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The question of Canadian culture continues to fascinate many Canadians. First, they are moved to defend it from the few who disparage it (mostly Canadians) and then to define it for the many who ignore it (mostly Americans).

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Robert Fulford, Editor of the magazine Saturday Night, spoke at length on the subject at the recent biennial meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States. He is an articulate spokesman for one point of view. In a future issue, we will present the somewhat different view of Canada's celebrated novelist, Mordecai Richler, on the same subject.

Is Canada a Cultural Suburb? [AND JONI MITCHELL JUST A SUBURBAN HOUSEWIFE?]

Canada does exist in the American mind; Americans do know that the land mass to the north of them exists as a separate state. But . . . Canada has for Americans, on both a political and cultural level, no clear identity. . . . Canadian culture gets into the United States in various ways, and at certain times it is accepted and embraced, but not as *Canadian* culture. . . . When Canadian culture arrives in the United States, in the form of persons or books or ideas, it is accepted readily as what it apparently is, a form of American culture. On television, for instance, Lorne Greene of *Bonanza* played the American father-figure to a generation of western-lovers, and it mattered to no one that he was from Canada. Nor does it matter that the people who made a film like *Fiddler on the Roof* . . . are Canadians trained in the Toronto studios of the CBC. . . . Canadians, like Leonard Cohen, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell, are easily assimilated by American popular culture. Were the Englishmen or Englishwomen adopting American modes and conquering them — as say, John Lennon has done, this fact would be remarked upon. . . .



Equally, when cultural ideas move south from Canada, their origin is usually forgotten. The most widely discussed event in American television this season is surely the cinema verite series called *An American Family*. In the thousands of American words I've read about this singular event, there has not been any mention of the fact that *An American Family* is, in approach and execution, almost a direct copy of Allan King's 1970 Canadian film, *A Married Couple*. It is this . . . which shapes English-speaking Canada and makes us feel at times like a suburb of America. Perhaps it is helpful if we think of cultural expression — that is, the fine arts and mass culture — as a kind of mirror for the existence of the people who use it. Americans, for instance, can look into both their fine arts and their mass media and see a reflection of themselves — it may be a reflection distorted by the neuroses of the artists or the commercial opportunism of the people who own the mass media; but, distorted or not, it is a version of themselves. But what if a society looks into the mirror and never sees itself? This is the situation