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[CANADIAN VOICES]

Who is a Canadian?

Northrop Frye of Toronto, David Candow of Newfoundland, Lula Beatrice Wilken of Saskatchewan, Albert Legault of Quebec and Milton Wong of British Columbia are Canadians.

Who is not a Canadian?

Nelson Eddy (star of *Rose-Marie*) and J. Carroll Naish (the half-breed villain in *Saskatchewan*) are not Canadians.

Who is Dan George?

Dan George is a North American Indian who lives in British Columbia.

Where is Canada?

Canada is all over the top half of North America. It includes forty-five cities with more than fifty thousand persons, the Vancouver area with over one million and greater Toronto and Montreal with nearly three million each. It is not one big northwoods.

Are English-speaking Canadians strong and silent? Are French-speaking Canadians given to gay chatter and emotional speeches?

Many Canadians talk a lot, at home, at play and at the office. Some talk less.

Why are Canadians so concerned with who they are?

Canadians are discovering themselves and their culture against the backdrop of a neighbouring country with a population ten times as large as their own, whose films, television and publications make up a high proportion of what Canadians see and read and whose citizens own large portions of Canada's industries and natural resources.

IN HIS RECENT BOOK, *Hollywood's Canada*, Pierre Berton dwells with almost morbid intensity on the strange image of Canada which Hollywood movies have projected to the world. "If tourists arrive at the border on a hot summer's day loaded down with furs and skis — and they have — it is because of what the movies told them about Canada. If Americans keep telling us 'you're the same as we are' — and they have — it is because the movies have convinced them of that fact."

Mr. Berton has a point: between 1907 and 1975 Hollywood made 575 movies which were, loosely speaking, about Canada. Of these, 256 concerned the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the plots, the scenery and the definitions of good and bad guys were both remarkably fictitious and remarkably the same. The "Mountie" was always required to "Get His Man," though members of the RCMP intensely disliked both the name and the slogan. In at least 9 films, the hero was ordered to bring in his sweetheart's brother, in 6 her father and in 5 herself. Hollywood has not limited its distortions to the RCMP (or to Canada) — Saskatchewan has no mountains, Maritimers do not drive horses and buggies, and Randolph Scott did not build the Canadian Pacific while wearing a cowboy hat.

But Hollywood's films were not intended to be documentaries; they were fantasies for a mass audience.

At any rate distortion is of less concern than domination, particularly in the economic field, and American and multinational firms do dominate some vital areas of the Canadian economy. In his recent book, *Storm Signals: New Economic Policies for Canada*, Walter Gordon says the rapid rise of such firms since World War II, which has "placed immense power in the hands of a relatively few senior financiers and businessmen," could mean that "a few hundred individuals will soon become more powerful than are many governments."

Mr. Gordon's alarm is not universal. The power of the super corporations may be fading rather than growing, and some were never interested in the northern half of the North American continent. Al Capone, one of the original multinational corporations, once said, "I don't even know what street Canada is on."

Toronto businessman Alan Heisey believes "a special grace of the Canadian way was how our country had, not for decades or generations, but for centuries, welcomed the wealth, the talents, the ideas, the peoples of the world as had few other nations." In *The Canadian Establishment*, Peter Newman says that while Canada is often considered in terms of its agonies, it is rarely viewed "through the prism of its status as one of

the world's most successful capitalist states." Herschel Hardin, using another prism, sees Canada as essentially "a public enterprise country." He thinks Americans have "a genius for private enterprise; Canadians . . . for public enterprise."

Culture and economics are intertwined (it takes a lot of money to produce a TV show, and large corporations sponsor most of them), but they deserve separate consideration. Industry is organized in blocks — often international blocks — of power. Culture comes from the heads and hands of individuals and is shaped by their experiences. If Shakespeare had been born in twentieth century Alberta, his plays might have been about oilmen and cattlemen, rather than princes and kings. The Canadians' concern about their culture and their economy reflects a basic desire to be seen as North Americans with a difference — liking, but unlike their southern neighbours.

This seems reasonable. Canadians are not only distinguishable from Americans, but are also distinguishable from other Canadians; the threat of homogeneity, either national or continental, is perhaps more fanciful than real. In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI, we present the viewpoints of a variety of people, picked more or less at random from across the breadth of Canada. Though their voices are distinct, there is something about each that is distinctly Canadian.

Mel Hurtig

"First let me get something out of the way. While the distinction seems terribly difficult for some to make, and while it has had to be repeated in Canada at least a thousand times too often, it nevertheless appears mandatory to repeat again and again: 'It's not necessary to be anti-American to be pro-Canadian.'"

William Kilbourn

"If Canadians (and perhaps others) wish to explore the real freedoms open to them . . . and to escape the blandness and boredom, the sameness and despair . . . they could usefully examine the subtle but profound ways in which Canada differs from the United States. For what emerges clearly to me . . . is that Canada is a different kind of American society, an American alternative to what has happened in the United States. When William Van Horne gave up his American citizenship after completing the CPR, he is said to have remarked, 'Building that railroad would have made a Canadian out of the German Emperor.' The inexorable land, like the Canadian

climate, has always commanded the respect of those who have tried to master it."

C. D. Howe

"I believe that those who are prepared to share with Canadians in the risks of developing our country should be as free as Canadians themselves in deciding how to conduct their enterprise. Nevertheless, anyone who does business in Canada should reckon with the . . . normal feeling of nationalism which is present in Canada, just as it is in the United States." (1957)

Captain J. E. Bernier

claimed the Arctic Archipelago for Canada on July 1, 1909. "I took possession of Baffin Island for Canada in the presence of several Eskimo, and after firing nineteen shots I instructed an Eskimo to fire the twentieth, telling him he was now a Canadian."

Northrop Frye



BORN IN SHERBROOKE, Quebec in 1912, is one of Canada's most distinguished literary critics and perceptive thinkers. He is the author of *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*, *Anatomy of Criticism* and *T. S. Eliot*. He was recently a visiting professor at Harvard and is currently University

Professor in the English Department of the University of Toronto. In an interview last spring, he talked about a variety of things and, most particularly, about the ways in which Canadians and Americans are not alike:

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

Every once in a while [a Canadian in the US] realizes he is in a foreign country. When I was first faced with the question, I thought: my religious affinities at the moment are the United Church of Canada, and my political affinities at the moment are CCF.* These were two categories I could never translate into American terms. The boundary has a reality in the Canadian mind of which the American has no conception. In Canada you hear the phrase, 'across the line,' to describe America. I've never heard an American say, 'across the line.'

I think the greatest source of misunderstanding by Americans is the assumption that the two

countries are essentially the same — that there have not been enough differences in historical cultural development to make Canadians a separate people.

The two countries have had different rhythms of aggressiveness. There has been a great deal of aggressive violence in American history, whereas the violence in Canadian history has been imposed from the top — the military conquest of French Canada, the western police.

In Canada, it has never taken the form of the elimination of dissident elements. Canada has managed to avoid things like Indian wars.

The United States became articulate in the eighteenth century, the Age of Reason, and it's had a fixation on the eighteenth century ever since. The Constitution begins by saying we hold these facts to be self-evident. Canada is a country where nothing has been self-evident and it didn't have an eighteenth century at all. The English and the French spent the eighteenth century battering down each other's forts. Canada took shape in the baroque, aggressive seventeenth century and took new shape in the romantic, aggressive nineteenth.

I often run into people from the US who come to Canada and who haven't the remotest notion of the kind of unconscious arrogance they have as people among colonials. I have often said Canada is the only real colony left in the world. It is now an American colony.

THE YOUNG

American students are much more frank in talking about their personal problems. Americans also ask me about my own personal views or beliefs — political or religious beliefs — much more freely. Canadians are much shyer and more reserved.

I have a great affection for American students, but young people who have been conditioned from infancy as citizens of a great world power are not the same people as young Canadians.

POPULATION

I think that people think in terms of empty space in Canada, but the empty space is not so easy to fill up. The people who come to Canada mostly head for Montreal and Toronto. The increase in population is going to be substantially in the very places that don't need it. The whole fantasy about the great open spaces — that there ought to be a hundred million people here — just

* Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. A socialist amalgam primarily of farmers and intellectuals which flourished in the thirties and forties; it is now called the New Democratic Party.

doesn't fit the facts of twentieth century life. Even if we got fifty million, the US would have five hundred million. Canada will always be a small country.

A COUNTRY OF IRONIES

The conception of Canada as a country of ironies — for example, Margaret Atwood's concept of the loser as hero — does identify, I think, a certain quality of Canadian writing that is worth looking at. Mackenzie King was a loser, but he was the incarnation of the kind of compromise that you have to keep making to hold the country together. . . . If Canada had not been able to compromise, it would never have been Canada.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

Two things, the airplane and television, are beginning to make sense of the country. Now it is possible for Canadians to become simultaneously conscious of the rest of the country in a way that was never possible before. It makes for a considerable quieting down of the separatism which has been such an active movement in every part of the country.

ECONOMIC DOMINATION

I suppose that almost every industry in Canada is a subsidiary of an American industry, so that the great masses of the working population are in effect American employees. I don't suppose there is a great difference in working in a refinery in Canada or one in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. But I think the higher up you go, the more you are aware that the real orders come from somewhere else, and there comes a point at which that becomes very oppressive.

NATIONALISM

I have much more sympathy with economic nationalism than I have with cultural nationalism, which seems to be a substitute activity. I don't think the Canadian writer is threatened; that's why I think the question of cultural domination is partly phony. It's a matter of understanding the potential of your own environment.

THE CANADIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMISSION

I sat on the CRTC for some years, and the CRTC is really putting up a very gallant fight to keep

control of our communication systems, so they won't become just a branch of NBC and CBS. You know when all the magazine business, all the book business, all the movie business and so forth have already been sold, it's a pretty desperate, last ditch struggle.

Hugh MacLennan

"If people would stop comparing Canadian literature, to its inevitable detriment, to Shakespeare and Racine, but would think of it solely in terms of the current international competition, I don't honestly see much reason for pessimism."

Lula Beatrice Wilken



WRITER ALAN EDMONDS of *The Canadian Magazine* went looking for "The Little Old Lady in Moose Jaw" and found Lula Beatrice Wilken. The LOLIMJ is a symbol of the down-to-earth, average person, a bit like the Kansas City Milk Man or the New Yorker's celebrated Little Old Lady in Dubuque. Mrs.

Wilken was a splendid find. She is eighty and she lives in a one-bedroom apartment in the north end of town. Moose Jaw is forty-four miles west of Regina, Saskatchewan and has a population of some thirty-two thousand. She is lively as a cricket, and she has a mind all her own:

THE UNITED STATES

Oh! That Watergate did them good. I hope it did anyway — should make them realize that the great American way isn't automatically the right way. They figure that one day they're going to own Canada and they're not far off it now:

The Americans went ahead faster than us because they have the climate, a twelve-month season, while we have to fight the elements.

THE TROUBLE WITH CANADIANS

The trouble with Canadians is that we haven't got enough confidence. We think we can't do as well as others. We see ourselves as losers. I really don't know where it ever came from in the first place. But then again, I'm mad at the government for educating our kids on American books.

CANADIAN CULTURE (and sex as entertainment)

We have a dearth of good play writers in Canada. We've got lots of good actors, but somehow it's either the play writer or director, or maybe both, but what we get isn't much good. I haven't been to a movie in ages because this overdose of sex has got into everything. I don't think the plays on television or at the show begin to come up to a generation ago. I don't really think I'm old-fashioned, and it seems to me the story and the acting of it is most important, not sex for the sake of getting attention, which is what a lot of it is.

BOOKS

I read a lot of trash, like those romance stories that all have a happy ending so you know before you start how they're going to end. I like a good detective story too. That Pierre Berton, now he's a fine writer. *The National Dream* and *The Last Spike* were really fine books. And that Barry Broadfoot who wrote *Ten Lost Years*, now he knows Canada. But I don't think I'll read his new one about the war. I don't want to remember that too much. It's too recent to be romantic.

TELEVISION

It's a wonderful thing for senior citizens, but there's lots I don't like. I don't like sex getting into everything, for one thing, and I don't like cuss words much. The English language is such that we can say what we want without cussing. People aren't as dumb as the people who make shows seem to think. I'm looking for big things from the CBC drama shows. On paper they look very good, but the government just doesn't give enough to the CBC, and consequently they haven't got the right managers maybe, or enough money, and it's easier to have shows come in from the States.

ECONOMIC DOMINATION

You know, I think Canadians are beginning to fight their way back. We have been sort of smothered, and our government has been very willing to go along. We've got to the place where we've got to recover some of our natural resources or else be taken over completely, and I think there's too much patriotism in the Canadians for that. Culture and economics go sort of hand in hand. We're dominated because we haven't got our own publishing houses; it's shocking the amount of American history that's

taught in our schools. We have some wonderful Americans that come up here every summer for their holidays. They have a wonderful time and they're wonderful people.

ABORTION

Well, in the first place, I agree it should be taken out of the criminal code, and it should absolutely be a woman's business. No man should sit in power and tell a woman what to do with her body. But I don't believe in it as a means of limiting your family; it's not a contraceptive and should never be used that way.

THE FUTURE

Well, I am not sure that I could forecast too much. I still think that we have the brains and the ability and the patriotism to do what's right by Canada. I am an optimist.

Pierre Berton

"A Canadian is somebody who knows how to make love in a canoe."

David Candow



NEWFOUNDLAND is the oldest part of Canada in one manner of speaking and the newest in another. It was visited and settled by European fishermen long, long before Columbus left Genoa, but it did not become part of the Canadian Confederation until 1949. It has always been remote, beautiful, austere, demanding and independent. David Candow is a Canadian Broadcasting Company producer who lives in St. John's, Newfoundland's largest city:

THE VIEW FROM NEWFOUNDLAND

We're the late-comers in the Confederation. We joined Canada in 1949. I mean, I was nine years old before I became a Canadian. When I moved to Calgary, Alberta back in 1970, it wasn't uncommon for my older relatives to refer to me as living in Canada. I mean, there are no Canadians like us, so you see we don't struggle for an identity that makes us different.

NATIONALISM

I kind of feel that sometimes the impression is that there's an anti-American feeling, and I don't think that that's behind any of this. It should be interpreted as pro-Canadian, which is understandable, and not anti-American.

CRIME

It's not necessary to lock your doors at night if you live in St. John's. But there's still vandalism. You can still see it in the papers, occasionally, perhaps too frequently to be proud about. You can still see a story where somebody knocked over a few graveyard headstones and things like that.

THE UNION WITH CANADA

Well sure, I would say that the people born here since 1949 are very strong Canadians. I mean, we feel different from other Canadians, but not apart from them.

Everett C. Hughes

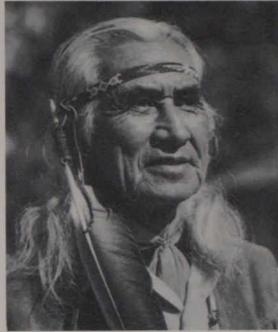
"Who shall call whom what? . . . An American must be careful, in some circumstances, of calling himself so, since he may be thought to be arrogating to himself . . . the name of the whole continent. Canadians are North Americans as much as he. But if he doesn't call himself American, the Canadian will; no one will call him a United States-er."

James Reaney

"In a country so physically large it is hard to think of the whole thing. A Dane or an Ice-lander has such a tidy neat home-shape to love. But Canadians — though patriots — see their whole nation in the local grain of sand. That feeling of a relaxed decentralized belonging is the Canadian national identity and it is frequently confused by Britishers and Americans with lack of national character and faceless blur. Mind you, I can remember as a child looking at a map of Canada at school and wolfing down the whole thing as *my* country. The shape of Hudson Bay, the Northern Arctic Islands, the coast of Labrador and the shapes of the Great Lakes were particularly lovable. Quebec always seemed like the profile of — someone — the Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland* with the Ottawa River defining her chin and jaws, Cape Jones as her nose, Labrador as her head-dress and some

unknown river (the Nottaway) as the outline of her rather pursed mouth. Ontario seems like someone in a rather grotesque rocking chair. The Arctic Islands had the fascinating fretted shapes of mackerel clouds in a sunset. Naturally I have never since known Canada as well as I did then."

Chief Dan George



IS SEVENTY-SIX AND CHIEF of the Co-Salish tribe. He received an Academy Award nomination and the New York Film Critics Award for his portrayal of Old Lodgeskins in *Little Big Man*, but he is in no sense a movie Indian. He was born on the Burrard Reserve in North Vancouver, British Columbia. As a youth he worked as a logger and later as a longshoreman on the Vancouver water front. His film career began after he retired from the water front because of an injury. The following excerpts are from his book of poems, *My Heart Soars*, published in the US by Books Canada, Inc.:

Our ways are good
but only in our world
If you like the flame
on the white man's wick
learn of his ways,
so you can bear his company,
yet when you enter his world
you will walk like a stranger.
As I see beyond the days of now
I see a vision:
I see the faces of my people,
your sons' sons,
your daughters' daughters,
laughter fills the air
that is no longer yellow and heavy,
the machines have died,
quietness and beauty
have returned to the land.
The gentle ways of our race
have again put us
in the days of the old.
It is good to live!
It is good to die!
— This will happen.

I AM A NATIVE OF NORTH AMERICA.

In the course of my lifetime I have lived in two distinct cultures. I was born into a culture that lived in communal houses. My grandfather's house was eighty feet long. It was called a smoke house, and it stood down by the beach along the inlet. All my grandfather's sons and their families lived in this large dwelling. Their sleeping apartments were separated by blankets made of bulrush reeds, but one open fire in the middle served the cooking needs of all. In houses like these, throughout the tribe, people learned to live with one another; learned to serve one another; learned to respect the rights of one another. . . .

I am afraid my culture has little to offer yours. But my culture did prize friendship and companionship. It did not look on privacy as a thing to be clung to, for privacy builds up walls and walls promote distrust.

Milton Wong



IS THIRTY-SIX and the manager of the Investment Department of the National Trust Company, Ltd., in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is the son of Chinese parents, born in Canada and married to a young woman named Fei, who is a dietitian. As a Chinese-Canadian, he is a distinctive part of the national mosaic; as a businessman, he has his own views on economic independence; and as a British Columbian, he has the point of view of a westerner:

THE VIEW FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA

I think our [the western] approach to Canadianism is different. We still probably have a kind of complex. I was going to say inferiority complex, but it really isn't. It's a different slant in terms of Canadianism. I think, in talking about domination by the US, that there's a good deal to say for both sides. The nationalism that we've gone through in the last ten years — to make everything Canadian — really bothered me.

TIES WITH THE US

There's no getting away from our ties with the United States; no matter how a Canadian will

want to feel, it's unrealistic. The United States with its agricultural base is the strongest nation in the world, and we can't deny that. All the business cycles in the world are materially affected by what happens to the United States. But, I would like to not use the word domination. I think that as a nation which has a high degree of exports, we have to recognize realities. To what extent are we willing to accept a lower standard of living if we want to enter into a brand new Canadianism?

Pierre Trudeau

"There is no such thing as a model or ideal Canadian. What would be more absurd than the concept of an 'all-Canadian' boy or girl."

Albert Legault



TO MANY AMERICANS THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC is the least known part of Canada. It is a place like no other — French and Canadian but as different from Ontario as it is from Brittany. Albert Legault is Director of the Centre Québécois de Relations Internationales at Laval University.

QUEBEC AND THE UNITED STATES

I think the United States does not pay as much attention to Quebec as to Ontario. However, the people in Quebec seem to think of the US as a great country and a country of the future — as some kind of a model, especially in the economic field or in the industrial field.

ECONOMIC DOMINATION

I think the concern is less strong than in the rest of Canada. Let's put it another way — it's less strong than in Ontario. Ontario certainly got more investments than it was looking for in the past, and now it is looking for ways to control them. The policy in Quebec has been the policy of open door to all investments. The more we can get, some people think, the better off we are. Nevertheless, some people are concerned about the huge investments coming from abroad, especially from the United States, and they're thinking more and more about ways in which to have a better control of their industrial development.

CULTURAL DOMINATION

I think the situation is quite different in Quebec. People in Quebec have their own very clearly defined culture, so they don't have the feeling of being threatened. We do have a lot of TV programmes, for example, which are imported or are being translated into French, and people don't even know sometimes that this programme is of American origin.

QUEBEC'S FUTURE

In the last ten years Quebec has been retiring within itself, and in the future that may change. I think Quebec may open itself much more to the world and to the rest of Canada — it could even go further; perhaps Quebec in the future could play an important role as far as Canadian unity is concerned. In the past, twenty years ago, nationalism concerned a minority. Perhaps in ten years you will see Quebec very active outside the province. In the last elections the Parti Québécois [the separatist party] got forty per cent of the Francophone vote; the polls seem to indicate that support for it is not going down. However there have been, obviously, some strong modifications in the party's programme, and these would seem to indicate that, in terms of future electoral strategy, separatism may not be as important an issue as some people outside the province are led to believe.

Mordecai Richler

Not all of Quebec is French-speaking. (In the 1971 census, 13.1 per cent listed English as their mother tongue; 80.7 per cent, French.) In *The Street*, Mordecai Richler remembers growing up in a different Montreal culture:

"Our parents used to apply a special standard to all men and events. 'Is it good for the Jews?' By this test they interpreted the policies of Mackenzie King and the Stanley Cup play-offs and earthquakes in Japan. To take one example — if the Montreal *Canadiens* won the Stanley Cup it would infuriate the WASPS in Toronto, and as long as the English and French were going at each other they left us alone: *ergo*, it was good for the Jews . . . and we looked neither to England nor France for guidance. We turned to the United States. The real America."

Douglas Le Pan

"It would be pleasant if there could be more scope for an independent foreign policy, if we could settle our own defence policy more freely, if we could have a more self-sufficient economy without sacrificing the economic advantages that flow from our close association with the United States. If . . . if . . . if . . . if. If wishes were horses, Canadians would certainly ride off in all directions."

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