Locality and Universalization

Where is Canadian Studies?

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When I finished *A Border Within* I felt somewhat satisfied with the argument that I had made proposing a certain shift in English Canadian social and political thought from a focus on "nation, state regulation and identity" toward "social movements, diversity and civil society." The continuity in this argument was the philosophical concept of "particularity" which I claimed was the *binding-together* of the tradition and which I attempted to develop further through a focus on the concepts of "border" and "wilderness." However, in making this argument, I relied on certain other concepts which were operational but not thematically articulated. One of the most important of operational concepts was "locality," whose role as an explication of the concept of particularity was assumed rather than demonstrated. The argument was thus, in terms that I will later propose, incompletely post-colonial. I will take up here the challenge of conceptualizing "locality" in a manner adequate to the argument about the English Canadian intellectual tradition, to current Canadian politics, and to the prospects for tying Canadian Studies to an emergent radical democratic and ecological politics of social movements.

In taking up the question of the concept of "locality," the argument will press toward a clearer articulation of the emergence of universalizations from a particular tradition. This tension—up and down, we might say, or back and forward—not only cannot be avoided but is a necessary aspect of trying to *think* here. Insofar as thought requires categories that supercede their application, the moment of universalization cannot be avoided. Insofar as application is not mere application of pre-existing categories, but rather generates potential categories that would situate the tradition of thought as an application of itself, the moments of universalization and particularization are mutually implicated. There develops a tension between two poles such that when one is pushed to a greater extreme, the other follows. In turning to the concept of locality, which has hidden behind arguments about Canada and the
world, one is pushed to re-frame the world through universalizations deriving from our particularity.

I will argue that the recent turn to locality in philosophy, politics and social criticism is not a simple mood soon to be replaced by a pendulum swing back to globality, nationality, or universality. Rather, it is a characteristic, innovative and necessary shift of attention that deeply unsettles the assumptions of the social order and that has a privileged place both in the Red Tory tradition of English Canadian thought and in that of contemporary social movements. It thus contains the possibility of a discovery of new relations between locality and universality, between near and distant, in which we may glimpse beyond the limitations of the current social order. Locality is, in this sense, a dis-ordering—a de-construction, if you like—that opens a new possibility. But this new possibility can only become clear if we shake clear of the opposition of locality and universality as settled within the current order, and begin from locality in order to discover the universalizing process from which the distant might be recovered without losing locality. I want to ask: What is a concept of locality that does not submit to an abstract and homogenizing universality? What emergent concept of universalization would not abstract from and dominate locality?

My argument begins from the Red Tory intellectual tradition because this tradition has an intimate relation to the social, economic and cultural history of English Canada. Thought cannot begin from just anywhere, but must start from where one is, and thus from the ideas that have been interwoven with making that place what it is. While I have been criticized for a supposedly conservative attempt to reinforce the near-canonical status of Harold Innis and George Grant, what I am really trying to do is to think outward from this starting-point in our place—whose near-canon has its limitations, but is by no means arbitrary—in an anticipatory way toward a transformed thinking of English Canada that
bears a productive relation to the critical social movements of our time. I am not saying that this is the only place to start, but that one must begin from a thinking that has a historical, epochal, inscription in one's place if one want to participate in the formation of a nation's destiny.

The work of Innis and Grant can be used to create an ideal type of the English Canadian Red Tory intellectual which constitutes the specific form in which a critical, localizing thread has woven itself into English Canadian thought and history. The Red Tory tradition is the way in which a communitarian politics has inserted itself into the politics of our nation and enabled us to survive the destructive individualistic and polarizing effects of capitalism. Its overwhelming rhetorical figure is that of lament, constructed out of an idealized past which has been lost in the present. Its conservative character is based on this look backward which opened up a radical critique of the present world system, which Innis called "space-dominating" and Grant called "technological" and whose main political characteristics were an atomistic liberalism combined with American imperialism. This critique implied a communitarian, even pre-modern, ethical standpoint from which to measure the world system, which Innis found in the notion of an oral tradition, based in face-to-face communication, that emphasized historical continuity and local innovation. The main contribution of Grant was the development of a concept of "particularity" which legitimized non-universal attachments as necessary incarnations of a universal good.

Grant's concept of "particularity" was introduced to defend Canadian autonomy against the international claims of the American empire. As he said, "In this era when the homogenizing power of technology is almost unlimited, I do regret the disappearance of indigenous traditions, including my own. It is true that no particularism can adequately incarnate the good. But is it not also true that only through some particular roots, however
partial, can human being first grasp what is good and it is the juice of such roots which for most men sustain their partaking in a more universal good?" While the main intent of this passage is to defend the legitimacy of particularity, and the task of bringing it to thought, it is also clear that it is not good to be enclosed within a particularism. Here we may distinguish between particularism — which by excluding universality elevates particular experiences to the level of a false universality, and is thus an ethnocentrism, or Fundamentalism—and particularity—which refers to a recovery of the particular from its forgetting, or loss, in such a way that one may both accept and love one's particularity and also "pass beyond" it toward a new universality.

Harold Innis also incorporated a localizing turn into his thinking because the claims to universality were seen as justifying monopolies of knowledge. He argued that "The conservative power of monopolies of knowledge compels the development of technological revolutions in the media of communication in marginal areas." The creativity of marginality was the basis for Innis's re-evaluation of the oral tradition as a hidden source of innovation and stability in Western civilization. In one of his notes he claimed: "Oral tradition more powerful on frontier and penetrates press and newspaper which cuts under conservative elements." It seems that claims to universality are not only exclusive and dominating but that they also require the hidden and unappreciated resources of particularity and locality.

The Red Tory phenomenon is not only a uniquely English Canadian intellectual tradition, it is also expressive of the founding institutional arrangements that brought Canada into being, the relations whereby Canada was, in an active sense, instituted. These features are well-known and I will only mention them quickly here. The East-West spatial extension of the railway and of trade routes was set up by the policies of an interventionist Federal state. The settlement and resource-extraction economy marked a geographical space that was
dominated by a central government embodying a colonial, Dominion, and then
Commonwealth, temporal continuity with the British Empire. This delicate balance between
a rapid geographical expansion that threatened to burst forth from traditional ties was
recuperated by a historical continuity directed by the inheritors of the state-private industry
alliance forged by the Empire. Similarly, there was a tension between the allegiance of
Canadians to their regions, and to the local possibilities that they contained, that was held in
check by a common identity as citizens oriented through the Ottawa axis defining most
political parties and their social goals. Such recuperation and balance was characteristic of
Canada until the recent FTA and NAFTA agreements solidified the breakdown of the
dirigiste East-West axis on which it was based.

Like the Peronist phenomenon in Argentina, the knee-jerk empiricism of the English
character, or the centralizing revolutionary posture of Parisian intellectuals, the Red Tory
phenomenon in English Canada is a social and intellectual formation that both expresses the
institutional arrangements on which it is based and also reinforces the ideational structure
that those institutions need for their continuance. It is thus not only a set of ideas in Canada,
but the set of ideas constitutive of the social formation as such and, consequently, inseparable
from it. The turn toward particularity and locality is a key characteristic of the institution of
(English) Canada as a social formation. As such, it sits uneasily within a Federal framework
that contains a certain residual and traditional conception of universality based on the
Empire-colony relation and later on the nation-state. It is a major issue whether the current
emphasis on locality in social movements can be understood to continue and develop this
tradition such that it may be effective in changed circumstances. These changed
circumstances include the shift away from the monopoly the nation-state has enjoyed since
the 17th century as the main site for political action. Therefore, the critique of Red Toryism
that I will advance resonates with the new political sites that are being invented by contemporary social movements.

I want to argue that there is a contradiction in this tradition insofar as its principled and universal defence of locality was hinged exclusively to a politics oriented to the nation-state. This claim seems to me obviously true, when looking at the work of Grant and Innis as a whole, and even more regarding the left-nationalist politics that drew its inspiration from them. But it is rather difficult to prove and would depend mainly on the claim that there is a slide in their writings, and in their thinking, from the general claim to the instance of the nation-state. While this claim must remain as a hypothesis at present, since it would require a major work to substantiate it adequately, I do want to go into it sufficiently to establish its prima facie probability.

In *Lament for a Nation*, George Grant asked: "How can a faith in universalism go with the desire for the continuance of Canada? The belief in Canada's continued existence has always appealed against universalism. It appealed to particularity against the wider loyalty to the continent." But if an argument for the continued existence of Canada must appeal to the rights of particularity, why cannot the rights of particularity as instantiated in the cities, regions, or elsewhere, be appealed to against the Canadian nation-state? Why, indeed, is the Canadian nation-state any better an example of particularity than the many and diverse local attachments within it, or the other "localities" that have been articulated by social movements?

The slide in the work of Harold Innis is more difficult to locate because, as Grant noted, he was not a philosopher and thus the ethico-political status of his conceptual categories was never broached as an issue. While both an encyclopaedic and original thinker, he remained a social scientist "in the sense that what he asked about anything, past or
present, was how it worked." It is an important methodological, epistemological and ethical question for social science to what extent its conceptual structure can be independent of ethical and political commitments. However this may be in general, I have argued elsewhere that the concepts of "oral tradition" and "empire" in Innis are not only analytical but also ethico-political categories that give such significance to the whole context of his arguments. Consider the following quote, where it is hard to imagine what the effect of the argument would be if its categories were interpreted as independent of ethical and political significance. "The guarantee of freedom of the press under the Bill of Rights in the United States and its encouragement by postal regulations has meant an unrestricted operation of commercial forces and an impact of technology on communication tempered only by commercialism itself. ... Canadian publications supported by the advertising of products of American branch plants and forced to compete with American publications imitate them in format, style and content. Canadian writers must adapt themselves to American standards. Our poets and painters are reduced to the status of sandwich men." Here we can see that the defence of locality and the inventiveness of oral tradition allowed Innis to criticize the suppression of public communication in Canada by American commercialism, even though it is not deployed to criticize commercialism within Canada or elitism within the institutions of the Canadian nation-state. While Innis did recognize the particularity of regions within Canada due to the different histories of staple resource extraction, he tended to subsume this under relations between Canada and the United States. "American branch factories, exploiting nationalism and imperialism in Canada, were in part responsible for agitation in regions exploited by the central area and for regional controversies." But if the case of Innis regarding this purported contradiction remains somewhat contestable, due to the innovative role of the periphery in his thought, it is not so in that of Grant, and even less so
with regard to the left-nationalism that was the main political inheritance of Red Toryism in English Canada and which regarded the nation-state as its central political actor.\textsuperscript{12}

With these quotations and comments I have tried to give some substance to my hypothesis that the Red Tory tradition contains a contradiction: on the one hand, it defends particularity, or localism, in principle and in general; on the other hand, it hinges this defence to a politics oriented exclusively to the national Federal state, which is local only in relation to the imperialistic forces of another state. This contradiction implies an acceptance, even if unstated, of the homogenizing forces of the Canadian nation-state itself and consequently often tends toward an idealized portrayal of its history as if it were less marred by internal violence and colonization than other nation-states. The romantically imagined purity of our one place wipes away the Conquests from which it was born, and its persisting inequality, through the overweening comparison to greater, and perhaps more compromised, international powers. If my claim that the Red Tory tradition limited itself through substituting the Canadian nation-state for locality in general has any validity, it implies that an immanent critique of this tradition both must understand locality in a much wider sense that would tie it to contemporary social movements and also adequately theorize the turn to locality alongside a new, anticipatory concept of universalization.

The achievement of a concept of universality was an \textit{accomplishment} in human history that required the separation of the particularities of a single way of life from an assumed and invisible ethnocentrism. Thus, the move to locality must be understood as a \textit{return}, an attempt to \textit{re-cover} the local, which means that it has been covered up and forgotten. It has been covered up by a formally abstract conception of space and universality that arose with modern science and technology. Within such formal abstraction space is understood as homogeneous and quantitative due to the abstraction from the qualitative differences of
places. Thus, we may distinguish space from place. Any place is arbitrary from the point of view of space and its qualitative components are considered to be simply subjective projections by an internal self without spatial extension.\textsuperscript{13} A recovery of the qualitative experience of place is thus part of a criticism of formal abstraction and of the ceding of practical life to scientific-technical imperatives that is characteristic of modernity.

This has affected the concept of criticism itself. For a long time we have sought to break through the limitations of our place and time toward a larger and more inclusive conception. We say, for example, that we must "get beyond," or "move outside," our preconceptions in order to be able to criticize them, to be able to "see them from a distance" and not be restrained within them. This moving away from oneself toward the distance is perhaps the oldest rhetorical figure in social criticism, older than the specific form it takes in modernity, which relies on an objectivistic form of reflection for the notion of passing beyond one's own particularity towards more universal and inclusive conceptions. Such passing beyond the particular to the universal is inherent in the very idea of a concept which was discovered in Greek antiquity (and is thus probably a necessary moment of thought). We thus see, for example, that people who act very differently from us, who believe in strange gods or forces, are really very much like ourselves when we utilize the capacity to see our own practices, beliefs and gods as particular and local, and therefore as not the only valid form that practices, beliefs and gods can take. Such universality was enlightening precisely because it loosened the connection between the particularities of one's own experience and the conception of human experience outright. One's own became an example, another case study, at the moment that the previously strange other became an example too. The universal, which was previously compacted with one's own in an ethnocentrism that could
not be aware of itself as such, retreated one step in abstraction so that both one's own and the other could be equally valid examples of the universal.

In our own time, it may be that this figure of criticism, and this movement from particular to universal, has come upon a limitation. It is unlikely to be exhausted entirely, since it will always be necessary to discover that one's own ways are not the only human, or reasonable, ways and therefore that others have a right to their ways, and that such ways are equally human as ours. But, there are reasons to now suspect that this figure of criticism, and this conception of philosophy, is not adequate to the tasks that press upon us now, and thus that the concept of enlightenment it legitimates needs to be rethought through the experience of recovering place from objectified space and so to open the possibility of belonging in one's place, rather than merely occupying a certain space.

Contemporary social movements have rediscovered and embraced locality, and have argued against "homogenization," "abstraction" and "top-down solutions," which implies that they anticipate a conception of place that is more than an example, or a case, of a larger plan. The environmental movement has called this "re-inhabitation" and has called for us to live in the world as our home, to live, in Stan Rowe's phrase in our "home place," here.14 There is thus an extraordinary coincidence between environmentalism and the Red Tory tradition. In the words of Gary Snyder, who has been very influential in contemporary environmentalism, "I want to talk about place as an experience and propose a model of what it meant to 'live in place' for most of human time, presenting it initaially in terms of the steps that a child takes growing into a natural community. ... The heart of a place is the home, and the heart of the home is the hearth. All tentative explorations go out from there, and it is back to the fireside that the elders return. You grow up speaking a home language, a local vernacular. ... Our place is part of what we are."15 This suggests that the figure of social
criticism, especially in the environmental/ecological movement, is reversing in the same way that the Red Tory tradition reversed the concern for universality to particularity and here. We no longer need to get beyond, but to "get back," to learn to take ourselves and the particularities of our own experiences as the measure of larger institutions and forces. But this cannot be simply a reversal. The experience of place has been shifted by its previous incorporation into abstract universality. Its recovery must also be a peek beyond—but, perhaps not "beyond" any more; we need to seek new metaphors here—a "gearing into," perhaps, or a "swaying with," the places through which we are defined. In short, this new concept of criticism as recovery of place requires a new concept of universalization that does not simply subsume particularity as an example.

The term "place" as defended by both Red Tories and environmentalists has some limitations which I want to clarify by distinguishing the term "place" from "locality." Even within the environmental movement, where it seems most applicable, the concept of place seems to suggest that there could be an independent republic of Prince George, or of Toronto, whereas such places inevitably require some larger coordination with other places. If independence in the sense of non-connection were the meaning of locality, we would seem to be doomed to rediscover next year the necessity of larger connection and would be stuck with the same forms of administration and institutionalization that have subsumed localities within their plan. Also, if locality is understood to mean a certain area, or place—a here as opposed to a there, the near as opposed to the far—it does not seem applicable to other social movements. The new connection between women that feminism has created is international and not linked to any particular place. Indeed, no movements, not even environmental ones, are restricted to a particular place in this sense. However, what is close, local, to one actor in a social movement is close to other actors as well—wherever they may
be in space. Their world is defined through this nearness, rather than through state or
corporate organizations, and they anticipate a new world in which this nearness becomes a
structuring force, a universalization, in which the world sways to their tune. In this sense,
locality is a key feature of all social movements.

The term "difference" is a more popular "postmodern" way of characterizing
contemporary social movements, which apparently would distinguish them from the
universal claims of earlier movements, such as those for the extension of suffrage. But
difference, and especially all the different differences, seems to imply an unreserved plurality,
and even perhaps the notion that any general characterization must be an illusion or an
imposition by an arbitrarily-chosen difference. The problem here is obvious. If there is no
general characterization, there cannot be differences. They all become Indifferent in the face
of an infinite plurality of differences. This place becomes simply anyplace and the here is just
another there. Or, on the other hand, there arises the problem of Fundamentalism. One may
simply assert that this difference is not like the others. It is fundamental, the measure for all
others. I won't go any further in elaborating the dangers of such a dogmatism. They are all
around us and threaten our common world and common humanity. This dangerous
tendency indicates the fear many feel in the face of the loss of their particular identities for
an abstract universality.

Indifference or Fundamentalism: the new possibility opened by the turn to locality
will be blocked if it remains caught within this false alternative. If locality is thought of as
one place, irrevocably different from others, then it must be a Fundamental place that is cut
off from others, that is autonomous because it is unconnected, and which is suffused by a
resentment that those from "there" do not belong here. Such severance will likely remain an
impossible dream in the interconnected world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,
and has already become a deadly ideology, a vicious fantasy of ethnic or religious purity. Such imagined purity also infects social movements insofar as their critical impulse often seems to depend upon a distorted utopia resembling an Edenic period before we lapsed (unaccountably) into patriarchy or the domination of nature. It often appears as if the only alternative would be indifference to place, viewing my home as just any place, as anywhere in space. What is loosely called post-modern is often just this fear of Fundamentalism that rebounds to embrace nomadism, exile, and a total loss of the significance of place.

Nowadays one is pressed to choose within this false alternative, when the issue of locality is rather how I can inhabit my home place without losing its connection to other places. And, how a new form of universality might emerge from this. Perhaps we can conclude, in a preliminary way, that the recovery of locality is characteristic of the social movements of our time, and that it continues the main emphasis of the Red Tory tradition, but that it also contains a danger of isolationism and Fundamentalism such that it is intimately connected to the recoil into Indifference by many of the population. The way around this danger is to think locality, not as a place, but as that which connects one place to another.

Our dictionaries tend to define locality as a place or site, which no doubt flirts with separatism and purism. I want, rather, not to think place as such, but to think location. If a place were truly separate, or isolate, it could not be located. The term "location" as a verb is better here, meaning "locating" or "being located" (O.E.D.), which connotes an activity of locating and thus contains at least an implicit relation to other places. Location requires a placing in relation to other places. Thus, it is not only a matter of connection, but the connection as it emerges from and defines a specific place. While location retains the reference to a single place, it refers to situating this place in its relation to other places, especially those other places that have a significance for this one.
Thinking location in this sense attempts what might be called "locative thinking." The locative case denotes the place where an action occurs. Thinking in the locative case is a thinking which is permeated by the awareness of its own place, that will not abandon itself to abstract space, but neither can be restrained within a given place and defines itself in its relation to other places of significance. Locative thinking is a thinking that does not simply occur somewhere, but whose location is integral to the meaning of what is thought. Locative thinking dwells in the moment in which connexion is made to other places beginning from here. It thinks through Canadian problems as a practice that forges non-administrative relations to other places. These relations define our location in a larger world. Particularity, as distinguished from particularism, thus corresponds to the emphasis on location over place, and locative thinking, which can be described as the thinking of the particular as it leads outward to other particulars, would avoid the dangers of a self-enclosed concentration on place (as it might be expressed in Fundamentalism or distorted utopias) and contain the possibility of a universalization.

I want now to fix more clearly on how locality is experienced as locality, what is the essence of locality, such that it begins from a qualitatively experienced place but leads on and connects with other places of significance. Location is place caught in the act of leading elsewhere. In order for locality to lead on to another place, it must involve an experience of place that is not enclosed but opens out and also an experience of another place to which it opens out. The phenomenon of "leading-outward" requires an "opening-out" and a "there" to which the opening opens. Such a leading-outward means that one can also come back, that there is an experience of "coming-back," or "returning-toward" the "home place," that defines particularity as such. Notice that, both in leading-outward and in coming-back, there is a double aspect to the movement. It has a goal—in one case, the other place where one is
headed and, in the other, of the home place to which one is returning. The goal, be it here or there, can be understood as a place since it is a destination and thus the end of movement. Place begins where movement ceases and ends where movements begins. In thus associating place with stasis, the phenomenon of locality emerges more clearly. The essence of locality is in the opening-out and returning-toward. It is the movement between places that allows them to be situated in relation to each other. Locality overcomes separation and thus avoids the problem of Indifference or Fundamentalism. Locality is the constituting of movement prior to the definition of places.

Location requires these two, an opening-out and returning-toward, because movement contains the possibility of return – even though the two are not ever entirely symmetrical. A rapids that can be shot one way requires a portage on return. In our time, much intellectual and practical energy has gone into showing the possibility and actuality of return—as is shown by the convergence of Red Tory arguments with environmentalism. Thus, we are re-discovering locality as a phenomenon of return toward place. Inhabitation of our home place is our goal. The necessity of return stems from something having gone wrong with the journey—its immersion in the objectification of the world which has cut off its relation to its origin—such that we need to turn back toward our original place. This is an essential movement of the world of our time. However, with one's sight fixed upon returning home, it is easy to pass over another, equally important, aspect of our situation. While our goal is home, we are still in movement. It is the movement that will bring us home, and the movement of return is what will situate home in relation to other places and will free us from the original illusion that our home is the only significant place. Originally, this illusion was merely naïve and not dangerous, and ethnocentrism that hadn't yet encountered others. Now, it becomes Fundamentalism. Consequently, it also motivates
others to avoid the return and remain Indifferent and homeless—poor postmoderns! In fixing on locality, on the movement that defines place, we can walk with the crucial tendency of our time toward the recovery of home without falling into either side of this illusion.

Thus far I have focussed on the movement of returning-toward and now must take up the asymmetrical movement of leading-outward since it is in the coincidence of these two that the essence of locality resides. To be led out is to pass beyond and therefore to experience a border, or a line that is permeable. In the moment of passing-beyond, of crossing the line, the here is defined as here. The here appears as here in contrast to a there which approaches, whose distance is shrinking, a there in the moment of becoming here. It is the line that creates the border between here and there. If the line were impermeable, a limit that could not be crossed, we would be back in the opposition between here and there that creates the false alternative of Fundamentalism or Indifference. We have to think the crossing of the line in the moment of its crossing to think location as opening-outward. The becoming-here of here and the approach of there coincide when the line is understood as a border in the act of being crossed. This is to think the relation as a relation, to think a verb as a verb, and to leave substances behind. It is such a locative thinking of leading-outward that gives a new approach to universalization.¹⁶

Here I must make another distinction, this time between universality and universalization.¹⁷ Universality is a stasis, almost a substance, an already accomplished universality. For a thinking tied to place, but dwelling in the locality of leading-beyond, there can be no accomplished universality as such but only the attempt to accomplish. Universalization is always tentative and in principle open to the questioning that emerges from other places. The moment of universalization is in crossing the border. A universalization can never be a conclusion, but is always an essentially contestable claim—
which thus requires a theory of such claims and the argumentative context in which they may be criticized. I will not attempt to provide such a theory here, but I do hope to have indicated that it is not a failure to have abandoned a conception of universality that could simply subsume particulars and thus, at least in principle, resolve all disputes. It is rather an advance, it seems to me, to have found a conception of universalization that remains tied to particularity but which opens out into a common discourse. The critical thinker needs to universalize but will have to do without certainty.

Here I would like to recall that the whole work of Harold Innis, both as political economy and as communication theory, centred on the phenomenon of transportation. Without entering into dispute regarding the proper interpretation of Innis, I want to suggest that the meaning of transportation that he used refers not to a movement through objectified or pre-constituted space, but to the phenomenon of traversal as such, to movement as such, so that, as I have claimed before, "space exists only insofar as it is traversed in some manner"\(^{18}\) and that it constitutes the relation between places.

Transportation is an interesting word. Trans means across or beyond. Port means carry, and secondarily the places to which one carries (O.E.D.). Transportation thus means carrying-between, carrying from one place to another. If we were to exchange this Latin root for a Greek one, its best translation would be "metaphor," which is Greek for "carrying-over," in the sense that one carries over one meaning to another usage or context. This suggests: Location is constituted in crossing a border. Transportation, as traversal, is the crossing which is movement as such. Metaphor is movement as such and movement, in all its metaphorical displays, is the essence of the border. The universalizations that emerge from the turn to locality in the Red Tory phenomenon and the contemporary social movements are such metaphorical displays. They still await the concepts that could displace the abstract,
top-down, technocratic and bureaucratic concepts that we have inherited. They are essentially contestable and demand further debate, and they are one with the movement of life. The world itself is not a constituted place, but is constituted through movement.

The border is not a place but rather a line between places. In order to define the essence of locality as leading-outward the border must be understood as the line which appears as it is crossed. Crossing is a movement, thus it is a kind of movement that is the origin of the border. There is a movement that remains within its place, and a movement that occurs in the distance, but the movement that brings there toward here, and that opens here toward there, is movement as such. It is movement as such because it defines location, without which here and there would not appear. The origin of the border is in the movement that defines location. But in becoming a border the smoothness of the movement of leading-outward is interrupted. What interrupts the smoothness of movement? Why does one pause between here and there? One encounters an Other, an Other indefinable within the terms and categories one brings from home. One could say that it is an encounter with wilderness, wildness, the undomesticated, the un-homely. This pause is the locus of an irruption, and interruption, that constitutes a border. Again, I must defer an important question, perhaps the important question, of how/when/why one encounters an Other. All I can say at this point is that, as I have traced the itinerary, the origin of the desire for Canadian Studies is in the encounter with this wilderness, not in the border with the United States—which implies that its nationalism, though important, is a derived phenomenon rather than its insppiration. And this might be a self-criticism, since in A Border Within I treated these as equi-primordial.

Corresponding to the desire that has created Canadian Studies, I have traced an intinerary: place, locality, wilderness, border, Other, universalization. All are phenomena of
movement, including the moment of pause. This should give some motive for reflexion if one recalls Northrop Frye's famous generalization that Canadian literature is, or at least was, a continuous meditation on "Where is here?". My argument, however, has suggested that the question is no longer "Where is here?" but is rather a reflexive and locative "How to describe 'Where is here?'". In conclusion, I will try to explain the history of the colonial and postcolonial demand for writing in Canada in order to show why this reflexive step back is demanded from contemporary thought.

Frye's observation is not surprising since any colonial literature must begin by facing the task of finding its place while at the same time using tools which derive from elsewhere. In the first place, this is likely to be, in terms taken from Harold Innis's dependency theory, a centre-periphery relation. That is to say, the attempt to write here places itself in relation to a there in which the categories of explanation and description—the myths, Frye would say—have been defined through an ongoing tradition. It is thus a culture of dependency even though its contents meditate on here. The first attempt places a new colonial content within the categories of empire and is fixed on a meditation on where it takes place. It is interested in writing itself, but it cannot yet imagine that its experience can generate categories as well as content.

As the imperial tie slackens, and a post-colonial literature emerges, its main task will be to generate from this place the categories from which this place can be understood, that is, to develop its own tradition. It will thus take a step back from the question "Where is here?" in order to ask through what categories of thought and experience the question can be properly formulated. Thus, the question becomes "What are the myths through which we can understand here?" or "What is the map that defines where is here?". Clear as he was about the structuring influence of myth, Frye might have asked this question, but he didn't,
since he remained convinced of the straightforward universality of the Biblical myth. At this point one is beyond a culture of dependency, and thus capable of criticizing it, but no viable alternative yet presents itself. I have argued elsewhere that the philosophy of George Grant and the political economy and communication theory of Harold Innis were at this stage and thus immensely critical, though ultimately unsatisfying.\(^\text{21}\) The critique of received imperial categories has begun, the search for new and independent categories is underway, and thus an intense and creative work is possible. But, in the absence of discovering even a single fixed point in mythical or categorial space, this creative energy falls back into the imperial categories that it attempts to overcome. Authors writing from out of the experience of this tension can thus be interpreted in two ways, each of which has its truth—in terms of the creative moment which impels them forward or through the imperial categories to which they finally return. Thus, while Grant wrote profoundly and intensely of the experience of wilderness that separates ex-European Canadians from their ancestors, wilderness as such never became a category of thought through which he interpreted the history or task of philosophy. Frye wrote from within the same tension. While his investigation of Canadian literature was both wide and deep, he never found in it anything to add to European mythology. Innis surveyed with an eagle's eye the biases that structured Canadian political economy and the history of empires, but he never proposed an understanding of either economy or communication that might substantiate the possibility of local independence—orality was a critical category, and that only; he was not an anarchist. Perhaps one could generalize so far as to suggest that our greatest thinkers and interpreters of Canadian culture thus far have been great insofar as they have inhabited this tension, but have not been able to fix a single point in post-colonial categorial space.
The question for contemporary thought should now be clear: Is there any post-colonial writing in Canada, a writing that encompasses the task of writing about everywhere from here—that is to say, of proposing myths, or categories of explanation and description, that illuminate the human condition as such? At this intense point, one is asking "Where are the maps from here applicable?" or "To what extent can our maps illuminate the world?".

Since English Canadian social and political philosophy is a form of literature, even if philosophy is not exhausted by its literary expression, it will tend to pass through the same three-step development—bearing in mind, of course, that the three will often overlap and be present in the same work. There is, though, a prior ground zero which still persists among those who refuse to face the impetus behind this development. Such would be a philosophy that is merely in Canada, that takes place here only in mathematical terms of spatial and temporal extension. It is here only because it is nowhere else and takes on both its problems and the terms for posing them from a pre-existing tradition. Once the pressure of thinking and writing here begins to assert itself, it will at first tend to be simply philosophy about Canada and the issues it poses. Terms and categories will still be inherited from another tradition. Next, the terms and categories will themselves need to be rooted in the historical experience from which the problems develop. This involves a philosophy of Canada, a philosophy whose terms are universalizations derived from its particularity and which strain to produce and articulate a tradition. Finally, the intensity of this effort can produce the demand that this tradition present terms and categories of understanding which illuminate the human condition as such. To do this, the tradition must ask "What is philosophy?" since the nature of the enterprise itself can no longer be simply taken over. An example of current work that is now between these last two stages would be the interest taken in Europe (as a
consequence of issues of diversity and commonality thrown up by European integration) in Canadian theories of multiculturalism, multi-nation states, and Aboriginal title.

Colonial and post-colonial philosophy thus struggles with the relationship of particularity and universalization, in which it begins by straining to become more than an application of an existing tradition and ends, in the many senses of that word, by discovering the universalizations which propose the form of binding-together that defines the tradition. A tradition is not a sealed vessel. It is formed both through influences deriving from outside and incorporated within, as well as influences from within that become interesting developments elsewhere. A tradition is always permeated by influences stemming from other traditions. The unity of a tradition, as compared with other traditions, is not so much in their content (though emphases do often differ in different traditions, some seem to immediately ask epistemological questions, others to dwell on political implications) but in the form of binding-together, that is to say, the categories of explanation and description, through which the internal relationship between elements is constructed. The form of binding-together that makes a tradition in Canada is, I have argued, the concern with particularity that is evident in the Red Tory lament for the subsumption of ‘here’ under the categories of empire and the environmental recovery of place as more than an instance of abstract space. I have argued that the ‘Canadian’ in Canadian Studies, though well-rooted in a viable philosophical tradition, now needs to go beyond the nation-state of its title toward recovering and extending the localities within. All the same, this need not imply an abandonment of the nation-state in an international context where it does constitute a certain locality. My argument suggests that any legitimacy such a defence of the Canadian nation-state may have in an international context derives from the extent to which it legitimates localities within itself.
At its apogee, a philosophical tradition will need to define in its own terms "What is a philosophical tradition?". A major danger in such an effort at an independent philosophical tradition will be the tendency to innovation for its own sake. Moreover, this is not a danger that can be simply averted, since conservatism in this case would not be tradition-sustaining but tradition-undermining. When one's tradition is in the future, brakes can only be found there also. The danger of reckless innovation can only be checked by pushing on to the final question. This history of the demand placed on writing by the transition from a colonial to a postcolonial condition leads us to recall that we began thinking about Canada with terms and categories inherited from the Empire and suggests that, at least as a first step, we must recall how they came here. Thus, in our own time, we must begin not with here but with the movement toward here, movement here, and movement leading-outward toward other places. I think that those interested in taking Canadian Studies forward must look back especially at the moments when this imperial legacy encountered Others, when its movement paused. And look ahead, leading-outward toward the world, with the terms and categories upon which our experience insists. The role of the critical intellectual is not to be right, nor to propose policy, but to redeem the metaphors thrust on us by our history, and risk movement. Such an acceptance of the struggles inherent in one's belonging, a turning of them toward universality, is what turns fate into destiny. The fate of Canadian Studies was the legacy of the Red Tory lament for a lost particularity. Its destiny is in the role that a defence of particularity and locality can offer to the world.

Notes:

5 This concept of institution of a social formation is developed in my *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication/Consumer Society/Social Movements* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
6 There is a partial exception in the case of Grant insofar as he did consider French-Canadian nationalism (as he called it) but no other form of sub-national particularity. See *Lament for a Nation* (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart, 1970) chapter 6.
7 George Grant, *Lament for a Nation*, p. 85.
9 See *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality and Wilderness*, chapter three.
11 Harold Innis, "Great Britain, the United States and Canada" in *Changing Concepts of Time*, p. 111.
12 See *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality and Wilderness*, pp. 27-47.
13 This is, of course, an adumbration of a large literature on the origin of the scientific-technological conception of reason in modernity. For my version, see Ian Angus, *Technique and Enlightenment: Limits of Instrumental Reason* (Washington: Centre for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1984).
15 Gary Snyder, "The Place, the Region and the Commons" in *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990) pp. 25-27.
16 On further reflexion, I have come to understand that the description of locality requires greater precision than I have presented here. I believe that what I have presented, however, is not misleading for the point under discussion. See, for a more detailed discussion, Ian Angus, "Place and Locality in Heidegger's Late Thought," forthcoming.
17 I have addressed the distinction between universality and universalization in *Technique and Enlightenment: Limits of Instrumental Reason* and *Disfigurations: Discourse/Critique/Ethics* (London and New York: Verso, 2000).
18 Ian Angus, *A Border Within*, p. 66.
20 By the term “step back” here, I am indicating that the concept of reflexion operative in this essay is phenomenological rather than the speculative second-reflexion based on Cartesian subject-object dualism that is dominant in modern philosophy and is perhaps clearest in Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung*. See, for a clarification of this point, my *Disfigurations: Discourse/Critique/Ethics*, chapter 8.
21 See *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality and Wilderness*, passim.
22 This essay is a revised and expanded version of a talk given at the Brock University Two Days of Canada Conference 3-4 November 1999 and subsequently published in the *Brock Review*, forthcoming.