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Advertisers' Index

Editor

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Legally Speaking

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not evident as I happened to spy the book one day in our warehouse. Imagining a collection of short stories, one of which obviously had to do with Beaver Cleaver's long overdue revenge against Eddie Haskell, I was naturally quite surprised to find this to be a scholarly but wonderfully entertaining look at the differences between American and Canadian pop culture as seen through Canadian eyes.

Unlike most of the Canadian-authored comparisons between American and Canadian cultures I have read, which tend to be defensive and nationalistic, the essays in this book actually identify and celebrate the differences between the two popular cultures. The central theme of these essays, to the extent that there is such a theme, is that neither Canadians nor Americans understand and appreciate those differences. Canadians tend to

see the relationship as one of domination and submission, cultural hegemony. Americans tend to be generally oblivious to the matter.

The editors and authors of this book seek to refute the domination-submission perspective. They do so by examining various elements of Canadian popular culture, including literature, sports, television, and theater, as well as broader trends in the merchandising and consumption of popular culture, finding in each something uniquely Canadian despite the large American presence. Most of the authors suggest that while Canadians may import vast quantities of American pop culture, they only take from that culture what they want. Into all they import, Canadians inject a bit of their Canadian selves, even if only from the perspective with which they view American programs, movies, etc. In other words, the Canadian identity is much stronger than even the Canadians acknowledge; strong enough to be able to enjoy Ameri-

can culture without being subsumed by it. Exposure to American sports and entertainment products, with their emphasis on individual efforts and heroics, consumerism, and unambiguous moral boundaries, has not altered the fundamentally Canadian values of "state capitalism, social democracy, middle-class morality, regional identities, official multiculturalism, the True North, the parliamentary system, institutional compromise, international neutrality, and so on."

The Beaver Bites Back? opens with a wonderful story of how the Fathers of the Canadian Confederation had intended that their country would combine the best of their ancestors and neighbors, meaning French culture, British politics, and American technology. Unfortunately, the plan went horribly awry and Canada wound up with French politics, British technology, and American culture. This is indicative of the self-deprecating style found in many of the essays. Still, in highlighting the real differences between Canadian and American culture, and by not being threatened by those differences, I think that the authors in this text convey a genuine pride in Canadian culture. I recommend this book to you not only as a glimpse at Canadian cultural identity, but also as an opportunity to view American culture through the eyes of our closest neighbor. That view is not always flattering, but it is enlightening. With the passage of NAFTA, we have moved a step closer to North American economic integration. In that context, every bit of cross-cultural understanding and appreciation we can manage is worthwhile. ☛

And They Were There

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Tom feels they might cause problems fulfilling the other principles.

Jo Anne Deeken expressed the opinion that small libraries with small budgets receive lower discounts. She told of a small private college consortium in North Carolina which has formed an association as a single buying group, and thought this an idea for others to consider. Jo Anne reminded us that discounts are not everything, but that fulfillment, service and delivery time are also important factors.

The topic of discussion for the next meeting in Miami will be "what does it cost to buy a book, without being charged for any other vendor services?" ☛

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