Tradition dictates that the organizers of our annual conference choose the Southam lecturer for a specific reason. The choice of the first lecturer, Anthony Smith, opened a window on European social thinking. The following year, Jacques Godbout, a media professional and social critic of considerable experience, was invited to address the present state of the art of media production and practices. Last year, Dallas Smythe was chosen in order to pay homage to an outstanding teacher and founding father of Canadian communication studies. Why this year's lecturer was chosen leaves me dumbfounded, a feeling that is no doubt shared by most of you. Whatever the reason, I dared not wait for the organizers to explain their decision and immediately undertook to give this lecture a particular twist.

For reasons I will explain presently, I would like to submit to you my personal appraisal of the scientific research in communication that has been carried out in Quebec and Canada over the past 20 odd years. My outlook on this topic is neither that of an endorser nor of a censor. My understanding does not stem from systematic enquiry nor from the collection of empirical data. It is based rather on the written accounts of, or conversations with people I hold in high esteem. They as individuals are more sensitive to seasonal variations in the colours of the scientific landscape than to short-term meteorological fluctuations. They prefer to assess time rather than to measure it.

As a consequence, I will quote a small number of observers and will not resort to a referendum of opinions. Since I do not intend to be judgmental but instead to give you my personal opinion, I invite those whose contributions I ignore not to be offended since those I am about to quote will certainly be distressed.

Anniversaries (1986-90)

Let us begin by noting a partial list of past and future communication related anniversaries in Quebec which will be celebrated and forgotten:
- The 25th anniversary of the first privately owned communication research firm in Quebec: le Centre de recherche sur l'opinion publique: CROP (1965);
- the 20th anniversary of the Department of Communication Studies at Concordia University (1968);
The 1987 Southam Lecture/Roger de la Garde

- the 20th anniversary of the D.O.C. in Ottawa (1968) and of the ministère des communications in Quebec (1969);
- the 20th anniversary of the first courses offered in communication studies (1968) at the universities of Montreal and Laval;
- the 15th anniversary (1973-74) of the Department of Communication Studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal;
- the 15th anniversary (1974) of the first post-graduate programme in Quebec at McGill; the 10th anniversary (1976) of the first PhD. programme at McGill;
- the 15th anniversary (1974) of the Institut International de Communication in Montreal;
- the 10th anniversary (1980) of the creation of the Association de recherches en communication du Quebec (ARCQ);
- the 10th anniversary (1978) of the publication on a regular basis of Communication et Information;
- the 10th anniversary (1977) of the first French-language bibliographical data bank: BIBLIOCOM and BADICOM;
- and the first of a long series of anniversaries of the joint PhD. programme in communication studies in Quebec (1987).

With so many causes to celebrate, it is only fitting that we open our family albums and recall the good old pioneer days. To trace the evolution of communication teaching and research in Canada with particular emphasis on Quebec, I will rely heavily on the work of three colleagues: Liora Salter from Simon Fraser, Jean-Guy Lacroix and Benoit Levesque from the Université du Québec at Montreal.

The birth of communication studies in Quebec (1957-1967)

The development of communication studies in Quebec has passed through two phases which can roughly be described as the birth of the discipline (1957-1967) followed by its institutionalization (1968 to the present). The first period was marked and propelled by a host of social transformations arising from the Quiet Revolution, whereas the second was influenced by two specific social demands. Between 1968 and 1974 the institutionalization of the discipline was moulded by the need for research at the state level. Since 1975, in contrast, there has been a trend toward the commercialization of cultural production and increasing demand for social control both of which have had an important impact on research and teaching. (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:7).

During the first development phase, in the ten year period from 1957-1967, there was no university research or teaching centre featuring communication studies. There were however a number of "echo chambers": the Centre catholique national, Radio-Canada's research division, the Institut canadien de
l'éducation des adultes (ICEA), the aforementioned CROP and journals such as Cite Libre, Liberte, Parti Pris and Socialisme. The birth of communication research in Quebec was accomplished with the help of these "echo chambers" which themselves were embedded in the Quiet Revolution which transformed Quebec society.

1960's research in the so-called field of "social communication" was carried out amidst such major events as the invasion of television, journalists' strikes at Radio-Canada and at La Presse, media monopolies and McLuhanism (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:7-8). During the decade, Quebec revamped and "modernized its state apparatus," applied democratic principles, created a Department of Cultural Affairs, intervened in cultural and communication matters and launched what intellectuals like Fernand Dumont and Guy Rocher call a full-fledged "cultural revolution" (Simard, 1984:151). That period also witnessed the privatization of the broadcast media when Telemetropole was granted the first private broadcasting license in 1961 (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:8).

During this period also, the first generation of Laval-trained social scientists became Quebec public servants. To transform their society they sought inspiration in Lerner and Pyels' communally based development model as well as the Scandinavian idea of social co-management. A good illustration of the thinking of the time is to be found in the epic programs planned by the Bureau d'Aménagement de l'Est du Québec. Communications - meaning the mass media - were considered one of the driving forces of modernization and thus a prerequisite for national and regional development. Today of course such a definition of the Promethean role of communications in national development is known to be misleading and constitutes an exercise in nostalgia, a quest for the déjà vu. It must be remembered though that during the period in question the driving force behind this collective turmoil was the will of a great many people to change the social order in many parts of the world. Intense verbal and physical manifestations were at work as much in societies on the threshold of post-industrialization - meaning those entering the information society - as in those societies engaged in the process of decolonization. Their discourse became a constant source of inspiration for those who planned the development of Quebec society, including the planning of cultural affairs.

The institutionalization of communication studies (1968 to present)

In Quebec, as elsewhere, the powerful socio-political impulses of the 1960's revamped and strengthened the processes of institutionalization which were led by a newly developing state apparatus. A result of this process, founded on
the rules of the market economy and guided by policies of state interventionism, was to "naturalize" i.e., to render common or trite the concept of "communications." Media and their social role became more and more identified with economics and industry, turning them imperceptibly into "cultural industries." Only after this institutionalization process was accomplished did an alternative definition of "communication" - in terms of its social practices - begin to circulate, in a covert fashion, among academics. And in spite of this seminal equation between communications and social practices, the universities' role as instruments of institutionalization and "naturalization" of the field of communication studies, were greater than their role as leaders in the public debate on the interpretative impact of communications. The only true public debate on these matters was held by a Quebec Parliamentary Commission on media ownership in 1972-73 whose painstaking verbal trashing produced a non-report. On the other hand, the report that did play a decisive role in the elaboration of a studies and research programme in social communication was not the result of a public debate but of a poll undertaken by a private firm (SORECOM, 1973).

All in all, communication studies in Quebec emerged during the great public debates of the 50's and 60's revolving around political and economic nationalism and the ensuing identity crisis. These debates and crises were not solely caused by Quebec. They were inspired as much by decolonization efforts elsewhere, by the war in Vietnam as by the May '68 events and the counter-culture manifestations epitomized at Woodstock. Only after state institutionalization and intervention had occurred did communications processes suddenly become important meriting planning, studies and research, because their control potentials were recognized.

Such a contextualization favoured a definition of "communications" as an "object of scientific enquiry," as a "problematic." It encouraged an academic framework where communications were defined in mechanistic terms and seen as a "professional practice." In other words, communications issues were conceived as some sort of social mechanism that ought to be improved or repaired from time to time.

Hence the necessity to train communication "engineers" and "mechanics." In so doing, it cannot be denied that thinking and research in the field of communications became limited in scope and in orientation. It is probably fair to say that certain research paths were less easy to follow in this social climate than others. In Lacroix and Levesque's words:

...the rapid expansion of a great many interlinked communication networks - an expansion made possible by the development of a wide range of techniques for transmitting and stockpiling visual images - brought to mind the idea that social communication implies a series of
media, techniques and practices, all of which are linked in a global information-communication network that spreads throughout society (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:9).

In an era characterized by assertions of all kinds, individual, national, cultural and political - and by the corresponding offshoot of collective and self identity - a kind of division of labour was devised between the welfare state and the mass media: whereby it behooved the entrepreneurial welfare state to ensure that people "fared well" as a labour force, as consumers and as a clearly identifiable social body. To achieve these ends a rapidly developing mass media sector was required. To paraphrase Philip Schlesinger (1987), channelling all these new energies into a controlled effort of economic and cultural development is possible only if people are adequately pre-formed and informed. Hence the important role of medial technologies in journalism, culture and education. The mass media's effectiveness were further increased with the aid of telecommunications technologies.

According to Lacroix and Levesque,

...in the process of institutionalization which was launched in '68-'69 the state played a crucial role in two instances: in the first, by devising mechanisms of state control in the field of communications and in the second, by legislating in a manner that made the different levels of research [and I would add of teaching] in communication dependent upon commercial necessities (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:9).

Privately owned firms in Quebec, such as CROP, SORECOM and Multi-Reso, as well as academic departments of communication studies and research were the main agents in this process of institutionalization (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:9). But they weren't the only ones. Lacroix and Levesque point out the important contributions of the Centre catholique national du cinéma, de la radio et de la télévision (now called L'office des communications sociales), of the research divisions of Radio-Canada and Radio-Quebec, of the Regie des services publics, of the CRTC, and of the federal and Quebec Department of Communication with their research and development branches. Added to these there were what the authors call "alternative research centres in communication" such as the Institut canadian d'education des adultes (ICEA), the labour unions and professional associations whose impact is more difficult to assess. As a result, the prevailing research approaches as well as teaching commitments in communications stemmed from the social sciences. They favoured content analysis methodologies and the study of the "psychological, cultural and economic effects of the media" (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:18). Many state requested studies focused on new technologies and a few adopted a critical stance. In the shadow of this mainstream theoretical model only a few isolated individuals or ad hoc groups are working in areas such as media and development, social discourse, and the political economy of the mass media and the social implications of telecommunications technologies.
The proposed creation of a joint PhD. programme in Montreal following the state's 1983 elaboration of a scientific policy on communications and the birth of various joint industry-university institutes specializing in communication research (such as L'institut national d'optique and le Centre de recherche en bureautique de langue française) mark the end, so to speak, of the process of institutionalization of communication research in Quebec. "The institutional breeding ground for research in communication in Quebec" was henceforth accomplished, and this breeding ground is reserved for state and industry joint ventures that respect "commercial imperatives" (Lacroix and Levesque, 1985a:23).

Thus, and notwithstanding the very real contribution of "alternative" research models and experiments in some academic institutions, the global institutional situation in Quebec today favours research emphasizing the social control dimensions of communications practices as required by commerce and government. The economics of the media are controlled "for their own good, i.e. to guarantee their profitability" by state and industry-approved organizations (Caplan Sauvageau, 1986:42). The marketing of mass media products is carried out by privately owned firms which supply producers with data on "social demand," on "consumer trends," on the "subconscious desires" of individuals, all conceptualized in terms of commercial strategies for specific products aimed at identifiable target groups. Both the privately owned and the public media assess their impact in terms of observed behaviour and attitude "changes" in their consumer audiences, thanks to services rendered by firms specializing in broadcast measurement and opinion polling. Media and advertising agencies utilise the same content analyses, communication policy analyses, technological development forecasts because they are part of the same system in which audiences are sold to industry.

Mass media producers take advantage of advice and "positive" critiques given by in-house experts (journalists and programme hosts), by psychologists, sociologists, economists, lawyers - all of whom boast some form of expertise in communications, ranging from the fiscal to the symbolic implications of a given communication practice. Most of these experts are found in publicly funded universities and are relatively well aware of the importance of promoting the Canadian "cultural industries" both nationally and provincially. They also agree that these industries need protection from public indifference and the voracious appetite of the U.S. neighbour. Finally, the media can count on academic and professional training programmes in communications, from the CEGEP to the Ph.D. level, which turn out an abundant labour force to fill jobs in journalism, advertising, public relations, research and related community work. The lifeline for these programmes are the university faculties which give
several hundred courses and seminars annually, supervise several dozen theses and produce well over a hundred articles, reports and lectures. Thousands of students are enrolled in full-time or part-time communications studies. Considering that in 1968, Quebec was endowed with one research centre (Radio-Canada), one privately owned opinion poll firm (CROP), its first communication studies department (Concordia), its first CEGEP (Jonquières) and university (Laval) programmes in journalism, a newly-born CRTC and a brand new Canadian broadcasting policy, one must admit that the growth achieved in the past twenty years has been impressive.

In all likelihood the same inventory could be made for the rest of Canada. Only the scale would differ. The same institutional integration of economic, political, professional and academic agents surely took place. The same ideological purposes were no doubt equally involved: to consolidate and control as adequately as possible an area of activity which is both economic and cultural in nature, and to do so under the banner of commodification and in pursuit of Canada's national identity.

The contemporary socio-political context for communication studies in Quebec

It is not my intention to criticize the institutionalization of the field of communications nor its purposes. But I do want to insist on one of the consequences of this institutionalization. I say "consequences" and not "effects," for I do not believe that there is a causal link between the process I am referring to and the object I want to consider, namely the basis of communication studies in Quebec and Canada. Institutionalization not only robbed the concept of "communication" of all its originality, it also eliminated the fundamental purpose of academic pursuits in this field: that of raising questions which are historically grounded as opposed to universal. The particular institutionalization processes described also precluded an analysis of the power struggle which has been waged over who determines people's interpretations of their daily experience.

Intellectuals and researchers, whether they be academics or not, have furthermore been hampered by institutional policies which devalue research. Budget cuts, heavy teaching loads especially at the undergraduate level, etc. encourage "problem-solving" research in which the "problems" to be investigated are often pre-selected by the granting organization. "Issue related" research in such an environment is put off to a later date, or to the next annual conference of the two communications associations (ARCQ and CCA).
"So, what else is new?" you may say. We've heard this old refrain over and over again from those who will not admit that "times they are a' changing," that intellectual endeavours have entered an era of specialization, that what we need today are fewer words and more deeds, that there is little to be done and excellent work being produced in spite of everything. It is obvious that times have changed, that excellent work is being done, that a younger, better prepared and more competent generation is taking over, and that pseudo-scientific buzz-talk should never be mistaken for a truly intellectual discourse. The question I want to raise is the following: in the present context, what is the original and particular contribution of our scientific community to the development of knowledge? More specifically, what is this scientific community teaching us, as individuals and as members of a society, that other sciences, arts or conventional wisdom have not yet taught us? Let us rephrase this question in the words used by Liora Salter in the conclusion to her article:

...is there another approach to communication studies, an approach which would encompass, as well as the objects already associated with the field, the global study of society as it can be observed from a communication angle? And if such is the case, how can this wider perspective be made compatible with more conventional research theories? (Salter, 1983:58). [And, I would add with the theory-building efforts of contemporary research.]

To ask whether the scope of communication studies encompasses the study of communicative practices in society is to raise the question whether there is a discipline, or a science of communication based on a recognizable paradigm and on a body of issues that polarize researchers in this field. Liora Salter's answer to these questions is "yes." She does however point out that there is a fault of sorts in the proclamation that there is a communication "discipline." This fault can be traced to the very circumstances that gave rise to communication studies. As with studies on the status of women, on the environment, on informatics, etc., communication studies, in Canada and in Quebec, are characterized by "an orientation that ties scientific work with social and governmental policies," and shows "an obvious relationship between knowledge and its applications to the social and economic context" and that binds "academic research and industrial applications of knowledge" (Salter, 1983:39). Hence the normative bent of the field. With the advent of the '80's and its widespread policy of budget cuts, pressure is being applied to abandon "philosophical and social issues and to pay more attention to the new information systems and their applications" (Salter, 1983:40).

This is what Liora Salter calls the "normalization" of the discipline, the academic anointment, as it were. According to her, normalization is essential for the survival of a discipline but it also threatens the value of scientific work
by making research more subservient to non-academic imperatives. This warning was relevant in 1983, it should be heeded even more in 1987 when budget cuts and external pressures are on the upswing. Thus we must ask ourselves if communication studies - as a field where scientific work, politics and social policies are closely linked, and as an intellectual discipline whose study of society is based on a recognizable paradigm and on its accompanying body of issues that polarize the attention of researchers - have not been deflected from their raison d'être by the present popularity of their academic offerings and by the successful application of communications theory to the solution of social and economic problems.

Let us suppose, for the purposes of discussion, that our scientific community is forging ahead in spite of budget cuts and external pressures and that it is pursuing the objective of establishing a recognizable paradigm. There still remains the question of how we will recognize such a paradigm i.e., how we will know that we have, indeed, produced such a paradigm. Liora Salter's answer is twofold. First, she identifies the specific characteristics of Canadian research in communication studies and in so doing draws the line, on the one hand, between communication studies and other more traditional scientific disciplines and, on the other hand, between communication studies in Canada and in the United States and Europe. Canadian and Quebecois researchers in communication studies:

- seem to combine a strongly theoretical orientation with surprisingly pragmatic goals often tied to concrete policy issues;
- emphasize organic ties between the private and public sectors;
- are more interested in the media as a system than its particular contents, more interested in the regulatory apparatus than the particular effects of the media;
- are more interested in specific events or in cultural issues and are more inclined to take historical and cultural characteristics into account; whereby the real - although implicit - object of communication studies is none other than Canada and/or Quebec.

In Liora Salter's view, neither "questions of consciousness" (typical of European studies) nor factors which influence the dissemination of information (typical of American studies) interest Canadian researchers. Rather, it is questions raised by Innis and the ensuing analysis of "the relationship between technology and political systems,' between the social experiment and its economic and technological framework" which typify Canadian communication studies (Salter, 1983:48). I will suggest further that a certain shift - at least as far as Quebec research is concerned - has occurred which privileges questions of consciousness linked with problems related to national identity.
Liora Salter's second answer to the question of the "recognizability" of the paradigm is to point out the specificity of the communication discipline's methodological approaches. More than a methodology, it's a "methodological orientation" which characterizes it and which can be seen at work in the discourse analyses which underlie even the most marginal of researches. But a "methodological orientation," even widely shared, does not constitute a paradigm which can serve as the basis for an intellectual discipline. The tie between different endeavours must be something other than methodology, it must be of the order of a problematic. What then is the problematic of Canadian communication studies, understood in terms of a specific intellectual discipline? If, as suggested by Liora Salter, "most disciplines are defined by the emphasis they place on a particular aspect of culture or by the particular orientation they choose regarding the study of culture [...] Communications, as a specific type of cultural study [...] the study of the different ways information is made meaningful for those who produce it, distribute it or use it, by focusing on the processes of meaning and interpreting [...] and of the ways in which information becomes a message, both from the point of view of its transmission and that of the impact of technological and contextual factors on the content of its message [...] i.e. the relationship between what is experienced, understood, and the social context" (Salter, 1983:55-57). In sum, "communication refers to a process of construction and reconstruction of reality, of culture, of the social discourses and their underlying logics [...] communications studies in Canada could be defined as cultural studies" (Salter, 1983:55-58).

But Liora Salter's article published in 1983 and the Caplan Sauvageau report published in 1986 are worlds apart. Culture is still a prevalent issue in the report but compared with the Salter article it takes on a totally different meaning. If one reads the report and the annexed papers (a notable exception: economist Abraham Rotstein's study) one is struck by the degree to which the "normalization" of the relationship between industry and knowledge has taken place to the detriment of disinterested scientific work. The time has perhaps come to set a new balance and to take up once again the quest for a problematic common to all Canadian communications researchers and scholars. The task at hand is not, perhaps, to question Liora Salter's postulate that Canadian communication studies is the study of culture, but to ask ourselves why the present context has rendered such a postulate non-operative: not in the sense that culture is no longer a pertinent issue but, rather, why the study of communications as "culture" is presently perceived as suspicious and obsolete. Even such "safe" topics as the "cultural industries" - the very "indecency" of the concept makes it an intellectual challenge in itself - are no longer an object of debate and even less of theoretical research.
The point I wish to make is if Liora Salter's contention that the unity of a discipline lies in its problematic and if such a problematic in Canadian and Quebecois studies has been, could have been or should be an "aspect of culture" is well-founded, it is puzzling to note the relative scarcity of literature in this area. As Jean-Pierre Desaulniers reminds us, culture is "a logic actively engaged in the production of differences" (1987:152). Canada and Quebec exist only through the efforts both have made over more than a century to identify their differences and especially those differences that might exist between each and their common American neighbour. A great number of papers and reports are written on the production and marketing of Canadian and Quebecois cultural "goods" and on the benefits of such production and marketing. A great deal has also been said on the import and extensive purchase of foreign i.e. American, products and the dangers of such a "cultural" deficit. Too often however, "cultural products" are synonymous with "Made in Canada" or in "French Quebec." And too often, the hazards involved in consuming "foreign" i.e., American-made cultural products are set out in terms of acculturation, i.e. Americanization.

What must remain the central issue for researchers are the concepts of "culture" and "identity" and the relationship between these concepts and actual practices both in industries which are effectively engaged in the production of differences and by ordinary people who "dis-engage" from industrial logic according to the dictates of a different logic anchored in their daily lives. In other words, we are prone to take for granted that culture exists, that it must be protected and that in order to protect it we must bend over backwards to make things as easy as possible for industrial champions of cultural defence, namely the media and advertising agencies. At the same time we forget that those industries are first and foremost commercial enterprises which benefit from equating our cultural interests with their entrepreneurial interests.

In sum, taxpayers are asked in the name of cultural differences to rally around the flag of a Canadian-Quebecois culture. They are asked to make their contribution to the war effort of politicians and entrepreneurs, against the enemies of our cultural state and for the sole benefit of looking at themselves in the mirror of the mass media, so as not to forget who they are. Furthermore, whenever a public or private organization or even a few researchers take it upon themselves to ask: "what is culture" in the hope of elucidating the mystery of our national identity, they immediately proceed to analyzing the structure of the mirror, and its content, without ever casting a glance at the people in front of the mirror. It is too readily assumed that culture, especially national culture, can be reduced to the equation between an onlooker - or voyeur - and his or her reflection. Such thinking assumes:
that cultural activities are acts of intellectual recognition whereby the true Canadian or true Quebecois recognizes his or her culture. Canadians and Quebecois don't know what their culture is but they sure can recognize it. This is better know as the "I'll know it when I see it" syndrome;

(2) that culture, by definition, is static. It is an object that exists somewhere, has always existed since it belongs to tradition and must not be left out of sight.

That is the reason why we have specially designated people to remind us of such things from time to time and if we sometimes fail to recognize our culture under outdated trappings, special culture-preserving agents will dress it up according to the latest fashion, or, if need be, give it a face lift. Thus Quebecois culture, for example, can be seen in rock music as well as in the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, in our multi-billion dollar "hold up" i.e., the Hydro dams as well as in our billion dollar "cover up" i.e., the Montreal Olympic Stadium.

From the "distinct" broadcast report by Caplan-Sauvageau to the "distinct society" of the Meech Lake agreement

It is interesting, I would even say fascinating, to compare Chapter 3 of the Caplan-Sauvageau Report, entitled "French-speaking radio and television" with the communique issued at Meech Lake. Both documents attempt more or less implicitly to define Quebec, and by inference, Canada. The Report makes reference to a "particular" society and the communique, to a "distinct" society. Both point to the French language as a distinctive trait. According to some experts who spoke before the Commission on Parliamentary Institutions in Quebec, French is the main distinctive feature of Quebec society within confederation. And why the French language? No one suggests that the whole of the Quebecois culture is reducible, or equated, to the French language. But many agree that the French language represents a unique breeding ground for the production of cultural reference points and differentiation in Quebec, "a logic which (can) actively engage in the production of differences."

Now this, it seems to me is an ideal topic for communication researchers; the analysis of public documents whose different authors suggest that the distinctive feature of a given society is not technological in nature but cultural and who furthermore contend that the distinctive feature of a given technology, namely radio technology, is also of a cultural nature. In other words, it is not radio technology, be it French-speaking or not, which defines culture in Quebec: it's the other way around. If this is the case, it is time to abandon the present theoretical models which have encouraged us to believe that culture is static and the media dynamic, and which have led us to measure and evaluate
the effects of the dynamic in terms of the static. The time has come to turn that perspective end over end and to realise that mass media institutions are static. In spite of their advanced distribution networks and technology, the media are slow and ponderous bureaucracies. It is culture which should be seen as dynamic. Such an about-face would focus our research efforts on the process of de-construction and re-construction of the mass mediated processes of communication, it would rediscover the user, the receiver, men and women as subjects rather than as objects. We would thus be compelled to speak to the user instead of about the user, to recognize his or her logic which is neither the media's nor, let us hope, the scientist's. If culture belongs neither to the media nor to scientists, it belongs to those who produce it, that is, to ordinary people. They should perhaps be given the opportunity to address the subject.

I am not saying we should open the doors to outrageous forms of subjectivism which would reject careful analysis and discard acquired scientific knowledge. In particular, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are hierarchies, that power struggles are at work, that there are structural forms of domination and that strategies of resistance are at play in the logic of culture. A culture is distinct not only in comparison to other cultures but also in comparison to itself. Which means that if Quebec culture can be recognized by its particular logic of differentiation and if that logic is actively at work in a given language, then it might well be that its cultural practices are formed in reaction to other linguistic logics spoken outside as well as inside the Quebec landscape. If Quebecers share "ways of thinking, doing things, feeling or being" that differentiate them from others, it can be said that such "ways" were devised, so to speak, and continue to be devised, because Quebecers are showing resistance to something. Unless one considers Quebec as perfectly homogeneous, the reality of several different cultural logics within Quebec society must be recognized as well as the preponderance of one of them. If "Quebec culture" corresponds to something real, it's because one logic is "actively engaged in producing differences" - one culture - has been institutionalized to give it a dominant status and to create the institutions to legitimize its dominance.

If culture is dynamic, it is because several logics are interacting within any historical time and space. This is especially true within the two major culture-producing institutions: the mass media and the educational system. It is here that communication scholars need to search for a unifying problematic.

An inconclusive conclusion

Before ending this lecture, I must explain the meaning of its title: "Mr. Innis, is there life after the American Empire? The reference to Denys
Arcand's latest film "Le déclin de l'empire américain" (The Decline of the American Empire) is obvious and some will no doubt believe that I sought reflected glory from the success of this film. In fact, there are two readings of this title. First, it may refer to our witnessing the "decline" of the empire professor Innis described in the closing paragraphs of his inaugural presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada in 1947:

The Industrial Revolution and mechanized knowledge have all but destroyed the scholar's influence. Force is no longer concerned with his protection and is actively engaged in schemes for his destruction. Enormous improvements in communication have made understanding more difficult. Even science, mathematics, and music as the last refuge of the Western mind have come under the spell of the mechanized vernacular. Commercialism has required the creation of new monopolies in language and new difficulties in understanding. Even the class struggle, the struggle between language groups, has been made a monopoly of language (Innis, 1951:30-31).

The quotation might corroborate Innis' pessimistic outlook - to wit: "These hurried and uncertain flights (from Constantinople) have left (Minerva's owl) little energy and have left it open to attack from numerous enemies" (Innis:30). But on the other hand, to use Innis' own words, could the title not also be construed as a "plea for consideration of the oral tradition as a basis for a revival of effective vital discussion" and effective democracy (Innis:32)? In other words, isn't Innis asking us to escape the spell of the "mechanized vernacular" represented by the study and the politics of the mass media industries, in favour of studying the logics involved in ordinary people's production and communication of culture?

The lecture title can be read in a second way (and here I am about to tread on dangerous ground). It may refer to the decline of the intellectual empire which Innis' disciples have built within Canadian communication studies. Empires rise and fall and the scientific community is not immune to the "cultural disturbances" that pave the way for new empires. Have we embarked on a sea of intellectual calm following the rise of the Innis empire within the scientific community and are we falling prey to the "commodification of knowledge" with its monopolistic discourse or are we on the eve of renewing our problematic, even if it means living through a period of "disturbances," of vigorous debates...and of democracy?

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* Translation by Michel de Repentigny, Laval University.


