

Canada: My Non-Woke Personal Library and Its Saving Virtues. Part 4

By Geoffrey Clarfield

First, I would like to take you to the shelf that deals with Canadian history. Canada is important to me because it is the land and the culture into which I was born. Understanding how it has shaped me is deeply personal.



Image from Writers Trust of Canada

My view of how our native culture shapes us is influenced by the great sociologist, Emile Durkheim. He was a secular French Jewish thinker who is considered one of the founders of modern Social Anthropology. Durkheim produced a unique, simple, and enduring way of distinguishing what is social from what is individual and idiosyncratic.

He argued that a society is a configuration of what he calls social facts, which he says have three aspects. They are *generalized* because they are systemic, or systematic. Examples include a society's language, its legal system, even its road system. They are *external*, in that we did not invent

them at birth, but are born subject to them, so everyone must internalize and accommodate himself or herself to them. And finally, *they have constraints*. If you move against them, by mangling the language, breaking the law, or going over the speed limit, you will suffer unpleasant consequences. Social facts have teeth.

Implied in Durkheim's view of society is that its stories about itself, although individual in origin, become generalized social facts, which new, younger members of society must internalize to function. So let me briefly outline the social facts of "The Story of Canada" as it was conveyed to me by our school textbooks, teachers and government-controlled media during my formative years, immediately after WWII.

Canada, I was taught, is a Dominion: an independent country that falls in some vague and undefined way within the sphere of the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain which defers that authority to a Governor General, whose role nowadays is largely ceremonial. Theoretically, however, ultimate authority is still vested in the Crown through the Governor General.

It was impressed upon us that this is a good thing, for since the Magna Carta the rights of the common citizens of the British Commonwealth are guaranteed by the Crown. This includes the right of *habeas corpus*, property rights, and the right to a fair trial, all protected under the crown and managed by an elected legislature and an appointed Senate. We were taught that, over the centuries, that in Britain and in its overseas Dominions, such as Canada and Australia, the rights of the common person have grown over time.

We learned that although the Vikings briefly settled Canada, in the 13th century, Canada's first settlers were Indians (Native Peoples) who migrated to Canada over the Bering Strait from Siberia at the end of the last ice age, up to 24,000

years ago or even earlier. That the French who first settled Canada during the late Renaissance and afterwards, although dedicated to converting the Indians to the Catholic faith, did so with an almost anthropological tolerance that is displayed in the records of the Jesuit Relations. No inquisition there!

When the British conquered French Canada in 1759, we learned that it was an enlightened Protestant conquest, for the local French elite were not dispossessed the French Catholic Church was not persecuted (unlike what the British did in Ireland) and that by the end of WWII, the French speaking province of Quebec was a willing and able partner in the Canadian national project.

Nevertheless, to assuage Quebec, we were all to learn French as a second language. Indeed, French soon became the only mandated living language taught in our schools, besides English. We followed the British in referring to the American War of Independence as the American Revolution, and welcomed to Canada those Americans who fled the United States, remaining loyal to Britain. The United Empire Loyalists, as we called them, soon after became our ruling elite.

To this day, it is a point of pride to claim descent from these Loyalists. Canadian's innate and historic sense of moral superiority to the Americans –the Yanks are not so bad, just sub-par is the attitude–is also based on Canada's complex treaty relations with more than six hundred Indigenous Canadian Bands (first nations), which we consider was and is infinitely morally superior to the treatment of indigenous peoples south of the border.

It was also a point of national pride –except in Quebec– that Canada fought alongside Britain, our mother country, against Germany during WWI and WWII, and felt a smug sense of superiority over the Americans because we fought the Nazis from the outset, whereas the US came late to the fight, and only after they were attacked by the Japanese in December

1941. We Canadians were on the right side of history!

That was the narrative of the school boards, the media, the universities, and the historians, both popular and academic. The ruling elites always encouraged Canadians in their small nation nationalism to distance themselves from their American neighbors, even though we consume all aspects of American popular culture, science, medicine, and technology, and were protected during the Cold War by their nuclear umbrella.

Let me briefly describe how and why I began to doubt so much of the Canadian historical narrative. It started in Kenya. I first read James (later Jan) Morris' *Pax Britannica* a three-volume history of the British Empire, while still in Canada. But it was later, when I re-read it during my ten years in Kenya, that it really hit home. Morris was one of the greatest British travel writers of the 20th century and a thoughtful amateur historian to boot. One of his insights in his chapters on the role of Canada and Canadians in the rise of the British Empire rang true with me.

When speaking of Ontario, he wrote that majoritarian Scots had populated it, most of whom wanted to be or were in the process of modeling themselves on and becoming Englishmen. If you simply go through the names of government ministers both provincial and federal, you will find scores of people of Scottish descent trying to be English.

This was the Ontario I grew up in during the postwar decades of the fifties, sixties, and seventies. Morris' was the first informed and playful outsider that gave me insight into the dynamics of the society I had been born into, and like any good anthropologist or travel writer, Morris noticed a pertinent fact that was everywhere present, but never acknowledged, properly labelled, or discussed.

He had hit upon the great Canadian "wannabe," someone born here, but dreams of reinventing himself as coming from the

right side of the tracks in the “good ole mother country.”

There are two other important books on my Canada shelf that have helped me get a better and more realistic picture of the society I was born into: the society whose mannerisms and attitudes I have internalized and whose post WWII Toronto-accented English I speak like the native son that I am.

The first of these books, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945*, by Angus McLaren is the most depressing. It is not celebrated, or widely read, but it does a wonderful job of showing that during the 20th century most of the political, legal, medical, and institutional elites – but not the common citizens – in Canada were convinced Social Darwinists who were not above stigmatizing anyone who was not a member of the “Aryan” Anglo Saxon “master” race.

This justified their implementation of involuntary medical interventions such as forced sterilization, and evinced a public admiration of the Nazis and their eugenic theories and practices which were well underway in the initial extermination of non-Jewish “inferior citizens” through medically assisted mass murder in the 1930s, before the Nazis turned this madness on the Jews of Europe and Tunisia.

One would expect that after WWII, this trend would be rejected with the exposure of Nazi atrocities, but no, even the so called great Tommy Douglas, the founder of Canada’s third political party, and inventor of Canada’s rationed and failing system of “socialized” medicine remained an unrepentant Eugenicist as did so many others in the Canadian elite.

I found this book particularly depressing because it was buried. It does not live as it should in Canadian elite consciousness and was not taught in our schools and universities. Scores of my teachers and professors of my parents’ age never mentioned it. They had lived through it and were complicit, but after WWII, they suddenly went silent.

They were too busy bashing America during the post war years.

By the time I was a young man. Canada was leaning more and more to the left, against its traditional NATO allies, and into the arms of Cuba, Russia, China and the "nonaligned movement" creating a generalized "culture of resentment" among educated Canadians.

Still, in those days, Canadians who aspired to excellence, to becoming somebody, would go to Britain or the US for graduate school: either to the prestigious left leaning schools of Oxford, Cambridge or the University of London for graduate school (and come back with a phony posh British accent), or go south to the (poison) Ivy Leagues.

The man who best exemplified this trend was Canada's Prime Minister from 1968 to 1979 and again from 1980 to 1984, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, (a Harvard graduate) whose invention of Multiculturalism helped push Canada towards its current state as a Woke, soft tyranny at odds with all and every aspect of Western Civilization and the Judeo-Christian ethic.

Sadly, it has also moved Canada into the radical camp of Jihadi anti Zionists at home and abroad. This is demonstrated by the fact that Hamas recently thanked the Canadian government for its support, soon after its latest pogrom in Israel on October 7, 2023.

My late father was quite matter of fact about the pervasive anti-semitism in Canada that he experienced during his lifetime, and about the uneven playing field that any public institution presented to a potential Jewish candidate, whether a government position or entrance to medical or law school.

There were quotas against Jews at most major Canadian educational institutions until the late 1960s, and they are now returning under the cover of DEI which, as practiced, is a hotbed of anti-semitic anti Zionism in Canadian institutions.

What my father and his fellow Canadian Jews were unaware of is that the traditional anti-semitism that he experienced, was at the time wrapped inside a pseudo-science that was mainstreamed by the elites who ran the country. This was true when he grew up, and when he served in the Canadian army during WWII. The elites have never apologized, nor did they own up to the fact that the man on the street with his or her traditional values (and prejudices) was morally superior to the so-called elite.

Today DEI serves the same function in almost every public institution in the country. Little has changed but the externals.

The fact that Canadian “intellectual” and ruling elites were –and once again are –on the wrong side of science and morality was presaged during the American Civil War, long before Darwin’s theory of the survival of the fittest. The recent book by Julian Sher, *The North Star -Canada and the Civil War Plots Against Lincoln* (2023), shows in detail that the Canadian (British) and French Catholic establishment in Canada were solidly on the side of the Confederates.

Confederate spies were choc-a-bloc in Toronto and Montreal. They were feted by the highest orders of society, as they spied on the North, and engaged in various plots and terror against the Union. Worst of all, the elites of both English and French Canada allowed the likes of John Wilkes Booth the freedom to travel back and forth from Toronto to Montreal where he planned Lincoln’s assassination.

When I walk across Front Street in my hometown of Toronto, I think of Booth and his associates taking advantage of the British Victorian prejudices against Republicanism that contributed to the untimely death of Lincoln, one of the world’s greatest men. Thankfully, documentation suggests that the average “subject” of English-speaking Canada was pro-Union and anti-slavery.

Indeed, many young Anglo Canadian men volunteered and went south to fight for Lincoln. But there is no monument that I know of in Canada that celebrates their heroism. This is tragic. The only member of the soon to be official Canadian elite who opposed the south during the Civil War was publisher and editor, George Brown, whose newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, was for the north and against slavery.

Brown went on to become one of the pioneers pressing for independence from Britain. An (almost) independent Canada was created by the Crown in 1867, because the British knew that they had given the Americans just cause to invade Canada in revenge for the killing of Lincoln.

Creating a semi-independent Dominion in the remains of British North America became a way of maintaining British control over Canada, a British North American presence that stretched across the continent, providing a first stop for British immigrants coming to the Americas whether they stayed here. Perhaps a majority ended up in the USA after a brief stay in Canada.

So if Canadian elites and political leaders have been less than stellar, how does one explain the disproportionate excellence that so many Canadians have shown and continue to demonstrate in a variety of fields throughout the history of this country, even though its ruling elites usually make the wrong moral and policy decisions?

It seems to me that the Federal elites have never yet been sufficiently authoritarian to snuff out the creativity of their citizens. This brings me to a happier chapter in Canadian history represented on my shelf by the five-volume set of *The Notebooks of John Robert Colombo*.

Colombo was born and raised in Kitchener, Ontario in the 1930s. He earned a BA from the University of Toronto after the war, where he "fell" into what was becoming a national

movement of poets, novelists, essayists, and filmmakers. He was a friend and colleague of Leonard Cohen and facilitated the careers of Margaret Atwood and Canada's Nobel Prize winner for literature, Alice Munro. He is a gifted poet and essayist.

I consider John a mentor, colleague, and friend. He concedes that through the Group of Seven painters Canada established its visual signature before WWII, that it was after the war that Cohen, Atwood, Munro and the rest, established Canada's literary signature, and its musical signature as well, through the work of song writers like Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, Jaime Robbie Robertson and others like them. That is the Canada I grew up in.

Listening to and reading most of these creators has had a profound effect on my own writing and songwriting. But this is only the tip of the iceberg of Canadian creativity and excellence which Colombo has chronicled over his more than sixty-year career as a writer, editor and poet. Having read many of his books I can only conclude that Canadians, like his friend Northrop Frye, and many others, like actors Christopher Plummer and Jackie Burroughs (with whom I acted when a teenager) have managed to succeed despite the Canadian government, usually by cultivating an audience in the US, Britain and Europe. I fear that may be changing under the government of Canada's current Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and NDP leader, "Jagdish" Singh, with their Orwellian commitment to mass UN inspired censorship and government lawfare.

There are two, less encouraging books on my Canada shelf concerning the social and economic history of Canada. They stand side by side, because to my mind, they are related. They show that – with a very few exceptional time periods– that the Canadian ruling elite has almost never striven to create a demographic situation in which each provincial capital radiates enlightenment and civilization to ever smaller units in the countryside, as the Americans promoted in their State

capitals, so well that not even the most isolated rural hamlet was starved for culture or the possibility of democratic participation.

The first of these books, *Maximum Canada -Toward a Country of One Hundred Million*, was written by Globe and Mail Journalist, Doug Saunders. Saunders' argument is simple. He believes that for Canada to be competitively viable with other OECD nations, not only economically but culturally, the country must more than double its population.

Saunders is a British born Canadian who leans left. Despite his ideological blinders he is empirical, and his book is worth reading, for he shows that for over two hundred years Canadian government elites have with a few exceptional periods adopted a policy that motivates Canadians and new immigrants to leave the country to pursue greater opportunities abroad. He recognizes that, demographically, Canada really consists of several cities and towns that run coast to coast near the US border. He expects that all future population growth will be restricted to this area as the government has no decentralization plans.

The second of these histories is by the economist, Jeff Rubin, who demonstrates that not only have the Republican and Democratic elites contributed to the de-industrialization of the US and Canada, but recent social and economic policies by both the Canadian and US governments –except during the Trump presidency– have contributed to the destruction of the North American middle class.

I remember reading an article during the height of Canada's draconian Covid lockdowns that 250,000 Canadian family businesses had closed down. Yet the government allowed Costco to remain open, where thousands of people could far more easily get and spread Covid. At the time, I mentioned to my local bank manager that it looked like the government was intentionally destroying the middle class. He answered, "It

sure does look that way.”

In Canada, national broadcasting is a very recent phenomenon begun by a now discredited national TV and radio system, which despite massive government subsidies, provides subpar programming. There is something amateurish about most CBC productions. It is as if a group of fine arts undergraduate students got hold of an enormous budget and had all the right equipment but were provided poor direction and faulty background research.

It is the Internet which has freed Canadians but with the latest draconian legislation by Trudeau to monitor the Internet and create 250 government jobs to do so sounds more like medieval censorship than freedom in action.

Canada is allowing in one million immigrants a year. Unlike the illegal immigrants pouring into the US, most of Canada's immigrants are legal, well-heeled, and come from the rising elites of developing countries. Unhappily, they are driving up real estate prices beyond the means of “legacy Canadians,” those who were born here.

Like Americans, “legacy” Canadians are suffering from overstretched public health and social services. They are paying the price of declining social services due to this surge of new immigrants, yet are continuously harangued by the government, the media, and the educational institutions that accuse them as suffering from “whiteness,” “toxic masculinity” and “structural racism.” This is how post WWII liberal elites are compensating for the Eugenic world view of their parents: by blaming the victims. When the children of these new immigrants come to our schools, imagine what worldview they are absorbing. DEI policies make sure that their needs come first. So it looks like Doug Saunders, the author of the first of these two social and economic histories, will have his dream come true, but with unhappy results. Canada will become, is already becoming, large, and unmanageable, with

overpopulated and dense big cities near the US border, filled with well-heeled immigrants from undemocratic regimes (who drive up real estate prices beyond the means of “legacy Canadians”), and who have no understanding of Western civilization and no primary loyalty to Canada. Nor are they encouraged to do so by our educational institutions, media or government. Quite the contrary. They are taught that we are a nation of “white racists.”

This is in contrast with the “white,” “legacy” Canadians of British and European descent. If they still believe that by being born here, they have rights, will have to learn to keep their mouths shut and stand at the back of the diversity, equity, and inclusion line. As Durkheim argues, social facts have teeth.

To justify this, our elites accuse the average Canadian of “systemic racism.” This is not true. It is the elites with their identity politics and affirmative action who are racist. They have given up Eugenics and adopted DEI which, oddly, is linked to the growing medical death cult of Euthanasia in Canada. For those who still believe that the Anglo and French speaking “legacy Canadians” who built this country, and until recently had established and protected our Western institutions, despite their various racial and religious prejudices over the years, please note the words of our current Prime Minister, Davos Wunderkind, Justin Trudeau. This is what he has [announced in public](#):

“There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada”...that “makes us the first post-national state.”

We should take him at his word. Canada’s government elites, like their American counterparts, are remarkably busy trying to restrict our freedom as much as possible through draconian and restrictive legislation and censorship, usually inspired by the UN. They are so politically correct that they have even

rewritten the National Anthem. I fear we may soon be singing, "God save our (gender neutral and environmentally sensitive) King!"

It is no wonder that Jordan Peterson is so popular in Canada and the States. He is the new spokesperson for the silent majority. His books complete the Canada shelf in my library. It would be wise to listen to him.

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