

What Canadian Identity? Which Canadian Values?



Read the following quotations and number them in order from 1 to 19 with 1 being the most true and 19 being the least true statement about Canada.



"Canada is the only country in the world that knows how to live without an identity."

~ Marshall McLuhan

Land Claims - "A classic example of Canadian compromise, 50/50, equal rights: the Inuit, Indians and Métis have the *claims*, the Canadian government keeps the *land*."

~ Alan Gould, *The Great Wiped-Out North*

"There are two miracles in Canadian history. The first is the survival of French Canada, and the second is the survival of Canada."

~ Frank R. Scott

"It is more than four centuries since the Aborigines, francophones, and anglophones began their complex intercourse in this place. We are one of the oldest democracies in the world—152 years without civil war or coup d'état. Look around at our allies. Compare.

Each of us, through birth or immigration brings something new to this experience. We add. We change. But for better and for worse, we do not erase....

With the past we can see trajectories through into the future—both catastrophic and creative projections. The central trajectory of the modern, Canadian democratic society has its foundations in the great reform alliance of Louis LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin; and indeed in that of Joseph Howe, which brought democracy to Nova Scotia a month before LaFontaine formed his Responsible Government on March 11th, 152 years ago.

...We often say that compromise is a Canadian virtue; that compromise has got us through the difficult situation of our complex population, complex internal geography and complex foreign relations..."

~ His Excellency John Ralston Saul, March 23, 2000, Inaugural Speech for the Lafontaine-Baldwin Symposium

"A Canadian is someone who drinks **Brazilian coffee** from an **English teacup** and munches a **French pastry** while sitting on their **Danish furniture** having just come home from an **Italian movie** in their **German car**. He/She picks up their **Japanese pen** and writes to their Member of Parliament to complain about the **American take-over** of the Canadian publishing business."

(source unknown)

What Canadian Identity? Which Canadian Values?

9.1.3
b



"Canadians are an ambivalent lot: One minute they're peacekeepers, next minute they punch the hell out of each other on the ice rink."

~ Ken Wiwa, *Globe and Mail*, 7 January 2003

"We have had more Americanization of Canada from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms than from the Free Trade Agreement."

~ Remark made by Mayor William Norrie, quoted in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, 4 October 1990.

"Canadians have long valued their traditions of democracy, freedom and tolerance. The rights and values so important to all Canadians are enshrined in The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, The Bill of Rights and provincial human rights codes. Along with these rights come certain responsibilities, such as respecting the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

Canadians are also proud of Canada's bilingual and multicultural heritage, created as generations of immigrants joined the Aboriginal peoples who had lived in Canada for thousands of years. New Canadians are expected to learn one of Canada's two official languages, English and French.

Citizenship means working together with all other Canadians to build a stronger Canada. It means making sure our values, dreams and goals are reflected in our institutions, laws and relations with one another."

~ Citizenship and immigration Canada, *A Look at Canada, Canadian Citizenship*:
<www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizen/look/look-02e.html>

"Canada is the only country in the world in which the majority is the moral guarantor of the minority."

~ Laurier Lapierre, historian and journalist, *CTV*, 2 July 1993

"Canada's very nature is contained in the fact that it has as many faces as a Buddhist deity. Our identity crisis really seems to lie in an attempt to cling to the illusion that uniformity and unity are the same things and that they are equally desirable—neither of which, of course, is true."

~ George Woodcock, author and critic, *The Canadians*, 1979

"One disadvantage of living in Canada is that one is continually called upon to make statements about the Canadian identity, and Canadian identity is an eminently exhaustible subject."

~ Attributed to cultural critic Northrop Frye by John Meisel in the *Toronto Star*, 15 October 1977

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"In Canada, the time has come to address a centrally important question. If what we have in common is our diversity, do we really have anything in common at all?"

~ Reginald W. Bibby, sociologist, *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada*, 1990

"The search for Canada is a personal journey. The search for a national identity is a journey without an end. It began a long, long time ago. It will continue into the far distant future."

~ Lorraine Monk, editor, *Canada The Things We Hold Dear: An Album of Photographic Memories*, 1999.

"Ethnicity does not replace Canadian identity: it *is* Canadian identity."

~ Harold Troper, sociologist, "Multiculturalism," *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, 1999

"For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly."

~ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister, announcing the multiculturalism policy, House of Commons, 8 October 1971

"Peacekeeping comes naturally to Canadians, as history has shown. The image of a Canadian soldier wearing his blue beret, standing watch at some lonely outpost in a strife-torn foreign land with binoculars at the ready, is very much an element of the modern Canadian mosaic, and a proud part of our national heritage."

~ Paul D. Manson, General and Chief of the Defence Staff, 17 November 1988

"The West hates the East, Maritimers hate everybody else. Toronto hates Québec. Everybody loves to hate Québec. And everybody hates Toronto, but in Toronto, they just don't understand why everybody hates them."

~ Anna Woodrow, sociologist, referring to stand-up comics in Canada, quoted by Jane L. Thompson in the *National Post*, 1 May 1999

"If I could have one wish, it would be to dump the entire population of Canada in Sarajevo for about six hours. Perhaps then they'd realize Canada is the best damn country in the world."

~ Lewis W. Mackenzie, Major General, Canadian Armed Forces, as quoted in the *Toronto Star*, 4 October 1992

"There is a fundamental connection between Human Rights and Peace. We will have Peace on Earth when everyone's Rights are respected."

~ John Peters Humphrey, author of the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as quoted in the travelling exhibition *Citizen of the World: John Humphreys and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, March 1999

Sources:

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