

**What nation, which people? Representations of national identity in  
English-Canadian history textbooks from 1945 to 1970<sup>1</sup>**

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*Textbooks : from the Narrative of the Nation to the Narrative of Citizens*

by

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Canada's rise from *Colony to Nation*, to borrow the title of a popular Canadian history college text in the 1940s and 1950s,<sup>2</sup> was a gradual process within the British orb. Canada was constituted as a federal union of British North American colonies by an act of the British Parliament in 1867, the British North America Act, 1867. The Act did not create an independent country; rather, it regrouped the British North American colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario into a federal structure that remained a colony of Great Britain. Internationally, Canada only became an autonomous entity after the First World War and it was in 1931, with the British Statute of Westminster, that this independence was formalized. Canada's head of state remains the British monarch and Canada had to have its constitution amended by acts of the British Parliament until 1982, when the constitution was "patriated" to Canada.

Significantly, while in other countries the central government used education as a vehicle for the fashioning of national identities, in nineteenth-century Canada national identity was simply assumed to be British. Though belonging to a "distinct" culture, French-speaking Canadians were taken to share in the British political nationality. Native populations, under the tutelage of the British Crown prior to 1867, fell under the

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<sup>2</sup> A.R.M. Lower, *From Colony to Nation* (Toronto: Longmans, 1946).

rule of the Canadian Federal government after 1867. The Federal government carried on the British policy of trying to "elevate" the Natives to the rank of British subjects through forcible education, confinement to land, and the expected adoption of agriculture as a means of subsistence.<sup>3</sup> But for the rest of the Canadian population, the British North America Act vested responsibility for education in the hands of provincial governments, which were also entrusted with "all matters of a merely local or private Nature in the Province."<sup>4</sup> This provision by and large maintained earlier educational arrangements, especially those pertaining to Catholic and Protestant schools. Prior to the Confederation of 1867, education had been a matter for each colony to administer, and by 1867, public education systems were still relatively new in each colony; while local governments had begun to set up primary schools in the 1820s and 1830s, secondary and higher education largely remained in private hands. These "private hands" were usually religious bodies, whether Protestant Churches or Catholic religious orders.<sup>5</sup>

Essentially, Canada's two major linguistic communities remained separate educational entities. In English-speaking

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<sup>3</sup> See Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> British North America Act, 1867, article 93; article 92. Available on the Government of Canada Web site at <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/const/loireg/pltl-1.html>.

<sup>5</sup> See J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, *Canadian Education: A History* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1970). See also the *History of the Book in Canada* Web site at the University of Toronto (<http://www.hbic.library.utoronto.ca/>), and the database on Canadian textbooks, hosted at Dalhousie University (<http://acsweb2.ucis.dal.ca/hbicdb/index.html>), which is part of the *History of the Book in Canada* project. A similar database of French-language textbooks, produced by Paul Aubin at

Canada, textbooks were at first imported from Great Britain and the United States or were local reprints of British and American works, while in French-speaking Canada, textbooks were imported from France or were reprinted French works.<sup>6</sup> Even though the idea of a common textbook for Canadian history would be put forward from time to time,<sup>7</sup> the linguistic, cultural, constitutional, and ideological obstacles were never surmounted and the Canadian textbook market remained segmented by language.

While it would be presumptuous to infer from the contents of textbooks what was being taught and what was being learned in schools, textbooks do put forth the views of national history that are considered acceptable in their time. Textbooks transmit a form of congealed public opinion or conventional wisdom that the generation holding power wants to transmit to the next generations. American education specialist Michael W. Apple has called this conventional wisdom "Official Knowledge."<sup>8</sup> This paper examines the contents of English-language textbooks on Canadian history for the period extending from the Second World War, when a flourish of new publications became available to schools in

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Laval University, is available at <http://www.bibl.ulaval.ca/ress/manscol/>.

<sup>6</sup> On the book trade in English Canada, see Roy MacSkimming, *The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2003); on French Canada, see Fernande Roy, *Histoire de la librairie au Québec* (Montreal: Leméac, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> See for instance Ken Osborne, "Voices from the Past. Canadian Historians and National History: A 1950 Survey," *Canadian Social Studies*, 36, 3 (Spring 2002), [http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css\\_36\\_3/CLvoices\\_from\\_the\\_past.htm](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_3/CLvoices_from_the_past.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Michael W. Apple, *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Routledge, 2000). See also "The Culture and Commerce of the Textbook," chapter 4 of Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (New York: Routledge, 1988): 81-105.

English-speaking Canada, to the end of the 1960s, when educational reforms in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada relegated textbooks to the background as conveyors of codified knowledge.<sup>9</sup> Because of the meagre contents of primary grade history texts, the paper focuses on high school texts. "High school", in this context, encompasses Grades 6 to 12, and Grade 13 in Ontario (now abolished).

Specifically, the paper surveys Canadian history high school texts authorized for use in Ontario. Authorization of textbooks was granted by the Ontario Department of Education and allowed Ontario school boards to bill the provincial Department of Education for purchases of authorized titles. Authorization thus insured substantial orders for textbook publishers, and since Ontario was the largest market for textbooks produced in Canada, publishers geared their offerings to the Ontario requirements. By contrast, the market in the other English-speaking provinces was small and fragmented; these provinces therefore had to make do with the offerings prepared for the Ontario market. Thus, while education remained a provincial prerogative according to the Canadian constitution, market forces in effect worked to standardize textbook offerings to all English-language school boards across the country. This remained the practice to the end of the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

The paper reports upon a systematic analysis of all the high school Canadian history texts published during the period under

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<sup>9</sup> On educational developments in Ontario in the post-war period, see R.D. Gidney, *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario's Schools*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> Ken Osborne has summarized this *de facto* curriculum in "Teaching History in Schools: A

study. The analysis was designed to draw out the representations of national identity imbedded in the textbooks. Textbooks constructed national identity by defining and characterizing the population of Canada. Canada is composed of Native societies of very diverse cultures, of French-Canadian and Acadian descendents of French settlers, of English-speaking descendents of settlers from the British Isles and the United States, and of immigrants from many countries. The description of the character of Native populations and the space given Native societies in textbooks provides a first group of themes that revealed the authors' attitudes towards the Natives and towards their place within Canadian society. Events which occasioned textbook authors to make value judgments about the place of Canadians of French origin in Canada, such as the character of the French-speaking inhabitants of New France and Acadia, the Acadian deportation, the British Conquest of Canada in 1759, the Quebec Act of 1774 (which recognized Roman Catholicism, the seigneurial system, and French civil law as institutions of the Province of Quebec), the Canadian Rebellions of 1837, the Durham Report of 1840, which led to the union of Quebec and Ontario, Confederation in 1867, and the Riel rebellions in 1870 and in 1885 in Western Canada, comprise a second group of themes liable to produce statements about Canadian identity. The arrival of the Loyalists, the Constitutional Act of 1791, the war of 1812, the Upper Canadian Rebellion, the achievement of responsible government in 1849, and the First and

Second World Wars provided a third set of issues from which "lessons" from Canadian history could be drawn for pupils, including the impact of the large-scale immigration to Canada in the twentieth century. Finally, the chapters on recent Canadian history contained statements about the character of contemporary Canada.<sup>11</sup> There is obviously no room here to discuss these themes in detail; we present only an overview of the main depictions of Canadian identity uncovered in textbooks by the systematic examination of these topics.

During the years from the end of the Second World War to the end of the 1950s, high school Canadian history textbooks reflected the requirements of the Ontario Department of Education both for perspective and for coverage. In 1942, the Department published its social studies curricula - which included the study of Canadian history - for Grades 7, 8 and 10.<sup>12</sup> The aims of the Grade 7 curriculum was to show how "two great nations [Canada and the United States] with common ideals and problems" came into being, while in Grade 8 students were to be "introduced into the wider community of the British Commonwealth, learning much of the geography and history of the Motherland and of the sister nations within the Commonwealth." British history was accorded as much

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<sup>11</sup> This paper summarizes two chapters from the author's work on *The Other Quiet Revolution: Evolving Representations of National Identity in English-Speaking Canada, 1945-1970* (in press). Textbooks were usually fairly well illustrated, and the analysis of these representations would warrant separate treatment. Some texts included study questions, suggested activities, self-tests, and suggestions for further reading; this pedagogical material is not taken into account here.

<sup>12</sup> *Programme of Studies for Grades VIII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1942); *Course of Study Grades IX and X Social*

room as Canadian history, since it was from British history that Canadians derived their "common ideals of freedom, justice, and democracy."<sup>13</sup>

Canadian identity, in this perspective, was anchored in an 'ethnic' definition of the country as "British." The country was British through the largest segment of its population, through its political system, through its cultural traditions and through its values. In Grade 7, the sweep of Canadian history began in the pupil's local community, then extended to the province of Ontario, and then embraced the history of Canada - "How Canada Became a Nation" - in "about three months." The history of the local community was to be the story of "how its inhabitants, with the racial character, traditions and aspirations common to them," attempted to cope with "the interaction of physical environment and social outlook...."<sup>14</sup> Thus the nation was composed of many 'races' which shaped the various cultures of Canada. Yet the choice of Canadian history topics in the *Programme of Studies* left little room for learning about "the racial character, traditions, and aspirations" of Canadian communities: it proposed an image of Canada that was confined to Ontario and the West and essentially ignored the non-British components of Ontario society.

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*Studies. History* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1942).

<sup>13</sup> *Programme of Studies*, 27, 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-33, 27.



A more detailed survey was offered in Grade 10: it covered Canadian history from "discovery" to the present, and concluded with sections on the local community and on citizenship. Among the seven "aims" defined for the Canadian history and citizenship course were the following: "2) To show how Canada's history is linked with that of the [British] Empire and related to other parts of the world; 3) To promote tolerance, respect, and goodwill towards other races and classes." The development of a sense of Canadian identity among Ontario's high school pupils entailed conceiving of Canadians as belonging to different 'races' and classes, foremost among which was the British 'race' and the progress it had brought to Canada. Pupils who did not belong to the proper 'race' and class were thus ignored in the identity-building process.

Textbook writers had no difficulty writing to this ethnocentric curriculum. The Canadian history texts published for the Ontario Grade 10 market between the early 1940s and the end of the 1950s met the Ontario requirements quite closely. A good example was the text with the longest period of authorization, University of Toronto History professor George W. Brown's *Building the Canadian Nation*.<sup>15</sup> This text was authorized from 1945 to 1959. First published in 1942, the book was reprinted with additional text on the contemporary period in 1946 and 1951, and lightly

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<sup>15</sup> George W. Brown, *Building the Canadian Nation* (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1942). The other texts were J.W. Chafe and A.R.M. Lower, *Canada - A Nation and How It Came To Be* (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1948); Arthur C. Dorland, *Our Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1949).

reworded in a "new" 1958 edition. Approved in nearly every Canadian province, it is estimated to have sold over 600,000 copies.<sup>16</sup> It could be said to be as close as Canadian circumstances allowed to a common textbook for English-speaking Canada.

Brown's text began with a presentation of North American geography. Included in this chapter was a section on Native Peoples, as provided by the Ontario curriculum. The implication was that Natives were simply a part of the landscape. Brown's chapter focused on the diversity of the material environment and of native material culture; the author recognized the Natives' "cleverness in making use of their resources" and acknowledged that "the coming of the white man was a violent shock to the Indian's way of living."<sup>17</sup> But there was practically no description of native social organization. Brown described the Natives through the eyes of missionaries, who admired the Natives' bravery, unselfishness, endurance, and hospitality; on the other hand, "the Indian was attached to his superstitions, to his belief in magic, to his feasts and ceremonials which were often no better than wild orgies." But this ambivalent picture gave way to a portrayal of the Iroquois of Eastern Canada as the enemy of the French settlers who "founded" the country. The Iroquois were "democratic in some ways," but they possessed qualities of "daring, cunning, and

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<sup>16</sup> W.D. Meikle, "And Gladly Teach: G.M. Wrong and the Department of History at the University of Toronto," Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1977. Meikle's list of provinces where Brown's text was approved does not include Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, but the author admits that the research for this appendix was "hurried and incomplete."

<sup>17</sup> Brown, *Building the Canadian Nation*, 14, 18.

determination which surpassed anything among their neighbours" and made them all the more fearsome for the inhabitants of New France. Natives were clearly constructed as "Others:" their culture was inferior to that of the Europeans who came to Canada in the seventeenth century, but they constituted, for a time, a threat to the birth of Canada.

Similarly, Brown offered a stereotypical view of French Canadians, also represented as "Others." French-Canadian culture and values were depicted as exotic, and therefore outside the bounds of the author's implicit definition of Canadian identity. Brown praised the courageous life of New France's missionaries and fur traders. He rehearsed well-worn stereotypes of French Canadians as *primitifs décontractés* and portrayed New France as a sort of historical theme park. "The voyageurs had a good humour which was never far below the surface. With their rollicking songs, their endless fund of stories, their gaily painted canoes, and their skill in forest life they were a type of Frenchman completely weaned away from the life of Europe." Living on the North American continent had manifestly improved the French. The habitant was portrayed as "cheery, high spirited and very fond of sociability." Still, New France was administered in the same despotic manner as France, but "the habitant did not object to this form of government," an implied political naïveté which stood in implicit contrast with the rights and liberties of Englishmen which British colonists, "unlike those of other empires," would

bring with them to North America. "The habitant had few ambitions but he enjoyed life. His interests centred around his family and his church. He knew and thought little of the outside world. His home was in Canada and he loved the land on which he lived. This was his strength." The suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter directed the reader to similar romantic views of French Canada in literature and folklore.<sup>18</sup> In a later chapter, Brown explained French Canadians' reluctance to enrol and fight on the side of the British Empire during the First World War with the argument that French Canadians "were far less in touch with world affairs than were the majority of English-speaking Canadians," a statement that rested on prejudice rather than on research.<sup>19</sup> According to Brown, French-speaking Canadians, unlike English-speaking Canadians, had "no sentimental attachment to Britain or even to France."<sup>20</sup> Lack of sentiment towards Britain and ignorance of world affairs characterized a group of "Others" within Canada who were thus by implication of a lesser fibre than the English-Canadian "We" implicit in the textbook's depiction of Canadian history and explicitly defined in the Ontario curriculum. Brown's description of the Acadians was grounded in similar stereotypes.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Id., 89-90, 93, 262, 95-6.

<sup>19</sup> For an extended examination of debates in the French-Canadian press about international affairs in the nineteenth century, see Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec 1760-1896* (Montreal: Fides, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Brown, *Building the Canadian Nation*, 403.

<sup>21</sup> Id., 100.

Brown had little to say about immigrants to Canada. He could not avoid the topic altogether, as the Canadian West was peopled by three million British and European immigrants in the years 1900-1914, but Brown's treatment of immigrants made up but a small part of the few pages on the twentieth century contained in the book. Brown alluded to immigrants in setting the stage for his treatment of Canada's participation in the First World War<sup>22</sup>, but without mentioning any specific group of immigrants. Instead, Brown described Canada as "a country with two main groups, French and English, and representatives also from many other lands."<sup>23</sup> But fundamentally, Canadians were defined as "British citizens", as Brown's last chapter of the "civics" section of the book indicated in its title. "Canadians," Brown wrote in a preceding chapter, "enjoyed the privileges of British citizenship wherever the British flag flew. Brown described the "many races" that made up Canada, according to the Ontario Department of Education, in a hierarchy that placed English-speaking Canadians of British origin at the top; the benevolent condescension that Brown's text exhibited towards French Canadians and, to a much lesser degree, towards Natives, only confirmed the hierarchical ranking he offered his young readers.

The depiction of the hierarchy of "races" that made up Canada was also a basic component of the other high school texts of the

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<sup>22</sup> Id., 403.

<sup>23</sup> Id., 472.

period. Brown's major competitor in the textbook market, University of Manitoba historian Arthur Lower's *Canada: A Nation And How it Came To Be*, published in 1948 in collaboration a high school teacher,<sup>24</sup> stressed even more what Lower, in his 1943 presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association, had termed "the primary antithesis of Canadian history," namely, the conflicts between French and English.<sup>25</sup> According to Lower, this deep division was based on different world views ingrained in each "race" by its religion. French Canadians could only be understood by understanding the medieval Catholicism of St. Thomas Aquinas and its extension to New France, and English Canadians as Calvinists with an acquisitive ethic. The "racial clash" between French Canadians and English Canadians over two centuries was one of the exciting aspects of Canadian history, according to the book's foreword to teachers. It was one of the three central themes of Canadian history that pupils had to understand, the other two being Canadian history's "running fight with geography" and "our relationships to the other branches of the English-speaking world...."<sup>26</sup> The text had but a brief passage on the "native races," which took pains to point out that the Indians was not "by nature, a wild savage, an inferior human being;" Natives

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<sup>24</sup> (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1948).

<sup>25</sup> A.R.M. Lower, "Two Ways of Life: The Primary Antithesis of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Association Report of the Annual Meeting, 1943*, 5-18. Also available at <http://www.cha-shc.ca/bilingue/addresses/1943.htm>. The word "race" appears 19 times in the paper.

<sup>26</sup> Chafe and Lower, *Canada: A Nation*, ix-xi.

simply had not attained the same stage of development as the white man.<sup>27</sup> In the chapters on New France, this textbook quoted nineteenth-century American popular historian Francis Parkman's works on New France and repeated some of his stereotypes: the French-Canadian habitant "was a man of simple tastes, industrious and carefree, with little interest in commerce or the outside world.... The early Canadians were a social, light-hearted people.... They were quite content with the seigneurial system.... The French Canadian was taught to be satisfied with his lot, to find happiness in living, not in things." This mindset was contrasted with the outlook of the English colonist, who stressed material progress,<sup>28</sup> sometimes much to Lower's distaste. The tensions between the stereotyped 'races' of Canada constituted the underpinning of Lower's interpretation of Canadian history for his high school audience.

History textbooks in use in Ontario schools in the years from 1945 to 1960 exhibited a number of general traits. The most obvious to today's reader was that the text almost exclusively portrayed history as made by 'dead white males;' very few women were mentioned, and neither were, to any significant degree, Natives, or Canadians of other than French or British origin. Textbooks placed 'race' at the core of definitions of Canadian identity. They tended to "explain" Canadian history by the

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<sup>27</sup> Id., 7. Italics in the text.

<sup>28</sup> Id., 242. Cf. similar passages in *Building the Canadian Nation*, described above.

ingrained characteristics of the two major 'races,' which were held to account for much of the conflict between them. Ethnic stereotypes were repeatedly used to describe English as well as French Canadians. The depiction of the habitant of New France, for instance, was similar throughout. The ethnic stereotype of the British, on the other hand, was less pronounced, as it would have been evident even to schoolchildren that not all the British were alike. But when it was invoked, the stereotype of the British offered an image of a "progressive" and "democratic" people, in implicit and sometimes very explicit contrast with the French.

As Canada entered the tumultuous decade of the 1960s, with a "Quiet Revolution" under way in the Province of Quebec and blossoming 'ethnic' communities gaining strength from the large-scale immigration of the 1950s, high school students in the English-speaking provinces were offered brand-new texts from which to study the history of the country. Produced to meet a new Ontario curriculum, these texts still kept much of the emphasis on political and constitutional history found in earlier texts. They would also continue to put forth representations of the nature of the country grounded in ethnic stereotypes. To be sure, the emphasis on the 'British' identity of Canada waned; but it did not fade away: even as the new curriculum stressed the North American character of Canada, it underlined the common British cultural and political origins of Canadians and Americans.



The new Ontario guidelines provided for an examination of Canadian history spread over four years. Grade 7 students were to learn about Canada from "the first arrival of Europeans" to 1800. The story was continued from 1800 to 1900 in Grade 8.<sup>29</sup> Twentieth-century Canadian history was assigned to Grade 10, British history having been surveyed in Grade 9. Canadian history was now offered more space in the curriculum. It was to be taught from a continental perspective, as "the division of the North American continent north of the Gulf of Mexico into two political areas is an artificial one from the point of view of geography. Canada and the United States form a geographical unit, and it is impossible to understand fully the history of Canada without viewing the history of the continent as a whole." This continentalist perspective reflected the fact that Canada had become tied ever more closely to the United States during the Cold War, and that its links with Britain had begun to wane. Canada and the United States, the Ontario curriculum stressed, shared a common language and much the same popular culture. Still, both had populations that were "predominantly of British origin" and political institutions and "democratic outlooks" that were "developments of the British political system and of the English common law." Thus it was British culture more than North American geography that brought the US and Canada together. "The persistence and vitality of the French language in Canada does not alter the significance

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<sup>29</sup> *Curriculum I:1(c) 35M, 1959. History Intermediate Division Grades 7 and 8* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1959), 2, 3.

of these facts."<sup>30</sup> The new Grade 7 textbooks had to include material on the English colonies, on the American Revolution and the War of Independence, and the creation of American political institutions. Grade 8 texts had to cover the territorial expansion of the United States and the US Civil War.<sup>31</sup>

The texts produced for the new Ontario curriculum for Grades 7 and 8 put more emphasis on the 'racial' tensions between French and English in the country than had the texts in use in the 1940s and 1950s. But Natives, French Canadians, and immigrants continued to be implicitly depicted as 'Others' even as some efforts were being made, in some of the texts, to better 'understand' these Others. George Brown's contributions to the new curriculum may serve again as example. In his Grade 7 text, *Canada in North America to 1800*,<sup>32</sup> treatment of American Native populations was expanded from Brown's 1950 Grade 5 text.<sup>33</sup> Expansion of the scope of the book forced a pruning of material on New France, and thus a removal of some of the stereotypes used to describe French Canadians. The Loyalists, too, were depicted in less stereotypical terms than in the previous work. Overall, the ethnic stereotypes

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<sup>30</sup> Id., 4-5.

<sup>31</sup> Id., 7, 9-10, 15-6, 19-20.

<sup>32</sup> George W. Brown, Eleanor Harman, Marsh Jeanneret, *Canada in North America to 1800* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1960).

<sup>33</sup> George W. Brown, Eleanor Harman and Marsh Jeanneret, *The Story of Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1950).

evidenced in Brown's 1950s texts had been attenuated, though not completely eliminated.

This was also true of Brown's companion Grade 8 text, *Canada in North America 1800-1901*.<sup>34</sup> The book had a narrow focus: it highlighted pioneer life in Upper Canada prior to 1867, and the settlement of the West after Confederation. The opening chapter, which described the British North American colonies in 1800, had only three pages on Lower Canada, which described the commercial importance of Quebec City and Montreal to Upper Canada. In the rest of French Canada, "life on the farms of the old seigneuries continued much as it had been in the days of the French régime" and it did not warrant further discussion.<sup>35</sup> Brown's new text avoided contentious issues such as the Upper and Lower Canadian rebellions or the Red River and North-West rebellions. No details of the battles were provided, nor of the repression which followed. Riel's hanging was mentioned, but not the violent political aftermath it provoked in Quebec and Ontario. The Red River Métis were said to have had "no right" to set up a provisional government in 1869, "even though there was no other government in the [Red River] country at the time." And the execution of Thomas Scott "made the people of Canada very angry"

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<sup>34</sup> George W. Brown, Eleanor Harman, Marsh Jeanneret, *Canada in North America 1801-1900* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1961).

<sup>35</sup> Id., 20.

without indication of which people and for what reason.<sup>36</sup> Canada's political history was thus cleansed of controversial issues.

Brown had some positive comments for immigrants, few of which "could speak English when they arrived. But they were hard-working folk, and often experienced farmers."<sup>37</sup> Natives seldom made an appearance in the story. When Natives, French Canadians, and immigrants were mentioned, they were depicted in a more positive light than in Brown's earlier texts, but only as interesting vignettes little connected to the main story. They remained "Others."

Compared to their 1940s and 1950s predecessors, the Grade 7 and Grade 8 texts gave less place to the concept of 'race' and offered far less glorification of the British connection. Otherwise, the new texts dutifully followed the precepts of the Ontario curriculum and maintained the previous focus on Ontario and the West. But the British connection resurfaced in the textbooks destined to Grade 10 students, who studied twentieth-century Canadian history as part of the history of the other English-speaking peoples, Great Britain and the United States.

The Ontario Grade 10 programme focused on the interrelations of Canada, Britain, and the US in the twentieth century. As the 1962 edition of the curriculum put it, "while the emphasis is on

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<sup>36</sup> Id., 271, 272.

<sup>37</sup> Id., 93.

Canada, the interplay of forces and events in the three great English-speaking democracies is so continuous and significant that no side of the Atlantic Triangle can be studied without reference to the other two."<sup>38</sup> The texts produced for this market gave little room to Canadian history and dealt mainly with Canada's developing presence on the international scene and its participation in the two World Wars. But they all put forward a view of Canada as one of the "three great English-speaking democracies." This allowed them to conveniently leave Natives, French Canadians, and other Canadians of non-British origin out of the 'national' story.

In 1963 the Ontario Department of Education introduced a new programme for Grade 13 students, who were to study "Canada and the Modern World." In spite of this title, the curriculum in fact prescribed an equal amount of American and Canadian history from the nineteenth century to the present. Among the aims of the new curriculum was to "show what an important part England and British institutions have played" in the "crowning achievement" that was "the creation of democracy with its ideals of social equality and of government."<sup>39</sup> As the texts produced for this level provided the most detailed examination of Canadian history offered to high

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<sup>38</sup> Ontario, Department of Education, *Curriculum I:7 & I:9 40M, 1962. Geography, History and Government Social Studies. Intermediate Division Grades 7,8, 9, 10. Replacing the Courses of Study in History in Curriculum I:1(C), 1959, for Grades 7 and 8 and in Social Studies in Curriculum I:1, 1951, for Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1962), 111.

<sup>39</sup> Ontario, Department of Education, *Curriculum S. 9 10,000-62-5431. History Grades 11, 12 and 13 Senior Division* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1962), 3.

school students, they deserve some specific attention. We examine two significant texts that were produced for this market.

The best of the three Grade 13 texts appeared under the signature of University of Toronto historians Ramsay Cook and Ken McNaught. McNaught wrote the half of the book dealing with American history, while Cook was responsible for the Canadian half. Cook was at the time a specialist of Western Canadian politics who was developing an interest in French Canada. Yet the book did not completely escape from portraying the conflicts between French and English in Canada as "racial division," though the term "culture" was occasionally used instead of "race." "Racial division" marked the early political history of Lower Canada, the 1870 and 1885 Riel rebellion, and the conscription crises of the First and Second World Wars.<sup>40</sup> There was a brief depiction of French Canadians after the Conquest as "a gay and hardy lot, faithful to their Church but enjoying boisterous good times." Cook quoted without comment a French observer who described the *Canadiens* as having "'intelligence and vivacity, but are wayward, light-minded and inclined to debauchery.' This was the land and the people that came under British rule in 1759."<sup>41</sup> This concluding sentence in effect endorsed the historical accuracy of the judgement offered in the quotation. Another quotation, from a "British official in Lower Canada," described

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<sup>40</sup> Kenneth W. McNaught and Ramsay Cook, *Canada and the United States: A Modern Study* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1963), 305, 319, 357, 374, 416, 466.

<sup>41</sup> *Canada and the United States*, 268.

the habitants as "'an industrious, peaceable, and well-disposed people; but they are, from their want of education and extreme simplicity, liable to be misled by designing and artful men, and were they once made fully sensible of their own independence, the worst consequences might ensue.'" This was to be read as an astute, premonitory comment, ignored by British authorities who granted Lower Canada an elective assembly.<sup>42</sup> Cook offered without comment Lord Durham's views of French Canadians as an "unprogressive and stubborn race" who blocked the economic development of the British colonies, and he described Durham as the best man who could have investigated the political situation in Lower Canada for the British government.<sup>43</sup> The chapter dealing with the years from 1888 to 1896, a period of conflict over language rights and provincial autonomy, was entitled "Race, Religion and Victory for Laurier."<sup>44</sup>

Even though it occasionally lapsed into the old terms of 'race' and the odd stereotyping of French Canadians, this textbook was much less derogatory in its description of French Canadians and much more critical of English-Canadian "extremism" than competing texts.<sup>45</sup> But it offered no stereotyping of Loyalists or British immigrants, thus distancing itself from the texts written by high school teachers in the 1950s. On the other hand, ethnic

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<sup>42</sup> Id., 279.

<sup>43</sup> Id., 319.

<sup>44</sup> Id., 379.

groups other than the British and the French were nearly ignored. Natives were only mentioned in the context of the first Riel rebellion of 1870. Immigrants were mentioned only twice in the text.<sup>46</sup>

In Cook's as in most Grade 13 textbooks of the 1960s, Canada was still represented as a bicultural country, but with less accent than in the 19840s and 1950s on the superiority of the British 'race' and of the British cultural heritage. This reflected the renewed tensions between French- and English-speaking Canadians that led in 1963 to the establishment by the Canadian government of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and which were highlighted in its preliminary report of 1965. This preliminary report warned that Canada, "without being fully conscious of the fact, is passing through the greatest crisis in its history."<sup>47</sup>

It was in this context that a Grade 13 textbook was designed to be used across Canada's linguistic divide, with identical contents in French and English versions. This textbook, entitled *Canada: Unity in Diversity*<sup>48</sup> in English and *Canada : Unité et diversité* - a subtle but significant nuance - in French, offered

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<sup>45</sup> Notably Edgar McInnis, *The North American Nations* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1963).

<sup>46</sup> According to the index. In the authors' defence, Canadian historiography on immigration and on Native societies was still in its infancy.

<sup>47</sup> Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 13.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Cornell, Jean Hamelin, Fernand Ouellet, Marcel Trudel, *Canada: Unity in Diversity* (Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1967).



the same treatment of Canadian history in both languages. The textbook was addressed, as stated in the introduction, to "anyone who regards history as first and foremost a discipline and a means to common understanding."<sup>49</sup> The book adopted a structure much different from its competitors'. It began with a substantial section on the history of New France, something that was not mandated in the Ontario Grade 13 curriculum. The book then offered separate chapters on the Maritime colonies, Lower Canada (Quebec), and Upper Canada (Ontario). After a chapter on the coming of Confederation which covered the years 1837 to 1967, the authors reverted to a coverage by region for the period between 1967 and 1931. The concluding section of the book, which brought the story up to the 1960s, once again focused on the national scene.

This attempt at a single synthesis that paid due attention to the regional peculiarities of Canada did not achieve much success. There were a number of reasons for this. Because of its heft (529 pages) and the absence of a pedagogical apparatus, the book held little attraction for English-Canadian high school students. Historian William Kilbourn, who wrote the book's introduction, noted that it lacked "a certain personal colour and a strong narrative,"<sup>50</sup> a polite way of acknowledging the plodding style. Each chapter was written by a single author, and the book showed few signs that authors had worked together to harmonize the

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<sup>49</sup> xiii.

<sup>50</sup> xi.

content, as numerous repetitions occurred in the text. Marcel Trudel, Fernand Ouellet, and Jean Hamelin, the three French-Canadian authors, were specialists on the history of French Canada and had been colleagues in the History Department at Quebec City's Université Laval; they were influenced by the historiographical tradition of the French *Annales*. They espoused a common view of French-Canadian history, which in translation came close to the ethnic stereotypes found in earlier English-language texts: the French-Canadian historians argued that the "backwardness" of French-speaking Quebec compared to English-speaking Canada was attributable more to its own weaknesses, such as the traditional conservatism of its elites, heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, than to French Canadians' position of inferiority within Canada after the British Conquest, as was argued by French-Canadian historians at Laval's rival institution, the Université de Montréal. The one English-speaking historian in the *Unity in Diversity* writing team, Paul Cornell, was a specialist of mid-nineteenth century political history; his chapters shared little of the socio-economic bent of the chapters written by the French-Canadian authors, thus depriving the book of a "strong sense of narrative." Perhaps the most important reason for the book's failure was not that it attempted a common history, but that the chapters originally written in French were so infelicitously translated into English that some passages are almost unintelligible.

As this brief survey has indicated, there was relatively little change in the perspectives on Canadian history offered by high school textbooks from the 1940s to the 1960s. The most important characteristic of the Canadian population, according to the textbooks, was its ethnic divisions. Prior to the 1960s, this was regularly couched in the vocabulary of 'race' and in a hierarchy of 'races' which obviously assumed high school readers to be white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and male residents of Ontario. In the 1960s, as textbook writers sought to provide some historical perspective on the political conflicts of the decade between Quebec and the English-speaking provinces, the treatment of the 'races' was more balanced: textbook writers attempted to give their readers a sense of the 'peculiarities of the French.' But the vocabulary of 'race' remained, and so did the lack of attention to Canada's First Nations or to immigrants.

The political history of Canada in the 1970s and the 1980s provoked a widening of perspectives among Canadian historians, but by the time this new historiography had sufficiently jelled to make its way into textbooks, textbooks had fallen out of fashion. The very concept of the textbook as repository of common cultural knowledge was being replaced by a child-centred view of learning. The contents of Canadian history texts from the 1940s to the 1960s may give pause today to those who pine for a return to textbooks as repositories of common knowledge: textbooks grounded in

stereotyping did not lessen tensions among ethnic groups in Canada. In fact, by spreading stereotypes and branding some Canadians as "Others," it may be argued that they contributed rather to hinder the finding of common grounds among Canada's peoples.