



Canadian Intellectuals, the Tory Tradition, and the Challenge of Modernity, 1939-1970

Philip Massolin

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In this well-researched book, Philip Massolin takes a fascinating look at the forces of modernization that swept through English Canada, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. Victorian values - agrarian, religious - and the adherence to a rigid set of philosophical and moral codes were being replaced with those intrinsic to the modern age: industrial, secular, scientific, and anti-intellectual. This work analyses the development of a modern consciousness through the eyes of the most fervent critics of modernity - adherents to the moral and value systems associated with Canada's tory tradition. The work and thought of social and moral critics Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, Vincent Massey, Hilda Neatby, George P. Grant, W.L. Morton, Northrop Frye, and Marshall McLuhan are considered for their views of modernization and for their strong opinions on the nature and implications of the modern age. These scholars shared concerns over the dire effects of modernity and the need to attune Canadians to the realities of the modern age. Whereas most Canadians were oblivious to the effects of modernization, these critics perceived something ominous: far from being a sign of true progress, modernization was a blight on cultural development. In spite of the efforts of these critics, Canada emerged as a fully modern nation by the 1970s. Because of the triumph of modernity, the toryism that the critics advocated ceased to be a defining feature of the nation's life. Modernization, in short, contributed to the passing of an intellectual tradition centuries in the making and rapidly led to the ideological underpinnings of today's modern Canada.

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