncan Campbell Scott with whom he shared his love of the wilderness. His poetic achievement consists of a small group of nature poems that he wrote on the basis of his direct experiences of nature excursions. Lampman makes a characteristic response to the Ontario landscape, which he would like to turn into a 'dream'. In 'Winter Evening', describing the snow whitened nostrils of the horses, the poet goes in a dream of golden palaces, crowded chimney towers and a thousand aureoles to see a glorious vision, which is to disappear soon when the dark night falls:

To-night the very horses springing by
Toss gold from whitened nostrils. In a dream
The streets that narrow to the westward gleam
Like rows of golden palaces; and high
From all the crowded chimneys tower and die
A thousand aureoles. Down in the west
The brimming plains beneath the sunset rest,
One burning sea of gold. Soon, soon shall fly
The glorious vision, and the hours shall feel
A mightier master; soon from height to height,
With silence and the sharp unpitying stars,
Stern creeping frosts, and winds that touch like steel,
Out of the depth beyond the eastern bars,
Glittering and still shall come the awful night.

The vision that he presents in this and other poems owes much to Wordsworth in particular and Romantics in general. He seems to say that man must renew himself through solitary communion with nature. It is this communion that the poet describes

as a "dream" in which man's energies are no longer at odds with one another. The self destructive 'strife' and 'change' of the city in this dream state are replaced by an exquisite balance in which opposites are taken up into a larger whole. However, this celebration of nature is touched by unease, as nature in Ontario is not like that of the Lake District in Wordsworth's poetry. Here there are 'stern creeping frosts, and winds that touch like steel' reminding the poet about the 'awful night' that shall eventually fall. Thus his vision of nature is touched by unease, even fear. Nature comes to be seen as threatening, with its final end of not a higher vision but death. Lampman thus transforms the conventions of nature poetry that he inherited from the Romantics. His nature poetry becomes personal and vivid recording moment-to-moment sensations through slight rhythmic variation. Some critics therefore call him and the other Confederation poets as gently melancholic.

However, the critical emphasis has shifted from Lampman as gently melancholic heir of the Romantics and Victorians to Lampman as alienated precursor of modernism. This has led to a new interest in his more obviously troubled later works and to new ways of looking at his nature poems in which he employs simple yet vivid images and diction. He creates his nature poems out of the sounds, colours and motion of the wilderness.

Northern wilderness, again, forms the subject of poetry for Duncan Campbell Scott (1862-1947), who was inducted into the fold of Confederation poets by Lampman. Both being civil servants working in Ottawa, became close friends as they shared similar responses to contemporary natural and intellectual environments. Like the English Romantics they loved nature and were also afraid of the violent side of Canadian landscape. While Lampman has a vision, a dream, Scott is not so sure about that in his poetry. Of the two, Scott is a poorer artist, as he is not as sure about his diction, phrasing and cadence as Lampman is. Unlike his friend, Scott had a little gift for melody. However, it is in the delineation of the life of the native Indians and their myths that Scott shows his skill as also in the depiction of the Northern landscape.

Scott worked in the Department of Indian Affairs for about fifty years. His concern for the Indians as wards of the Canadian government was genuine, though tilted in favour of his religion, Methodist Christianity. He tried his best to help them within the narrow limits of the governmental policy. In a sonnet titled 'The Onodaga Madonna', the poet imagines an Indian girl who belongs to a "weird and waning race" of some tribe without any future in Canada. She has a child hidden in her shawl:

And closer in the shawl about her breast,
The latest promise of her nation's doom.
Paler than she her baby clings and lies,
The primal warrior gleaming from his eyes;
He sulks, and burdened with his infant gloom,
He draws his heavy brows and will not rest.

This is a very touching picture of a vanishing people who at one time were proud warriors fighting for the First nations that they belonged to, but are on the brink of extinction. Though sympathetic to this tribe, Scott accepts their fate as inevitable, which Desmond Pacey has called 'gay fatalism' - an affirmation of death as part of life. Similarly, in his celebrated poem, 'The Forsaken' the poet accepts the fate of the Chippewa woman who first stays alive by fishing with her flesh, then accepts the inevitable death as she meets 'the silence deeper than silence'. This poem, when read from the point of view of the native Indian culture of the Chippewas, is full of unintentional irony. Her son following her tribe's custom that allows the old and invalids to be forsaken so that the tribe survives in the harsh climatic conditions of the North forsakes the woman. The irony is unintentional because Scott interprets the custom in the light of the Christian values unknown to the heroine in the poem. Similarly, in 'On the way to the mission' from *New World Lyrics*, an Indian is ambushed and killed by three white men who plan to steal what they think, look like

furs. The white men however discover to their shock that the Indian whom they killed, in fact, was carrying his wife's corpse to the mission for burial. The white men discover her body with a crucifix 'under her waxen fingers'. The conclusion of the poem is appropriate because the Indians have been Christianised. Scott comes off very well in those poems, which deal with the encroachment of European civilisation on the Indian way of life.

Like all the other Confederation poets, Scott had to face the question of reconciling the European literary and philosophical traditions with the Canadian landscape and its inhabitants. With a European sensibility, Scott chose the Northern landscape and its inhabitants to do that.

Thus, we can see that from the pre-Confederation poets to the Confederation poets, there is a concerted effort to define Canadian identity that takes cognisance of the fact of Canada being a bilingual and three civilizational country under the British Empire. The feeling of exile and isolation, so prominent among the predecessors, is not so strong among these poets who seem to have developed love for the land. However, their feelings to Nature are ambivalent: while nature inspires awe and spiritual longings in some, it is hostile, and therefore a source of horror for others. Similarly, the ambivalent attitude to the Native Indians as savages and nature's children is also discernible among a few writers. It may therefore be surmised that while Confederation did produce a political 'nation' under the British Empire, it had to yet produce a Canadian identity necessary for the growth and development of a national literature with a character of its own. Northrop Frye, however, makes a clear distinction between identity and unity in Canada when he remarks in the Preface to *The Bush Garden*:

Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and the works of culture: unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in political feeling . . . Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gesture of cultural nationalism; assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism. (Frye, 1971, Preface to *The Bush Garden*, ii-iii).

The Confederation Poets could produce only 'the empty gesture of cultural nationalism' as nationalism was yet alien to the Canadian imagination because it was still a Dominion of the British Empire. Frye is of the opinion that lacking the American Revolutionary tradition; Canada had gone from a pre-national to a post-national phase without ever having become a nation. Notwithstanding this remark of Frye, let us try to understand the serious efforts put up by some of the poets and writers who attempted to create Canadian nationalism and modernism.

2.3 MODERNISM/NATIONALISM

The Modernist phase in Canadian literature became prominent with the efforts of the Canadian nationalists who created a sense of nationhood after the formation of the Confederation and development of the railways connecting Canada from "coast to coast". This newfound unity of Canada was more conceptual than real, asserts Northrop Frye in his essay "Preface to Uncollected Anthology". This idea of a "nation as the poet's only true imaginative space" is an "environment" that a poet constructs to define his identity. Unlike the United States, argued Frye, Canada had grown 'one dimension': it was made into a nation "out of the stops on two to the world's largest railway lines". Each stop represented as small community separated from the next space, so that the nation's frontier consisted of a series of circumferences rather than a single boundary. Its unity was therefore conceptual and

was maintained by a single boundary of a political will, which was manifested at its best in 1967 when Canada celebrated the Centennial of Confederation with all the fanfare including the hosting of the most spectacular event "Expo 67". The Centennial marked the emergence of Canada as a mature and self-confident nation. It was soon followed by the Constitution Act of 1982 that further strengthened the federal structure of Canada making it free from legislative control of the United Kingdom symbolised by an independent Canadian flag with maple leaf. Though Quebec attained the status of a "distinct society" within the federation, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the Charottetown Accord in 1990s, strengthened Canadian nationalism. Separatism that posed a danger to Canadian nationalism got a setback after the defeat of the second Quebec referendum in 1995. Thus we see that Canadian nationalism had to contest with forces that attempted to pull it apart politically. Canadian policies of multiculturalism and bilingualism have helped Canadian nationalism as they strengthen the notion of a nation as an "environment": a space large enough for negotiating conflictual political, economic, ethnic, regional, social, sexual, class and other interests.

Canada, it may be surmised with Frye is "not a nation but an environment". This construct of nation as an 'environment' not necessarily a homogeneous cultural and historical unit made an impact on contemporary poets, who could easily deal with the imaginative aspects of that environment.

The Modernist movements in Britain and America also influenced these poets. They attempted to write poetry using a rigidly sculptural structure in impersonal and unemotional tone with a rigorously disciplined rhetoric, mythic and historical reference. Here the poem is seen as an aesthetic object whose internal formal organisation is more important than its external reference. Modernism's ideals were those of control, of organic unity, or ironic distance, and of impersonality. The form of the modernist poetry advocates closure of form rather than an openness of form.

In the 1920s and 30s, a modernist movement in Canadian poetry appeared in Montreal. Rhyme and even the lines of conventional measure were scorned. So-called 'free' verse with simpler and more colloquial diction became the new fashion, following the British and American models. The young leaders of this revolt were McGill University students and their friends. The most famous members of this close-knit group called themselves Four Horsemen: F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith, A.M. Klein, and Leo Kennedy. (Morley in *Ambivalence*, p. 27). F.R. Scott's satiric poem, 'The Canadian Authors Meet' begins:

Expensive puppets percolate self-unction
Beneath a portrait of the Prince of Wales.

With the irreverence of youth, Scott rocks the Confederation poets for their religious earnestness, their patriotism, and their nationalism:

The air is heavy with 'Canadian' topics,
And Carman, Lampman, Roberts, Campbell, Scott
Are measured for their faith and philanthropics,
Their zeal for God and King, their earnest thought.

E. J. Pratt (1882-1964): Though not a member of any group or movement, E.J. Pratt was one of those poets who attempted to bring Modernism in Canadian poetry. He is central to the discussion of Canadian modernist poetry mainly because the publication of his *Newfoundland Verse*, which initiated the Canadian modernist movement that was later on taken up by A.J.M. Smith, F.R. Scott, Leo Kennedy and A.M. Klein. His contribution to this also acknowledged because of the efforts that he made in finding a publisher for A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry*. Pratt's poems in *Newfoundland Verse* reject the romantic dreams and visions of Confederation poets. In a poem like 'The Ground Swell' he evokes a nature and a Creator almost opposite to that of Wordsworth's view of a nature as benign and a

source of eternal mystery. His nature poetry expresses an 'evolutionary vision' guided by the post Darwinian philosophy as interpreted by T.H. Huxley and others, who argued that the fundamental component of the whole cosmos is cosmic energy and that the fundamental process of universe is evolutionary. Sandra Djwa argues that the central concern in Pratt's poetry is the conflict between Darwinism and Christianity.

Though he initiated the modernism in Canadian literature, Pratt however never joined a group or a movement to promote it. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he wrote longer poems sometimes moulding two narratives. However, two of his shorter poems 'From Stone to Steel' and 'Come Away, Death' are the most memorable poems because of epigrammatic form and dramatic construction. Pratt gives an epic quality to his longer poems though he does not follow the epic convention of a single hero, as he believes that individuals are a part of the larger social units shaped by nature, culture and technology. While composing these long poems, Pratt undertook painstaking research in the details of history, technology and media. Dorothy Livesay has argued that Pratt's long poems are "neither narrative, nor epic but documentary". The documentary quality of his poetry derives from subject matter, specialized language, technical names, precise bits of knowledge and arcane facts. Pratt thus transforms the history of Canada and scientific knowledge into a heroic and mythic whole in such poems as: *The Titanic*, *Brebeuf and His Brethern*, *Dunkirk*, *Behind the Log* and *Towards the Last Spike*.

In *Towards the Last Spike* Pratt celebrates the triumph of the human will that led to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 by the engineers and workers of European descent and ignores the 'coolies' who were mainly Chinese, a few native Indians and South Asians.

F.R. Scott in 'All the Spikes But the Last' questions the authenticity of this documentary poem which presents only the official version of the history of the making of the Canadian Pacific Railways that united the Canadian nation when he writes, "Where are the coolies in your poem, Ned/ Where are the thousands from China who swung / their pick with a the bare hands at forty below?" Referring to the racist policies of the government, Scott asks, "Is all Canada has to say to them written in Chinese Immigration Act?"

F.R. Scott (1899-1985): Francis (Frank) Reginald Scott was a second-generation Canadian poet, the son of a lesser-known Confederation poet. He rejected the romantic poetry of his father's generation to reflect his social consciousness in poetry. A founding member of *Canadian Mercury*, a literary magazine that gave voice to the Montreal group of poets listed above. In his landscape poems like 'Old Song', 'Lakeshore' and 'Laurentian Shield', he has attempted to project a Northern evolutionary view of nature that influenced later poets like Al Purdy and Margaret Atwood.

He wrote comprehensive poetry that has the power to unite the mythic nature of the land with the reality of personal experience. He could scrutinize the activities of a self-indulgent society while looking at the lakeshore with the eyes of a visionary. To illustrate let us take his poem 'Laurentian Shield' with its magnificent opening:

Hidden in wonder and snow, or sudden with summer,
This land stares at the sun in a huge silence
Endlessly repeating something we cannot hear.

The 'something we cannot hear' refers to the poetic quality of land, of the meaning of land in the north – 'inarticulate, arctic' for which the Canadians had been waiting. Having made a statement about land, the poet descends to a more didactic message in the following lines when he writes:

It will choose its language
 When it has chosen its technic,
 A tongue to shape the vowels of its productivity.

...
 Nouns of settlement
 Slowly forming, with steel syntax,
 The long sentence if its exploitation.
 ... monopoly, big with machines,
 Carving its kingdoms out of the public wealth.

The final message of the poem is '....millions whose hands can run this rock into children'. The poet thus attempts to transform this Laurentian field into a place of extraordinary vitality for the present and not a place for romantic ruminations like his predecessors.

In 1925 he collaborated with A.J.M. Smith to found *The McGill Fortnightly Review*, an iconoclastic journal of modernist literature. His first attack in this magazine was against the old poetry and its form. His poetry has a penetrating vision expressed in a spare and precise style with grace and wit. He has elegant diction and sharp satire as his strong points. His poetry is full of word play and is not so much dependent upon metaphor.

A. J. M. Smith (1902-1980): A poet, anthologist, critic and teacher, Smith was one of the founders of Canadian literary modernist movement. With Frank Scott, he compiled *New Provinces* an anthology of 'new' Canadian poems that announced the existent Canadian modernism. However, it is his 'Preface' to *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943) in which he made a controversial distinction between the 'cosmopolitan' and 'native' verse to set the norms for Canadian national/ modern poetry. Making this distinction, he stated that while the 'cosmopolitan' poet wrote on what Canadian life had in common with life everywhere, the 'native' poet focussed on 'what is individual and unique in Canadian life'. Historically Smith saw the 'native' poet as someone who tried to 'come to terms with an environment that is only now ceasing to be colonial', while the 'cosmopolitan' poet 'from the very beginning has made a very heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal civilizing culture of ideas.' Smith thus saw colonialism as a threat to Canadian poetry and asked Canadian poets to become 'cosmopolitan' which would help create modernist poetry in Canada.

Smith was a nationalist, who compiled many anthologies of Canadian poetry, which included poetry written in the two official languages of Canada: English and French. He believed that a poem should be "a highly organized, complex, and unified re-creation of experience, in which the maximum use of meaning and suggestion in the sounds of words has been achieved in the minimum essential outlay of words. A poem is not a description of an experience, it is experience itself." This is amply illustrated in this short poem "Sea Cliff" which reads: "Wave on wave/ and green on rock / and white between / splash and black / the crash and hiss / of the feathery fall, / the snap and shock/ of the water wall/ and the wall of rock." The second stanza using the extreme economy of words makes us experience the ebb and flow of sea through the ebb and flow of words: "after - / after the ebb-flow, / wet rock, / high - / high over the slapping green, / water sliding away/ and the rock abiding,/ new rock riding/ out of the spray. Besides its pithiness, it is the ebb and flow and the movement that capture us in the dynamics of this movement.

Sara Jeannette Duncan (1861-1922): Like A.J.M.Smith, she was a nationalist who advocated the 'Dominion status' for Canada under the British Empire. Her imperialist faith is clearly reflected in the character of Adveena Murchison, the heroine of *The Imperialist* (1904). The novel makes a passionate appeal for Canadian nationalism and also for a struggle against colonialism. The narrator of the novel very proudly remarks, "We are here at the making of a nation". Another North American novel in which she presents her nationalism is *Those Delightful Americans* (1902), which is a light and entertaining story of an English matron's discovery of American high society. Similarly, *Cousin Cinderella or A Canadian girl in London* (1908) is an

account of the effort made by a Canadian brother and sister to gain social recognition for themselves and their country in London, the centre of the British Empire. It centres on an emerging sense of national consciousness and a struggle against colonialism.

Duncan lived in India for over three decades after she married Everard Cotes, a British official who worked in the museum in Calcutta. Her *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* (1893) is a memorable account of the Anglo-Indian society of the time. Her *Set in Authority* (1906) and *The Burnt Offering* (1909) are set in Imperial India. Indian nationalism, though seen rather sympathetically in these novels, is not given its due, as India, according to the protagonists, should remain under the benevolent rule of the British. Thus, Duncan has two views on British Imperialism: one for Canada and another for India. While she favours Canadian nationalism, she does not do so in the case of India, as she believed that India would disintegrate if made free from the British Imperial rule.

Morley Callaghan (1903- 1990): Edward Morley Callaghan was born and educated in Toronto, where he has lived most of his life. In 1923 he met Ernest Hemingway, who was employed briefly by *Toronto Daily Star* and encouraged him to continue writing and helped him publish his early stories. Callaghan and his wife travelled to Paris in 1929 where he met many writers in the expatriate community there. After he returned from Europe, he spent a few years in New York, before he made Toronto his permanent home where he supported his writing career through journalism and radio and television appearances. During the thirties, his stories appeared in *The New Yorker* regularly. During these eight years he published the following seven volumes: *It's Never Over* (1930), *No Man's Meat* (1931), *A Broken Journey* (1932), *Such Is My Beloved* (1934), *They Shall Inherit The Earth* (1935), *Now That April's Here and Other Stories* (1936) and *More Joy In Heaven* (1937). However, during the decade of 1940s he did not publish much. His later fiction includes: *The Loved and the Lost* (1951), *Morley Callaghan's Stories* (1959), *A Passion in Rome* (1961), *A Fine and Private Place* (1975) and *Close to the Sun Again* (1977).

Like his contemporaries, Callaghan tried to find a style for the new post World War I age that he attempted to portray realistically with the bareness of a documentary. His realism is more than a verbal photograph as he has given it a characteristic tone by evoking the essence of a character or situation. His novels are realistic narratives that are constructed as parables. The recurring metaphors and images, for example, invite a reader to interpret *The Loved and the Lost* (1951) at more than one level.

Another characteristic of his realism is that the ending of a story simply stops, which leaves the reader with his interpretation. This open-ended-ness of the narrative may happen at a moment of illumination or clarity for a character. This permits his characters and implied readers a moral choice to confront life and accept a responsibility for their decisions and actions. To quote him, he believed to "tell the truth plainly".

Like other Modernists, Callaghan is always concerned with the central issues of the twentieth century. Eroding religious values, rejection and alienation are some of the issues that concerned him more than the jingoism of Canadianess that his contemporaries were attempting to discover for themselves. In order to universalise his experience, he even removes his own individual presence from his writing as also the environment. Like A.J.M. Smith's 'cosmopolitan' writers, Callaghan objectifies his characters, their environment and their Canadian identity so that they get interested in 'timeless issues'. The main theme of his novels is the problem of mankind's imperfect condition that he attempts to improve, like T.S. Eliot, the great Modernist, through Christian humanism. His short stories deal with the extremity of the individual's situation that reflects the internal conflict in the mind of an individual. These stories reflect man's sense of loss, his longing for the lost Gardens of Eden, dehumanised world and law bereft of morality. Callaghan thus reflects the Great Depression in his novels. Unlike his contemporary Canadian Modernists, he

suggests a way out of this through Christian humanism and not through Canadian nationalism. Modernism for him thus provides him a coherent identity that has the power to impose order upon its environment.

2.4 POST-MODERNISM/POST NATIONALISM

Canadian nationalism was challenged particularly in 1980s when Canada signed a treaty for the establishment of "free trade" between Canada and the United States that finally resulted in North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) establishing free trade between Canada, United States and Mexico in the 1990s. Keeping this background in mind, Frank Davey in his *Post National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel since 1967* analyses sixteen post-centennial novels to announce "the arrival of the post-national state – a state invisible to its own citizens". Governed by multi-national capitalism, it is a state in which a nation as a "community of difference" has vanished. Davy concludes his book with the remark of the protagonist in George Bowering's novel *Caprice*: "The world [has] started to shrink. We are all Europeans now" (Quoted in Davey, 266). Specificity of the Canadian nation is thus deconstructed. Advancing his argument further, Davey states:

Specific novels may argue for a humanist Canada, a more feminist Canada, a more sophisticated and worldly Canada, an individualist Canada, a Canada more responsive to the values of its aboriginal citizens, but collectively they suggest a world and a nation in which social structures no longer link regions or communities, political process is doubted, and individual alienation has become normal (266).

Davey is of the view that there exists "heterogeneity of Canadian discursive field" (23). He also observes that "gender, class, region, ethnicity, and economic structures mark texts as decisively as can nation or 'world culture'" (18). The usual relationship between the (literary) codes or positions and between gender, class, region, ethnic affiliations and economic practices is that of contestation and/ or dominance. In the age of multi-national capitalism, Canadian nationalism can survive only by "participating in the arguments of a nation that is being continuously discursively produced and reproduced from political contestation" (24).

It is this political contestation that forms a fertile ground for the Post-modern Canadian poets and writers as Post-modernism presents a challenge to the concept of a coherent identity that has the power to impose order upon its environment, which questions the "ontological certainty" located at the core of Modernism. In its race to homogenise and universalise, Modernism attempted to obliterate or gloss over the cultural, historical, sociological, gendered and other differences. Respecting differences and otherness, Post-modernism, encourages identity politics based on gender, class, region, ethnic and religious affiliations, economic practices or cultural orientations.

Multiculturalism highlighting multiple cultures, heritage languages, regional identities and nativism augments the Post Modernist agenda. Margaret Laurence was one of the first writers supporting this agenda.

Margaret Laurence (1926-1987): Asserting a regional identity by making the small prairie town of Neepawa in Manitoba as Manawaka the centre of her fictional world, Margaret Laurence has found a permanent place in the Canadian literary canon. In fact, she was the major novelist in 1960s and 1970s. Her five interrelated works of fiction beginning with *The Stone Angel* (1964) conclude with *The Diviners* (1974).

Born in the town of Neepawa (fictional Manawaka), she felt a sense of entrapment there like her highly autobiographical character Vanessa MacLeod in her stories collected in *A Bird in the House* (1970). Marrying Jack Laurence in 1948, she went

with him to live first in England and then in Africa where she began her literary career. Her book *A Tree for Poetry* (1954) is a translation and recasting of Somali poetry and tales. Her African stories that she started publishing in 1954 were collected in *The Tomorrow-Tamer* (1963). She wrote three other African books. While *This Side Jordan* (1960) is a novel that deals with Ghana's independence, *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (1963) is a memoir that deals with her years in Somaliland and *Long Drums and Cannons* (1968) is a critical study of some emerging Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe.

Africa thus formed a crucible in which she put her Canadian experience to examine some of the major themes in her fiction. Africa also sharpened her sense of Canada as a new country that was coming to grips with colonialism. With this most valuable expatriate experience, Laurence came back to Canada and separated from her husband. Then she moved to England where she wrote the first three Manawaka novels: *The Stone Angel*, *A Jest of God* (1966) and *The Fire Dwellers* (1969). She was thus established as the foremost Canadian novelist of the decade. Regionalism was now established as a force to reckon with in Canadian literature. Her best-known novel *The Diviners* published in 1974 completing this cycle of fiction brought together themes and characters of all the other four Manawaka novels.

Hagar Shipley who fights for survival at the age of 90 in *The Stone Angel* is recognised as the first completely successful character in Canadian fiction. Hagar's journey from innocence to experience to achieve self knowledge is highlighted in her statement "I must have always, always, have wanted that – simply to rejoice. How is it I never could?".

The Diviners (1974) has been called a large, risky and experimental post-modern novel that has also been appreciated for its feminism. It moves away from realism when it uses such techniques as "memorybank movie", a flashback inserted as a set piece into the narrative that uses the point-of-view of Logan Christie, a garbage collector whose view of the seamy side of the town is passed down to a young orphan, Morag Gun. The novel, therefore, becomes a meta-history making a statement about life in Canada. Epic in sweep, the novel touches upon the historical events of the settlement of the Scottish pioneers on the prairies resulting in the displacement of the Indian and the Metis, the mixed breeds. Canadian nationalism thus undergoes a change to make a post national argument which would include all the marginalized native male, female and other voices to construct a post modern Canada.

Robert Kroetsch (b. 1927): Born in a small Prairie town in Alberta, Kroetsch grew up during the Depression of 1930s. Instead of taking up a sombre view of life, he is best known as a comic novelist. His novels use great myths to tell tall tales blending classical mythology and North American Indian tales. Fantasy and comedy being the two modes that he is fond of, he parodies as much as he parallels. This makes him a doyen of Canadian Post Modernism.

After graduating from the University of Alberta in 1948, he went to work as a labourer in search of experience. He lived in Labrador for a few years before he went to study at McGill university in Montreal and then the University of Iowa in the U.S. where he earned a Ph.D. for an early version of his novel *The Studhorse Man*. For the next fourteen years he worked in the U.S. before moving to Canada. Currently he is professor of English at the university of Manitoba.

In 1965 Kroetsch published his first novel, *But we are exiles*. Written in the realistic tradition, this novel is based on his real experiences of working on Mackenzie River riverboats. However, he moves away from realism to myth and fable in his trilogy – *The Words of My Roaring* (1966), *The Studhorse Man* (1969) and *Gone Indian* (1973). Investigating an imagined Alberta landscape through the four decades, the novelist playfully considers the Great Depression years, the Second World War and

the naïve pastoralism of 1960s and 1970s. In all these novel the mythic level dominates the literal, shifting his fiction towards fable. In two of his later novels in this trilogy, he uses meta-fiction and self-reflexive techniques casting doubts on the events described and thus blurring the line between fact and fiction. As Kroetsch once remarked to Margaret Laurence, "In a sense we haven't got an identity until somebody tells us our story. The fiction makes us real." The trilogy uses comic parallels between modern world of the Canadian West and the Western civilization as a whole. He uses a mythic structure that he thinks appropriately describe the three crucial decades of the twentieth century history.

Re-iterating his belief in the post modern uncertainties, one of the characters in his next novel *Badlands* (1975) remarks, "There are no truths, only correspondences" emphasizing the importance of Kroetsch's technique of allusion and parallels and his faith in the Post Modernism. The situation in this novel is a deliberate inversion of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. The action patterned on a descent into the underworld, resembles Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*.

Kroetsch's next novel, *What the Crow Said* (1978) is an ironic reconstruction of a literary tradition of many myths of abduction of a human being by bees, birds, animals etc. By reducing his story to an elemental and episodic tall tale, he 'deconstructs' the form of the novel.

During the 1970s, Kroetsch turned to write poetry. While most of his short poems are collected in *The Stone Hammer Poems* (1975), most of his long poems are published in *The Ledger* (1975). His poetic work in progress, though published, is series of long poems called *Field Notes* (1981). His other books of poetry are: *Seed Catalogue* (1977) and *The Sad Phoenician* (1979).

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UNIT 3 ENGLISH CANADIAN THEATRE AND DRAMA: ITS EVOLUTION

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Colonialism and Theatre in Canada
- 3.2 Towards a Canadian Theatrical Identity:
- 3.3 Canadian Professional Theatre:
- 3.4 Summing Up
- 3.5 Questions
- 3.6 Further Reading

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This very brief unit touches upon Canadian drama and theatre. In drama Canada's indigenous output has been very this for a great variety of reasons.

3.1 COLONIALISM AND THEATRE IN CANADA

The history of Canadian theatre may be divided in three phases: (a) colonial (b) towards a Canadian theatrical identity; and (c) professional Canadian theatre. Though there has been theatrical activity in Canada since the beginning, the professional theatre is very recent. Canadian drama therefore has no history before 1950s.

Even before the Europeans arrived in Canada, dramas were performed by the Inuit and by many Indian cultures – the Ojibwa, the Iroquois, the Plains Indians etc. The shamans or mystics were gifted actors who used masks, stage props and voice projections including ventriloquism to perform with great skill the spiritual plays and spirit dances celebrating initiation, purification, death, and resurrection. Ritualistic performances were designed to benefit the community – by influencing the weather, or curing illnesses etc. The community participated in these dramas played by the shamans by singing songs, chants and speaking known dialogues. The Mystery Play of the British Columbia Kwakiutl Indians is perhaps the best known of this cycle like the European Mystery Cycle plays.

No precise date can be given to the performance of the first European play(s) in Canada, though there are claims to the theatrical activities during the expeditions of Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583. However, *Le Theatre de Neptune*, published in Paris in 1609, was the first play performed in North America. It is verse drama that was played by some seventy or eighty Frenchmen and Micmac Indians. The officers of the colonial garrison and fleet performed Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* in 1792. The plays during the colonial period were imported from the mother country and played on Canadian soil. There was nothing Canadian about them. Charles Mair, a native Canadian, was a member of the 'Canada first' movement that made a serious effort to Canadianize the theatre activity. His *Tecumseh* was published in 1886 but was not successful as a play because it was unactable. In the preface to this play, Mair explains his intention to create 'an original and distinctive literature' for Canada. Though his play failed, later dramatists took up his mission and started writing on Canadian themes such as cultural and linguistic differences between the English and French Canadians, the rivalry between the two cities of Montreal and Toronto and the differences between West Canada and East Canada. The entirely Canadian themes and satire, however, were orchestrated in *H.M.S. Parliament* (1880) by William Henry Fuller. The play was acted in many cities. It is very typical of time

and is directed at Sir John MacDonald, the Prime Minister and his policies, particularly the 'National Policy', which restricted free trade. The play raises the issue of Canada/ U.S. relations in this way:

BRITANNIA: I am told you are carrying on a flirtation with your 'Cousin Jonathan', and some people are talking about an alliance between you. *Reproachfully.* Oh! Canada, *I would never have believed it of a well-conducted girl like you!*

CANADA: *Indignantly.* It's a horrid story mamma. I like 'Jonathan' very much as a near neighbour and a cousin, but I should never dream of a close connection, and I don't believe he desires either....

3.2 TOWARDS A CANADIAN THEATRICAL IDENTITY

Canadian drama, like Canadian identity, has generally been defined with reference either to the British or the American drama. B.K. Sandwell, a critic, writing in 1911 in the *Canadian Magazine* expressed this sentiment when he observed:

...Canada is the only nation in the world whose stage is entirely controlled by aliens. She is the only nation in the world whose sons and daughters are compelled to go to the foreign capital for permission to act in their own language on the boards of their theatres. The only road to applause to a Toronto theatre audience is by way of Broadway. The Montreal girl who wants to show her own people that she can act must sign an agreement with a New York manager.

While Sandwell criticised the American domination of Canadian theatre, he did not plead for an independent Canadian drama. What he wanted was that the British occupy the American space. The British actors, dramatists and other theatre personalities visiting Toronto and other Canadian cities, stressed the need for the British patronage of Canadian drama. For Harold Terry, a British writer, American plays were a 'menace to Imperial progress'. Canadian drama thus was supposed to be tutelage of the British.

Ironically, the Canadian drama saw a ray of hope in the rise of radio and film industries. These competing forms of entertainment made the visiting American and British drama troupes financially unviable, thus opening the way for the establishment of Canadian theatre. This gap was filled by the local troupes. Inspired by the Little Theatre Movements in Europe, their Canadian counterparts eschewed commercial ideology and expectations and dedicated themselves to innovation and experimentation in Canadian theatre with priority to Canadian plays. Arts and Letters Players of Toronto played a significant role in this movement. Soon the Hart House Theatre at the University of Toronto was opened in 1919. This theatre eventually became a place to nurture and challenge Canadian directors, designers, actors, and playwrights. However, the Canadian Professional theatre did not exist till about 1950s.

3.3 CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL THEATRE

The professional theatre in Canada took off mainly because of the role of the Massy Commission played and also because of the Centennial Celebrations in 1967.

- **The role of Massey Commission:** With the growing pressure on the government to become actively involved with the arts, letters, and sciences, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent established a Royal Commission in 1949 chaired by Vincent Massey. This Royal Commission's mandate was encourage organisations in the fields of arts, letters and sciences "which express national feeling, promote common understanding, and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural and urban life." The Report was published in 1951. It established Canada Council of Arts. It established the principle of government subsidy to the arts and was a landmark in Canadian theatre history. Robertson Davies, a playwright and novelist expressed the hope of the Commission in following words:

"As we have observed to many people the words "National Theatre" mean a building, probably in Ottawa; but unless such a building is a centre form which travelling companies go on tours throughout the length and breadth of Canada, it would be a foolish extravagance. If the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, we were told, could be transplanted bodily from Stratford-on-Avon to Ottawa-on-Rideau, with all its equipment, we would still be without a national theatre; but, "if we can develop even one company, acting in a tent or in school halls, which can move Canadians to tears and laughter with the great plays of the past, and with great plays of the present (including perhaps a few of their own), we have the heart of a National theatre."

According to Ferdinand Brunetiere, a French critic, there exists a curious relationship between periods of national awareness, national identity, and major dramatic literature. He says that Greek tragedy is contemporary with the Persian wars,. Consider the Spanish theatre: Cervantes, Lope the Vega, Calderon, belong to the time when Spain was extending over all Europe... and France in the 17 Century" Similarly England the in 16th Century.....

- **1967 Centennial Celebrations:**

"In 1967 we woke to find ourselves celebrating the 100th anniversary of a real country. This country. With money and attention lavished on national festivities as never before, we became aware of Canada as never before. We watched the centennial year unfold, and what we saw was ourselves. For a little while, Canada was visible.

We were all changed by that vision. It was a glimpse of "subconscious Canada" a taste of the excitement, energy, and creativity that lay beneath the proverbial bland exterior and preview of the cultural and artistic fervent that was to follow. For some, the renewed sense of nationality was exhilarating; for others it was frightening. (S.M. Crean "The Invisible Country" in Don Rubin (Ed.), *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*, Copp Clark Ltd. Toronto, 1996. p. 332).

During these Centennial celebrations many buildings of theatres were built from the Federal funds from Canada Council of Arts and subsidies were given to Canadian productions.

The first professional Canadian drama is *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* by George Ryga: "I would prefer to date the emergence of the Canadian playwright from the appearance on November 23, 1967 of George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at the Vancouver Playhouse *Ecstasy* was Ryga's rather wry Centennial gift to the Canadian people" commented critic. This play anatomised Canada's treatment of the minorities (in this case Native). Here Ryga dramatised the tale of a "sementos" that is: a man who has lost his soul, a man who has lost touch with the earth. Ryga invented a new dramaturgy in which he could give theatrical shape and definition to stream-of-consciousness techniques that were that were traditionally the preserve of the novelist and poet. It is however, not a memory play. It is a sustained montage divorced from causality and a regular time-sequence. He uses rock music, dance, and film

projections to comment on the conflict between a bourgeois society and the new alternative culture of the 1960 in *Grass and Wild Strawberries* produced by Vancouver playhouse in 1969.

Another noteworthy playwright who brought “docu-drama” to Canadian theatre James Reaney. His trilogy of plays – collectively known as *The Donnellys*. This Docu- drama is claimed to be a very Canadian form for revisiting history. A real incident reported in Vancouver newspapers is replayed in eight hours in this trilogy, which combines history, folktales, myth, music, dancing, mime, and a host of ingenious theatrical techniques and devices. Canadian drama after the arrival of James Reaney has acquired a name.

3.4 SUMMING UP

Canada has a very thin history of services indigenous dramatic writing. A boost for it came in 1967 – the Centennial year.

3.5 QUESTIONS

1. What makes 1967 a key year in the development of indigenous Canadian drama?
2. What gives George Ryga a special place in Canadian drama?

3.6 FURTHER READING

A.P. Dani, *English Canadian Drama*, New Delhi, Creative Books, 2004.

UNIT 4 CANADIAN DISCOURSE ON NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Life Style and Mindset
- 4.2 The Note of Terror
- 4.3 The recourse of Myth
- 4.4 Let us sum up
- 4.5 Questions
- 4.6 Further Reading

4.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit briefly takes up the role of nature and technology in connection with discourse formation in Canada.

4.1 LIFE STYLE AND MINDSET

Looking at the map of Canada, one finds colourful and dramatic patterns of lakes and forests, mountains and prairies – which may make one believe that Canada has a discourse of nature. More so, when very few people live on such a huge landmass which is bigger in size than the USSR, the USA, Brazil and most of the other countries in the world. An interesting fact of today's life in Canada, however, is that 75% of its population lives in cities. "As of 1986, Canada had twenty-eight metropolitan areas with population of 10,000 and together these cities accounted for 61 percent of Canada's total population of 25,354,064", Canadians, thus are an urban people. They are more urban than their neighbours in the south as more than one in four Canadians live in metropolitan areas with populations of over a million, while in contrast only one in twelve live in a similar urban agglomerations in the United States. Canada has thus moulded a cold northern landscape of yesterday with which Sussana Moodie and others fought to civilise it, into a dozen of modern, efficient and healthy cities : Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver have advanced to a high state, and the citizens of few countries in the world can claim to have developed urban environments that are so orderly and healthy, so vibrant and safe.

The history of development of the urban environment in Canada is the history of the development of the Canadian discourse on nature and technology. The experience of wrestling with a rigorous northern climate and wilderness conditions have shaped the Canadian imagination. Since the time of the early settlers the idea of the forest therefore has struck in the Canadian mind so that it has become a symbol. One of the most nostalgic pastimes of a Canadian tourist is to stay in a log cabin in the northern wildness. This is the dream of the original explorer.

One way of looking at Canadian literature is to see it as an ongoing dialogue with the wilderness, an obsessive, repetitive effort to relieve (and perhaps reframe), that moment of original encounter that the settlers had with nature. Major John Richardson who fought with the British Army against the Americans in the War of 1812, wrote a novel of the wildness : *Wacousta or the Prophecy's Tale of the Canadas* (1832). It is a Gothic extravaganza, a historical romance set in 1763 and describes the last Indian uprisings led by the famous chief Ponties against the British forts. The two forts Richardsdon describes are outposts of civilisation lost in terrifying and alien wilderness, desperately defending the rituals of British culture",

"The most powerful agent in the novel is the forest – a "psychological space that is unmitigatingly terrifying. Here nature is total opposition to culture and holds no possibility except nightmare.

Happiness, liberty and civilisation itself is pressed nostalgically within the safe walls of the fort which is surrounded by a huge, unthinking, menacing and formidable wilderness. A personal motive of revenge, requires a symbolic paradigm: two aspects of the white man at war. On the one hand is the super-ego: which is authoritarian, repressive, militaristic and committed to an ideal of order. On the other hand is the unconscious passionate mind rising in nightmare violence against all the constraints it. The novel's gothicism, thus easily turns the forest into a dream landscape.

In this symbolic allegory, Richardson, makes Wacousta, a child of nature and colonel de Hardimar, a product of civilisation and its corruptions. At the end of the novel, Richardson makes an ironic compromise by killing both Wacousta and Colonel De Hardimar. It is Hardimar's son, an idealized Englishman who carries on the burden of the imperial mission and makes peace with the Indians. Richardson thus sees Nature as alien territory that must be dominated, just as man's passionate self must be constrained. Until it is civilised, the wilderness is an enemy who has to be conquered. That is the message of the book.

4.2 THE NOTE OF TERROR

Northrop Frye isolates "the evocation of stark terror" as the central pattern of Canadian poetry. The immediate cause of this sense of terror is the Canadian landscape. When the early settlers came to Canada either via the Hudson Bay or the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the huge Canadian landmass surrounded and engulfed them. When these visitors went to the USA, the American coastline more or less symmetrical, confronted them, Columbus while looking for India, ended up landing on the American coastline because it just confronted him. It was like meeting an old friend saying, "How could I have missed you?" But the experience of the European going to Canada was like meeting of two strangers, full of suspicion. The Canadian settlers, once engulfed and surrounded got suspicious of nature around them. Their first reaction to nature, therefore, was that of terror: the frightening loneliness of a huge and thinly populated country. In the bitter winter, which forced them particularly all the year round, they felt helpless like a trapped mink. Physical distance between one settlement and the other made them as lonely as a loon.

Consequently the evocation of stark terror became a prominent theme in Canadian literature.

For Mrs. Sussana Moddie roughing it in the bush was a soul stirring experience when she said, you shut out the whole moral creation in the loneliness of the forest and fly back to civilisation. Her portrait of life in the bush is one of aching loneliness, disorientation, culture shock, and the headstrong will to impose a human order on a recalcitrant environment.

If to impose an order on environment was the central concern of the Canadian mind in the Nineteenth Century, a nostalgia for the recovery of wilderness with a feeling of guilt for rape of nature informs the Canadian imagination today when technology has made inroads into this wilderness. Once the God forsaken wilderness has today become an object of longing. One of the most fascinating figures in Canadian literature now is Archibald Balaney, alias Grey Owl, a Yonge Brit who came to Canada at eighteen and within two years had gone Indian. He deconstructed his English past and invented an Indian heritage for himself, a hoax which lasted until

after his death. With the publication of his famous *Pilgrims of the Wild* in 1935, he became a big sensation. Clad in bookskin facket and leather parts wearing moccasins, his long black hair hanging in plaits to his shoulders, he presented himself as a half-breed born in Maxico and brought up in the Canadian Wilderness. Grey Owl seems to have awakened a nostalgia for the enmity of the primitive wilderness in Europeans who were stumbling towards the Second World War. Most marvellous is that no one knew that this articulate half-breed who captured their imaginations was really Archie Beelaney for Hartings, England, Grey Owl, in fact, was not a phony because he adopted the Indian way of thinking as much as living.

4.3 THE RECOURSE TO MYTH

Modern Canadian writers have sought to understand this myth that Archie Belaney was attempting to offer. This is the myth bared on wilderness as an alternate mode of perceiving the dark side of our mind. People fly from this side of our mind because it seem terrifying, but are equally hypnotized by it and return to this puzzle. Mangaret Atwood in *Surfacing* uses this motif of journey into wilderness as a voyage of evolutionary regression during which the idea of the human must be reinvented. The unarmed narrator of *surfacing* searches the wilderness of Northern Quebee for her father, a botanist, who has been reported missing. IN the progress she comes to terms with a filed lone affair and an abortion. She also re-evaluates all her cultural assumptions. Atwood challenges our way of relating to nature, as her subject is the polarization of man and nature that results from our compulsions to explain and master her. Language is one of the tools man uses to achieve this mastery. He sets himself, the perceiving subject apart from nature, the perceived object. The Cartesian logic of our language, argues Sullivan dictates not only a split between subject and object, but the superior position of the subject – nature, in other words, is acted upon; it is our colony. Atwood's persona intuitively seeks another mode of vision, another code of language. It is natural that she should turn to the native Indian culture to contrast technological man's alienation from nature with the Indian's mythical participation in nature. Atwood's goal in *Surfacing* therefore is perfect communion with wilderness, which the unnamed narrator expresses when she writes :

"I lean against tree. I am a tree leaning. I am not an animal or a tree.
I am the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow. I am a place." (p. 101)

The two modes of population of nature in the Western thinking are : a) that the wilderness serves us as raw material for our technologies or b) it becomes a romantic projection – like wordsworth and others (it must approve or disprove). Atwood suggests third mode : c) nature as *the fact of itself*, which makes us fact too. Nature is our place. We are in it. A world in which man does not dominate his environment either projecting his will on it or reading mystical massages waiting for intimations of immortality. He accepts nature as the fact of itself – a demystified and desecularised version of perceiving nature. Man belongs in nature as do the skies, sunshine, the trees. He takes part in the symbiotic relationship seeking no superior place, rather, recognizing nature's power to overwhelm him, Atwood sends her heroine back to her anaesthetized urban and environment where nature is paved over.

This dialectics of nature and civilization which is the basic theme of Atwood's *Surfacing* form the core of the Canadian discourse on technology. This highly original comprehensive and eloquent discourse on technology is Canada's principal contribution to North American through. This discourse is situated midway between the future of the new world and the past of European culture. The Canadian mind is that of the in-between, which oscillates between the pragmatic will to live at all costs of the Americans and searing lament for that which has been suppressed by the modern technological order.

The Canadian intellectual condition, argues Kroker, is to be ambivalent to the present-mindedness of American culture on the one hand and the cultural legacy of the European past on the other. By virtue of historical circumstance and geographical accident, the technological American empire has marginalised the Canadian existence. The Canadian intellectual condition of ambivalence is thus a product of the dialectical movement between the power of the American empire and the bitter historical knowledge that the crisis has its origins much deeper in European culture. The Canadian mind, argues Kroker, may thus be one of the main sites in modern times for working out the meaning of the technological experience.

There Canadian thinkers who have deliberated on this issue are : Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis and George Grant, Grant analyses the technological dependency, Heidegger examines technological humanism and Innis scrutinizes the empire of communications. Together, they present a comprehensive view of the dialectics between technology and society.

There is reflection on the price to be paid for the consumer comforts of technological society and on sociologist studies the deep relationship between technology and dependency in Canadian economic history. There is an understanding that technologies of communication in the electronic age overthrow the privileged position of the "contents" of the media, substituting a new sign – language of rhetorical and symbolic effect. This is the age of the enclosure of whole societies within designed environments of media.

McLuhan's thesis is that all media work us over completely. They are so persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments.

For McLuhan, we live in a processed world today, As we enter the electronic age with its instantaneous and global movement of information, we are the first human beings to live completely within the mediated environment of the techno-structure. It is our plight to be processed through the technological simulacrum, to participate intensively and integrally in a "technostructure" which is nothing but a vast simulation and amplification of the bodily senses.

This technological simulacrum, for Harold Innis is the process of making. The mark of technology, both transforms and screens off the environment and imprisons us within the seductive vision of the technological imagination. He studies technological experience as a dynamic social process with which we are implicated as historical being. The delicate process of healing from the technological simulacrum will have to be at two levels – first as the damaged human sensibility and then, a damaged natural environment. As a methodological, but also rural practice, Innis insists that it is only by reliving in depth the actual history of industrial technology – its economy, politics, psychology and culture – that we can achieve a thorough understanding of the political economy of modern technology – or the relationship between technology and civilisation in North America.

To conclude then what the concepts of "technological dependency" of Grant, of "technological humanism" of McLuhan and of "technological realism" of Innis seem to emphasise collectively is that a) Technology is the real world – that b) it is a distinctive modern fact to live technology as a kind of second biology which defines and limits the human condition. To define ourselves in this new technological environment, then is to establish a new relationship with ourselves and with nature which informs the comprehensive and eloquent Canadian discourse on nature and technology.

4.4 LET US SUM UP

Canadian discourse on nature and technology needs to be taken into account if any serious attempt to be made to understand the typical make up of Canada as nation.

4.5 QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of terror in the Canadian mind-set?
2. What is the general Canadian attitude to 'Nature' especially in the early years of its existence as a nation?
3. How do Canadian generally look upon technology?

4.6 FURTHER READING

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