

surface problems which are manifestations of deeper distress.

In the case of the United States, the American ethic dictates a very large concentration on self-interest and self-centeredness. United States scholars have long tended to study trouble spots and spots of obvious (preferably exotic) interest because of their distinctiveness. In each country, the vast majority of citizens are sure that they know all they need to know about the other, without any real grounds for their certainty. Both are misled by the superficial and most easily observable similarities into believing that the other culture is much like their own. In the case of Canadians, this temptation is all the stronger because of the deluge of random informational material which descends on every home and every office from across the border. Unfortunately, we in Canada seldom stop to realize that this information is indeed random in nature and fails to provide us with any definitive knowledge about the key characteristics of the American culture.

For there is an American culture; and I believe that there is also a Canadian culture. We stand on the brink of the very most dangerous kind of misunderstanding -- that in which each side has unwarranted certainty that it understands. Until we convince the mass of the public in each nation that the other is really foreign and that, in spite of the superficial similarities, there lie beneath this crust clear outlines of a distinctive and interestingly different culture, we shall fail to really understand one another's point of view for we shall often fail to bring any degree of realism to our dealings with each other. An even more practical point in terms of this study is the fact that until our distinctiveness and foreign-ness are established, the United States public is going to have no appetite for information about Canadian culture. Schools, after all, are public and social institutions. They tend to reflect the appetites -- and lack of appetites -- that exist among the general public.