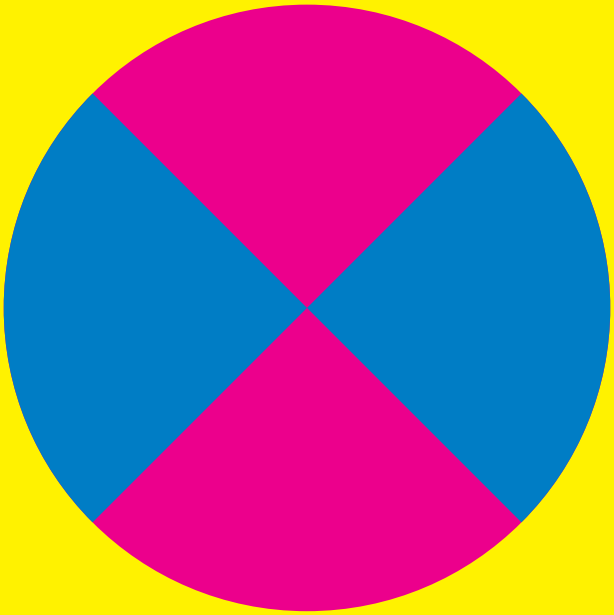
EXPANDING THE CIRCLE:

Inventing the 6 Degrees Citizen Space

Essays



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What follows are six essays written by the three of us for *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper. The series, originally titled '*Experiments in Pluralism*,' was conceived as part of the lead up to the inaugural 6 Degrees Citizen Space, held in Toronto from September 19 to 21, 2016.

Our shared notion was to use these pieces to experiment with the kind of language and ideas that might serve as the thought foundations for this annual gathering. 6 Degrees has been designed to help rethink, in the fullest sense, how societies approach immigration, refugee crises, citizenship, diversity and belonging. Our belief is that the initiative will quickly become the centre of an urgent and essential global conversation, one that will produce on an annual basis essays, debates and representations that help open the door further to new attitudes and policies.

 We are extremely grateful to Globe and Mail editor David Walmsley for his enthusiasm and support for this project. Special thanks as well to Gabe Gonda, Victor Dwyer, Jared Bland, and Hamutal Dotan.

CANADA'S MULTICULTURALISM:

A circle, ever edging outwards

John Ralston Saul

April 23, 2016

Canada is now the only Western democracy in which there is no serious argument among the citizenry or politicians over the importance of immigration. Canadians understand that immigration is not migration. It must be seen as the first step toward citizenship. And the sooner an immigrant becomes a citizen, the better.

The main complaint after the arrival of the first 25,000 Syrian refugees seems to be that more of them should have been *citizen sponsored* because it is harder to settle those who are *government assisted*. So we now need more refugees, but in that first category.

Incidentally, I believe the term should be *citizen sponsored*, not *privately sponsored*. Private implies self-interest or commerce. This is all about citizen engagement.

Seen from outside the country, our attitude toward immigration and citizenship often seems to make Canada an outlier – problematic, a contradiction, sleepwalking to disaster, even unacceptable as a real nation-state.

Over the last month in several European countries, I found that many people, of all backgrounds, educations and beliefs, were quicker than ever to say *Of course, you can believe in these things. You have a big country. You're a new country.*

Neither is true. We aren't big. For the last hundred years most immigrants have gone to a handful of big cities. And we aren't new. As a settler society we are the product of 400 years, most of it spent going through the same economic, political and social dramas as other Western countries. We are the oldest continuous democratic federation in the

world – beating Switzerland by a few months. We are the second- or third-oldest continuous democracy of any sort in the world – 168 years without breaking up, without a civil war, a coup, an absolute monarch, a dictator.

Our cities are built where Indigenous peoples prospered for thousands of years. As I pointed out in *A Fair Country,* back in 2008, First Nations and Métis peoples far outnumbered settlers into the second half of the 19th century. So Canada at its best is very much the product of the long relationship with Indigenous peoples, their approaches and philosophies; and above all, their concepts of inclusion and belonging, which today we would call immigration and citizenship. If the central characteristic of Canada is its complexity, this also is an outcome of our long relationship with Indigenous peoples. In particular we owe a great deal to the example of the Métis Nation, the very model of living complexity.

None of this lessens the reality that, for more than a century as immigrant power grew, the Indigenous-settler relationship was betrayed and great evil was done. But that in turn cannot erase the Indigenous influence on our society. That Indigenous reality is now reasserting itself. The Supreme Court of Canada's decision April 14 that re-establishes Métis and non-status Indian rights is yet another example of this.

Today, repairing the relationship with Indigenous peoples is the single most important test for Canadians. We now seem ready to play our part as their allies, but must remind ourselves every day that central to reconciliation is concrete restitution. Many of us keep coming back to the words of Chief John Kelly – "as the years go by, the circle of the Ojibway gets bigger and bigger. Canadians of all colours and religions are entering that circle. You might feel that you have roots somewhere else, but in reality, you are right here with us."

Canadians understand that immigration is not migration. It must be seen as the first step toward citizenship. And the sooner an immigrant becomes a citizen, the better.

When I find myself explaining to Europeans why our system of inclusion and diversity more or less works, I inevitably go back to those non-racial Indigenous ideas which leave space for multiple identities and multiple loyalties, for an idea of belonging which is comfortable with contradictions, which shifts humans from their autocratic role as masters of the universe to one more integrated into the place itself. This is an approach to values which is the opposite of the European-U.S. understanding of the monolithic citizen melted into a pot of national uniqueness.

All of which matters today because Canada is out on the cutting edge, doing things other countries are not. We know that the leaders of the three most powerful European countries have declared multiculturalism a failure. Which I suppose is supposed to mean that Canada is or will be a failure. But we should also know that what they mean by multiculturalism has more or less involved the abandonment of what they inaccurately call migrants into ghettos; that they imagine it involves the breaking up of society into unrelated pods, producing in the worst cases police no-go zones and failed schooling. The author of a recent biography of Tony Blair presents the former British prime minster as preferring "multiculturalism" over the "integration of immigrant communities." We know this is not at all what multiculturalism is supposed to mean. And our opinion should be worth something since we are seen as the inventors and the experimental centre of the concept.

Our great weakness as Canadians is that we have been lazy when it comes to explaining what our experiment consists in. Our excuse could be that it is, after all, an experiment. That is not good enough. The atmosphere out there in most Western countries is one of tired elites, many of them caught up in bourgeoning campaigns of fear. Canadians know all too well how contagious these are. Our last prime minister started down that road, which is one of the reasons he is out

of a job. And we know well the confused, divisive atmosphere in the United States – the discourse of walls and security. The current British Prime Minister believes he must get the immigration levels down. The French Prime Minister has just called for the banning of headscarves on students in universities. Even German Chancellor Angela Merkel, having made a great ethical gesture in 2015 to welcome one million Syrian refugees, now finds that, because Germany does not have an overarching immigration-citizenship policy and structure, it is a nightmare to organize their settlement. The result has been a political backlash. And yet we must admire the risk that Germans have taken and their determination to make it work.

What's more, we must not confuse the massive political and ethical failure of most European governments with the attitudes of large parts of the citizenry. Europe is filled with citizens throwing themselves into the crisis as volunteers. Just as the Macedonians were closing their borders, I was in the transit camp on the Athenian docks in Piraeus. At that point, they were managing a few thousand refugees. The sheds were all well organized and run by amazing volunteers – not NGOs or government. In fact, the Greeks, almost broken by their own crisis, have responded with generosity and care to the refugees' plight, just as many citizens of Calais have stepped in to support refugees in the awful camp outside their city. In southern Italy, in Germany, there are thousands of such stories. And there are thousands of study groups, professors, NGOs, activists doing whatever they can.

But the problem is so profound that the continent is failing and governments are justifying this failure by blaming others. You could call it a massive mismanagement of the end of empires; less the uncontrollable outcome of geographic proximity and more the result of 50 years of hypocrisy when it comes to Mediterranean relationships. The Brexit

movement in Britain can only be seen as a deeply romantic desire to return to another era, which itself never existed. I hear serious individuals talking about a need to *recreate* an alliance of the English-speaking peoples, as if we have all been sitting around for 40 years, waiting for Britain to come back to us. The most likely outcome of Britain voting to withdraw from the EU would be Scotland separating in order to stay in Europe. This is one of those do-I-laugh-or-do-I-cry moments.

There is a whispered conviction among many around the continent that the real problem is Islam; that it is not *absorbable* into Judeo-Christian civilization. This is the language which Christians used to use against Jews and Protestants against Catholics and vice versa. This was once the excuse in Canada for excluding Sikhs, Chinese, Japanese. And it was the excuse for trying to destroy Indigenous peoples.

Reactive panic – and crisis

The heart of the crisis lies elsewhere. Every year for seven decades Europe has been taking in large numbers of immigrants from many places. They were called many things – migrants, refugees, guest workers. The delusional assumption was that they would serve their economic purpose or be protected for a while, then go home. They didn't. And European leaders, off the record, knew they wouldn't.

And so, 70 years of lying to themselves has resulted in an immigration civilization profoundly unprepared for immigration. No attempt has been made by the EU or by individual European countries to develop an overarching, proactive immigration policy, with the necessary infrastructure both at home and in their embassies. In many cases they are doing better than they think, but their idea of themselves hides this success. The result now is a reactive panic; a crisis of drownings,

disgraceful camps, human disorder and suffering. And there is still no hint of any desire to create a dignified, balanced immigration policy with citizenship as an essential celebratory part of the whole. It is precisely now, in the midst of the crisis, that they should be developing a positive, holistic approach. If anything, the latest EU-Turkish agreement crosses basic ethical lines and so in the long run will make matters worse.

The countdown to citizenship

Let me go back for a moment to the failure of Canadians to explain ourselves to ourselves, let alone to others. There are real risks involved in this ham-handed mutism and naive triumphalism. What's more, it is unnecessary. The patterns of our immigration and citizenship history, at their best and their worst, are clear.

The idea of a broad government-supported immigration/citizenship policy goes back to the Indigenous welcome. That's how the settlers survived. It was equally central to both the New France settlement strategy and system created for the Loyalist refugees fleeing in the 1780s from the American war against Britain. In February, 1848, the first law passed by the new responsible-government parliament of Canada laid out the beginnings of a modern immigration/citizenship policy. With Confederation in 1867, the government immediately created a department for immigration and citizenship, and sent agents out around the world. Rules guiding the newcomers from immigrant status to citizenship were put in place and, ever since, that process has ranged between three and five years.

By the late 19th century, citizenship ceremonies were growing in popularity. Citizenship was a choice to be celebrated publicly. Since 1900, the annual immigration numbers have ranged between 200,000 and 400,000. In 1995 we set the yearly target at 1 per cent of the population.

The idea of a broad government-supported immigration/ citizenship policy goes back to the Indigenous welcome.

It usually ends up at around 0.7 per cent – between 250,000 and 300,000. As a point of reference: The one million refugees taken in by Germany last year, had they been shared around the EU, would have represented 0.2 per cent of the population. In many of our embassies, over half the staff looks after immigration. We were able to handle the 25,000 Syrian refugees in a few weeks because we have a large group of public servants expert in immigration, settlement and citizenship. The first thing those refugees received on disembarking in Canada was their permanent-residency status, starting them on the countdown to citizenship.

We all know that these 400 years of policy development were tarnished and regularly knocked off track by multiple insurgencies of racism and exclusion. But each of these was gradually eliminated and the main line re-established.

The philosophical trick in all of this is that immigration and citizenship have always been treated as inseparable steps. Engagement and marriage. This means that each immigrant arrives knowing that she must think of herself as a citizen, because she soon will be a citizen. This is a philosophy which changes radically everyone's attitude toward inclusion and integration. It means that language training is simply part of the package from the beginning, as is the expectation that new Canadians will get involved in volunteerism and politics – the two keys to an engaged citizenry.

A perpetual experiment

What of the multicultural misunderstanding?

Canadians seem to be moving toward other words – diversity, pluralism, inclusion, interculturalism – as we have sensed a growing confusion elsewhere. But the idea is really not so difficult.

I think of it as rooted in balance – a central Indigenous concept of how societies function. At its best a balance between the place, the group and the individual. You could also describe it as a balanced or positive tension between organized integration and celebrated diversity; a conviction that diversity and fairness are reflections of each other; that this requires a rigorous use of political restraint; an allergy to universal mythologies and ideologies. All of which means that we must be self-confident enough and tough enough to live with the reality of complexity.

This is the opposite of the tired European-U.S. insistence on monolithic identities. The Canadian concept of living in a perpetually incomplete experiment may seem radical to many in the Western world. And yet you could simply see it as a profoundly non-racial approach to civilization – one based on the idea of an inclusive circle that expands and gradually adapts as new people join us.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ARE VITAL TO TELLING CANADA'S STORY

Adrienne Clarkson

May 13, 2016

In a 1913 photograph, we can see Scandinavian immigrants, in long underwear and trousers with suspenders, looking at a blackboard that states the duties of a citizen:

1. Understand our government.

2. Take an active part in politics.

3. Assist all good causes

4. Lessen intemperance.

5. Work for others.

The underlying principle of all these injunctions is that Canadians must be able to communicate with each other in a common language.

Our officially bilingual country (English and French) brings immigrants from more than 100 countries to become citizens. It is, however, implicit in our pluralistic society that people often speak their language of origin at home, and are able to become fluent in either or both the official languages. Indigenous languages are part of our original fabric, requiring a different support and understanding.

In the 2011 census, there were more than 200 languages reported as a "home language." Nearly six million Canadians reported speaking at least two languages at home, and seven million speak French at home. Interestingly, the rate of bilingualism in Quebec among immigrants is higher than the rate for those born in Canada.

In my travels across the country I find that immigrants are keen to have their children learn both official languages. My family in the 1940s believed that French would help me get ahead. They were right. In 1999, I became the first anglophone governor-general to be fluent in French. Now, across the country, French immersion is seen to be a vital tool for immigrants to move into the mainstream. We have changed from a country that used to have "another European language" as "home language" to a country where the largest increases in "home languages" are spoken by people from Asia, North Africa and Latin America. Chinese as mother tongue leapt to one million in 2006 from 100,000 in 1971. The Indo-Pakistani languages were spoken by nearly a million Canadians in 2006 compared to 33,000 four decades before.

There are 60 Indigenous language groups, divided into 12 distinct language families. Nearly a quarter-million people reported an Indigenous mother tongue and about that many reported speaking an Indigenous language regularly at home. Although there is huge diversity, three – the Cree languages, Inuktitut and Ojibway – account for almost two-thirds of the population that have an Indigenous mother tongue. In British Columbia, however, there are over 30 Indigenous mother tongues, and most are spoken by fewer than 1,000 people. The nefarious policy of the residential schools separating the children from the land, their grandparents and their ancestors was a deliberate strategy to kill their culture.

When governor-general, I was visited by Indigenous leaders deeply concerned with the loss of languages and of the ability to transmit their culture through them. Indigenous peoples believe that everything belongs to those not yet born. Language is one of those things. More than half of Canada's native languages are spoken in B.C., and almost all are at risk of disappearing. Only about one in 20 Indigenous people in

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the province are still fluent, and most are elders. It is telling that, in the Northwest Territories, Tagalog, the language of the Philippines, is listed by more people as their mother tongue than is an Indigenous language.

In New Zealand, the Maori language has come to be part of the expression of the whole culture. About 15 per cent of New Zealanders are ethnic Maoris, and seats in the legislature have been reserved for them since 1867. Through their Constitution, the proportion has increased as their population has increased. With language comes responsibility, recognition and power. Since 1985, there have been two Maori governors-general, including the current one, Jerry Mateparae. The first one, Paul Reeves, had also been the primate of the Anglican Church of New Zealand. All churches have separate streams for the Maori language and for Maori leaders. There is a profound recognition of the necessity to maintain the Maori culture, even as that culture is participating in structures that are not indigenous to them.

Any visitor to New Zealand picking up a newspaper is struck by the fact that an English-language publication is filled with terms like *pakeha* (white) and *wahine* (woman) – Maori has permeated English and created a special kind of New Zealand language. In Canada, most of us know words like wampum and canoe, but there is no feeling that our Indigenous culture is as pervasive as it is in New Zealand.

Not to say that New Zealand's story is only a happy one – translated into Maori, their formative Treaty of Waitangi does not mean the same thing as it does in English. This has led to disputes and difficulties in application of the law and property and governments. In Canada, we have not really attempted to integrate Indigenous languages. We need to actively introduce key words, particularly conceptual language, into English and French, because language is the expression of a culture, and losing it is like losing the freedom to express yourself, and therefore the ability to be a citizen.

Unless you speak out, you cannot be connected and you cannot make decisions as equals. The freedom to speak in one's language indicates the equality that marks being a citizen. Democracy is not simply about laws or voting or constitutions; it is a culture of values, hopes, and means of expression and living life. As one Indigenous leader put it so eloquently, it is an invisible line from the heart into the past.

Language is vital to a country like Canada, because it is the basis from which we can act. In Hannah Arendt's phrase, we are "dead to the world" until we have learned how to express ourselves among other human beings. We cannot act until we tell our own story in our own language – and, in doing so, add to the ongoing experiment that is Canadian life today. We can learn who we are and who we were only by knowing the story of which we ourselves are the heroes. People cannot feel they belong if they do not have access to the languages in which they feel the most comfortable, even if English and French are the official languages. Cultures do not operate in a mechanical way – they flow out of personalities, experiences, beliefs and history.

In Canada, we have two official languages; this has always been interpreted to mean we should be able to speak and operate in both languages. We should not be hung up on the fact that bilingualism must mean that everybody speaks every word of the other's language perfectly. I remember being at meetings for Expo 67 in which francophones and anglophones spoke to each other in their own language, and yet were understood. In a country like South Africa, even in times of apartheid, Afrikaans and English could be understood, even if not spoken fluently by each language group.

By promoting French-immersion schooling, and by creating the structures which encourage francophone minorities to stabilize themselves and

begin growing again, we have reaffirmed the central role of French and of bilingualism in Canada. Surely now is the time for the same to happen with Indigenous languages. This is a national imperative. Do we really want to be responsible for the disappearance of dozens of languages proper to this place?

In Canada, we've always been able to accept and open ourselves to others. In doing so, our sense of time and of each other becomes multidimensional and complex. This is the advantage of living in a country in which many languages are encouraged and there are two official ones. With this acceptance of many languages, we continually affirm that we are accepted as immigrants. And, we are a part of a country with its structure of parliamentary democracy, the common and civil law, public health care and public education.

We must never begrudge funding for public education. Free public education is paramount to our ability to integrate an immigrant population. It is the great egalitarian principle by which we must live. It is in attending school that children – wherever they have come from, originally – acquire a sense of place in this country. It was at Kent Street and Elgin Street public schools in Ottawa that I always felt that I belonged. If we are going to continue to accommodate newcomers into society, we must continue to have well-funded public education, paid for by the state and free for all citizens. Language, either French or English, is the basis of our belonging.

In the case of the Indigenous languages, there is one further element that must never be ignored: Language gives pride and identity; it gives people confidence to know their own mother tongue, and is the basis for their being able to live their lives, for being related to each other, and for knowing their histories. All Indigenous peoples deserve to have

the ability to nourish their culture in order to sustain them for their continuing life in a Canada that continues to evolve and to welcome people from all over the world.

No longer should Indigenous peoples feel that somehow they and their languages, and therefore their culture, have been left behind deliberately in order to favour those who came to live in this land. All of us must be aware and sympathetic to how important language is – not only for expression, but also as a continuing and evolving means of identity and the basis of citizenship. Losing one's language is like losing all freedom of expression. It is the loss of a human right.

All Indigenous peoples deserve to have the ability to nourish their culture in order to sustain them for their continuing life in a Canada that continues to evolve and to welcome people from all over the world.

CANADA'S IDENTITY IS AN EXPERIMENT IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REALIZED

Charlie Foran

June 17, 2016

At a recent event in Vancouver an Irish immigrant asked me why Canada doesn't have a foundational story for its artists to tell. We don't have a statue-worthy heroine with a baby in each arm or a ripped warrior hero with a hound by his side. We don't have a national unifying myth.

The Irishman had a modest proposal. He suggested the Institute for Canadian Citizenship get to work putting that story together. He wasn't calling for a retooling of a narrative from Europe or Asia; he thought the organization should create something born of the country in 2016.

The project would yield all kinds of benefits – including, he believed, for citizenship. Culture-wise, newcomers don't have much they can identify as being the obvious local equivalent of what they left behind. No Canadian Monkey King or *Ramayana*. No Robin Hood or, indeed, the Cuchulainn of Celtic lore.

As a result, the Irishman said, new citizens don't see Canada as a vibrant cultural entity, one worthy of their already culturally divided attention. Give them the right story for this place and they'll become engaged with it. Give better-framed Canadian culture, and you'll get more active citizenship in return.

I thanked him for his thoughts. To myself, I thought: *Here we go again*.

Can a vague societal anxiety thrive for a lifetime? In English Canada it sure can. That anxiety – Do we have much of a culture? Do we much care if we don't? – has underwritten our public conversations for 70-plus years. That the root of it may be based on an inadequate conception of the collective space we inhabit is only now starting to be discussed.

The inadequate conception is of Canada as a 19th-century nation-state like so many others, with its artists proclaiming "its" poetry and singing "its" songs. Most of these other states house a dominant ethnic identity, good for the production of a dominant artistic project and, to an extent, character.

Such countries – the majority on the planet, for sure – often do possess a strong cultural identity. They do have a few fabulous stories to tell, ones they've been refining for centuries, and believe capture their essence.

But English Canada, at least, never really found its footing as one of those nations. (French Canada did, an essential point of difference.) Lucky for us, it is now too late, and we have no choice but to establish ourselves as something different – a culture that is many cultures, many stories, in a place that stretches across a continent and is richly occupied.

How far have we come in our awareness of ourselves as an experimental nation? Last October, just a few weeks into his tenure, Justin Trudeau issued a mild identity shock by telling The New York Times Magazine that he was now prime minister of the "first postnational state." Our PM also said: "There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada."

Mr. Trudeau's remarks are not without precedent in our intellectual history. A half-century ago, Marshall McLuhan made a typically playful and elusive observation about his homeland. "Canada is the only country in the world that knows how to live without an identity," he said. What Mr. McLuhan meant was far from clear to most people at the time, but he did want it known that the condition wasn't a negative. He added an intriguing follow-up: "Any sense of identity we have is our sense of density."

Regardless, the majority of thinkers and artists have struggled with our seeming underperformance as a "people." In 1942 Bruce Hutchison

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published *The Unknown Country,* now considered the pioneering foray into the Whither-the-Canadian-Identity book trade. A bulging shelf of titles have followed in its wake.

Those titles alone have often been self-explanatory: *What is a Canadian?* and *The Unfinished Canadian* come readily to mind. Our cultural identity has usually come under the greatest scrutiny, and been found the most anxiety-producing. Laments have included a tendency to be too small, too regional, too marginal, too easily overlooked, or simply dismissed.

Those anxieties make sense. After all, the arts – theatre, film, music, dance, books – are meant to tell you where you *really* live. Here is the country of the soul, not the census: Shouldn't every citizen wish to belong there?

Apparently not. Mordecai Richler, firing daggers from his 1960s exile in London, declared Canada to be "here a professor, there a poet, and in between thousands of miles of wheat and indifference." (He was being negative.) In their 1992 song *Courage*, the Tragically Hip celebrated artists like the novelist Hugh MacLennan who tried surviving in that unknown country.

And piss *on all of your background*, Gord Downie sang of the bad Canadian habit of denigrating our own. *And* piss *on all your surroundings*.

It has certainly been a slow awakening. In 1972, a young Margaret Atwood willed a unity onto the then-nascent notion of a Canadian literature with her influential thematic study, *Survival*. "When I discovered the shape of the national tradition I was depressed," she admitted. The immigrant "is confronted only by a nebulosity, a blank: no ready-made ideology is provided for him."

Ms. Atwood famously declared the act of cultural, political and, yes, meteorological "survival" in such an environment to be our determining narrative. Not long afterward, the journalist June Callwood wondered if the actual daily practice of civility – in part, our overpraised politeness – might be the Canadian unifier. Truth be told, neither concept goes far enough toward the territory of heroic statuary or stirring legend.

Here we are in 2016, when few dispute any longer the unseemly length of English Canada's colonial hangover. For the first century of nationhood, we didn't bother moving away from imported and inherited customs and thinking, a stark disavowal of lived history and geography.

Canada in the 21st century is certainly an energized place by comparison. Our cultural industries are big businesses and our artists are reasonably supported. Audiences for most of the arts are on a steady rise.

Even so, we continue to export much of our acting and musical talent, ignore our films, keep Canadian theatre largely in the commercial margins, and at the moment appear destined to outlast the era of brilliant long-form television without making a significant contribution to it – unlike, say, tiny Norway or Denmark.

The senior film producer Robert Lantos fumed in The Globe and Mail at the CRTC's rejection of an all-Canadian movie channel under the "mandatory carriage" category, calling the chairman "utterly blind to the cultural imperatives of what it takes to be a nation." That was last weekend. Mr. Lantos also lamented the modest Canadian box office for *Remember*, the latest film by Atom Egoyan. Add Paul Gross's impressive *Hyena Road* to the predictable list of the predictably neglected.

Given these ongoing challenges for Canadian arts and artists, why then would anyone think it lucky for English Canada to be too late to create an old-fashioned cultural nation? Consider the Prime Minister's comments again, especially his calling us the "first postnational state."

Like so much of the focus of the new government, the words seem calculated to change the direction of public thought. In the months since the election, the Liberals have proposed lots of new words for fresh thinking: reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, to name a few.

If this was Justin Trudeau's intent, it is worthy. We do need new language to describe this vast, improbable country called 21st-century Canada. We do need to find a way to inhabit our entire cultural space.

To do so, we must get past one easy misconception – the outdated nation-state model – and one harder reality: the historic comfort level among Canadians with conceiving of themselves as parts of smaller, cozier self-definitions, as well an attendant incuriosity about who else lives reasonably nearby.

The launching point for this project is obvious. Indigenous Canada is where we all live, in terms of geography, spirit, and history. In order for that to be real and meaningful, we must start with the stark: that a cultural genocide occurred, and most of us were unaware or, perhaps, just not concerned enough. Artistic expressions of these truths are necessary, and can only help.

Overall, Canada as an experimental cultural space requires the right spirit in order to take shape. That spirit, simply, is an openness to having your history unsettled and your mind changed. As well, a certain comfort level with complexity and irresolution is probably good. In her forthcoming book,

The Promise of Canada, Charlotte Gray calls us an "unfinished and perhaps unfinishable project." That sounds about right.

At the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, the spoken-word artist Shane Koyczan gained national attention with his poem *We Are More*. Canadians thrilled to lines such as "We are an idea in the process of being realized" and "We are an experiment going right for a change."

But as noteworthy as the poem itself was Mr. Koyczan's decision in the summer of 2015 to not perform *We Are More* on Canada Day. On Facebook he cited the "dark path" the country had gone down in the subsequent years, citing among other concerns the Harper government's attempt to create two categories of citizens, as well as its refusal to investigate missing indigenous Canadians seriously.

That was a long 11 months – and one government – ago, but I hope Shane Koyczan continues to have high expectations for our unfolding experiment. I hope, too, he writes more poems about Canada in the process of being realized.

Overall, Canada as an experimental cultural space requires the right spirit in order to take shape. That spirit, simply, is an openness to having your history unsettled and your mind changed.

INTEGRAL TO CANADA'S ECONOMY, IMMIGRANTS DESERVE MORE SUPPORT

John Ralston Saul

July 22, 2016

One of my great-grandfathers came from a family so poor that his parents abandoned him in Trafalgar Square. He somehow ended up in the hands of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was sent from London to Canada as an indentured child – a virtual slave – and began his new life as one of those little boys running messages up and down the transcontinental trains.

He ended up driving the trains – chief engineers, I believe they were called. His son became a doctor in Winnipeg, then ran the St. Boniface Hospital. His daughter married a businessman, Merle Saul, my grandfather – and perhaps more successful as a hockey player. He played rover, a position for the fastest, most agile. His grandfather had immigrated to Montreal in the 1840s to work on the great Victoria Bridge. He was an illiterate stonemason and ended up in Camden East, west of Kingston, Ont., with a 100-acre land grant. More important, he became a very successful builder.

His youngest son married the descendant of United Empire Loyalists – that is, a family of refugees who'd arrived from the United States in the 1780s having lost everything. They seem to have built solid, if unremarkable, lives in and around the neighbouring town of Napanee.

In any case, that youngest son and his new wife moved out to Winnipeg in the 1890s, and did well – Saul and Irish, builders of large stone buildings.

His grandson, my father, left university in 1940 to volunteer for the Winnipeg Rifles and found himself landing in the first wave on D-Day. He had already married a girl he fell in love with in England while waiting to be sent to fight – a war bride. Forty-eight thousand of them came to Canada as young wives, bringing 21,000 Canadian babies and

small children with them. Immigrants. I call them the *refugees of love*. They had left family and country to follow their husbands to a land they didn't know.

As for me, I married a refugee who arrived here as a small child. They had lost everything, and she did pretty well.

All of these are immigrant stories; a surprising number are refugee stories. All people making their way. Contributing. Some are ordinary stories. Some extraordinary. The small abandoned boy in Trafalgar Square. The young woman following a man to a country she knew only through him. The young man running up the beach of Normandy on the cusp of history. The little refugee girl becoming governor-general.

So, when I hear people debating the economics of immigration and refugees, I am always surprised.

Speaking for my own family, trickling in here over two and a half centuries, we all arrived with nothing, except my mother who arrived with a little boy, my older brother. So, yes, some of us arrived with families, the core of Canada's success. And we brought our ambitions, our skills, our talents, our hopes. And we made our way.

Our stories have key shared elements. We were all products of the public school system, all people without privilege, and the Canadian system gave support to each to help with the transition. It seems to me that, from the immigrant point of view, Canada has been built in good part by people who arrived in need, received some form of support, and reinvented themselves. For several centuries much of that support came from Indigenous peoples, who were, in effect, the government of what is now called Canada.

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that immigration and citizenship have never been, at their core, linked to money.

Upholding a fine tradition

I thought about these stories when Adrienne Clarkson and I were at a Toronto airport terminal, greeting government-sponsored Syrian refugees as they left their plane. Most of the adults were farmers or mechanics or drivers or bakers, or had had other jobs requiring skills, but not a lot of education. There were some teachers. Not many.

Twenty-seven thousand Syrians so far; by this year's end, perhaps 50,000. This is the tradition of Canadian refugee policy at its best. Somewhere between 30,000 and 70,000 at a time: the Vietnamese boat people in 1979-80, the Czechs in 1968, the Hungarians in 1956, the Vietnam War non-consenting Americans, Chileans, Ismailis, Tamils. That refugee tradition goes back to the almost 50,000 United Empire Loyalists in the 18th century.

With Syria, Canada made a very specific choice – to take families in exile in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Because of the terrible rates of refugee drownings in the Mediterranean, we often forget that those with some money and often more education have tended to take the European route. It requires resources to make your way through the military and political blockages, through the human smugglers; even if the reality is highly dangerous.

By taking families, we have reached out to the young, who have been unable to go to school for years. This is the exact opposite of the now-defunct Immigrant Investor Program and the suspended Immigrant Investor Venture Capital Pilot Program which, stripped of rhetoric, were about selling citizenship. They were devoid of the ethical core that goes with citizenship. And immigration to Canada is meant to be about just that. Citizenship.

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that immigration and citizenship have never been, at their core, linked to money. Some come with finances – but most have little or none. And we have had a growing number of highly educated immigrants. But what makes our system work, including its economics, is the ethical idea that immigration is inextricably bound to citizenship and therefore to belonging. That idea of belonging is not tied to conformity – to the idea that we must melt into a mold which will make us all the same.

If anything, it is our comfort with difference that produces economic drive, just as it has fed scientific innovation. And a cultural flowering – almost a third of those to win the Giller Prize for fiction have been foreign born. More than a third of some 18,000 Canada Research Chairs at universities across the country are foreign born. These are not utilitarian outcomes. They are attached to the complex Canadian idea of belonging, which brings these pieces together.

Let me go back to the economy. The numbers are startlingly clear. After four to seven years here, the likelihood a new Canadian will own a business overtakes that of someone Canadian born. These may be smaller companies, but as Statistics Canada points out, after a generation, corporations are calculated in the Canadian-born category. And so we miss something special.

As co-chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, I follow this closely. My own sense is that the way we do our numbers is causing us to miss a revolutionary phenomenon – the rebirth of an economy of multigenerational, private, family-owned corporations. And these are largely the creation of new Canadians. In the lead up to the 6 Degrees Citizen Space gathering in Toronto in September, we are studying this phenomenon in partnership with the Centre for International Governance Innovation and The Vancity Group.

The astonishing thing is that studies everywhere in the West – by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Union, by American universities – all demonstrate the positive economic force of immigration, whether it be its effect on growth, innovation or wealth creation. They all show that, financially, immigrants contribute more to social services than they receive. But there is an equally clear negative factor. The more this positive reality is treated as a utilitarian outcome separated from culture and from how diversity works, the more those who see themselves as custodians of the country's past become frightened and convinced that money is flowing out; that immigration is an economic negative. This utilitarian error lays at the heart of Brexit, but also that of the rising fear, populism and racism in the United States and continental Europe. This utilitarian approach has been the EU's biggest mistake.

But utilitarianism has also had effects in Canada beyond the Immigrant Investor Program, as well as beyond the rampant misuse over the last decade of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Certain corporate sectoral lobbies want cheap labour unattached to social responsibility. They have pushed Canada to adopt policies inspired by the failed and socially disastrous European guest-worker policies. There was a bit of an ethical pushback near the end of the Stephen Harper era. And it is true that very limited parts of the foreign workers program are useful to precise sectors and workers, if strictly and justly administered. But the main contradiction remains – at its core, the policy denies the essential ethical link between immigration and citizenship.

And it highlights a risk: that we may be on the edge of forgetting that immigration to Canada has mainly been based on strong public and citizen support, to ensure a fast start for newcomers. This idea goes back to the sustained welcome given by Indigenous peoples, the New France support for immigrants and the Canadian colonial support

for the Loyalists. Over the centuries this support was often a mix of government investment and citizen adoption of earlier arrivals by their own community. The decision to welcome the Syrians reminds us of that long history of public and citizen support.

Why would we forget what works? Because utilitarian economics attacks as wasteful costs what we used to see as public investments in the country's future. Utilitarianism takes us back to attitudes that produced the exploitation of Chinese railway workers, which in turn led to the head tax. Yet all of us, all our families, benefited from the reality of public investment in immigration and citizenship.

Much more we could do

What would this mean today? What are we not doing, or not doing enough?

First, we seem to forget that our society and our economy were built from 1850 on the wealth of public education.

Today that simple strategy is more important than ever. In an urban society, newcomers need to adjust much faster. Immigration often comes with language difficulties and cultural complexities. Both require much smaller classes for students. A monolithic group of middle-class children can get by in classes of 30 students. A complex school with many newcomers needs classes of 20 at the most and a greater emphasis on all those adjustment phenomena. That means more teachers. Many more.

And volunteer mentoring programs like Pathways to Education have a strategic role to play. Canada is a world leader in volunteerism, but these kids, whose parents are themselves struggling with language and adjustment, need the support of established citizens. This is about much more than simple tutoring.

After four to seven years here, the likelihood a new Canadian will own a business overtakes that of someone Canadian born.

And while it is true that new Canadians are above-average creators of companies and some of our large corporations have serious diversity programs, other companies as well as our schools, colleges, universities and governments are lagging behind in support programs.

There are not nearly enough courses available on how our bureaucracies work, on regulatory structures, on business law, on the culture of business in Canada. There seems to be little understanding in the big urban centres that new Canadian entrepreneurs often prefer to install themselves in suburbs or smaller cities. This requires a different approach to training programs.

As I looked through the many studies which have been done, the message keeps coming back to the lack of professional networks. I was left with the sense that basic things are not being done – or not done enough. Have chambers of commerce thrown themselves into helping new Canadians find their way? Are business schools – so obsessed with overcharging for their services – reaching out to help new Canadians get started? Who is providing easily available advice on professional norms, on how people act in business situations? Treat each other? In a very good Maytree and Metcalf Foundation report, we learn of initiatives being taken in the Netherlands and in Finland. In a Conference Board of Canada report, it is clear that businesses still do not take advantage of the language skills of new Canadians when it comes to international possibilities.

And despite enormous pressure to change over the years, professional self-regulating bodies continue to grumble and to obstruct when it comes to the equivalence of foreign qualifications. This can be seen as a way to protect their advantages. By limiting membership in their profession, they limit competition. This is classic protectionism.

Those old self-regulation models of the professions are increasingly an obstacle to maximizing the contributions of new Canadians. Germany – the champion of tough professional standards! – is now moving ahead of Canada by setting up clear, efficient equivalency rules for immigrating professionals.

In spite of all these problems, immigrants and new citizens continue to be important drivers of our economy. And they quickly become participants in society, and catch on to the volunteerism ethic. But Canada has never been a place of economic ease or easily shared well-being. If it works, it is because we have designed social agreements and public policies to support individual action.

It is fashionable to insist that everything changes. And some things do change. But social behaviour and its economic outcomes are pretty stable factors in all societies. The Canadian idea that an immigrant is a citizen in the making is tied to the idea of both public support and volunteerism. And all of this makes it possible and essential that we will adjust and act aggressively to ensure that new citizens get their chance. At this point, I would say that they are making their effort, while our constituted society is lagging behind.

IN MAKING ROOM FOR OTHERS, WE MAKE ROOM FOR OURSELVES – AND FOR CANADA

Adrienne Clarkson

August 19, 2016

Recently, I was on the Queen streetcar in Toronto when a woman pushing twins in a stroller attempted to get up the steps. A man with dreadlocks wearing a pinstripe suit and a lady with a patent-leather handbag rushed to her aid and, after a brief struggle, she landed safely and pushed the stroller down the aisle. The twins, a boy and girl, stared apprehensively at the rest of us. People cleared the seats around them so the stroller had lots of room and the mother could sit.

In Canada we are used to making space. Most of us, or our parents or grandparents, had room made for us in this country. Whether, like me, they got on a Red Cross exchange boat in 1942 that carried 30 per cent more passengers than it legally should have, or were plucked from a Vietnamese refugee camp in Hong Kong in the 1970s and landed in Edmonton in mid-winter, or were flown from Chile to Vancouver after the 1973 coup, or fetched up in Montreal as a deserter from the U.S. Army in 1979 – we were driven here by forces beyond our control.

There is something particular about Canada, with its atmosphere of benevolent neglect, of letting people alone, that makes it possible for those who arrive with nothing, to sense that they can belong and be part of something they can help to construct.

I think it has to do with the negotiation of space. It isn't just that we live in an enormous country, the second-largest in the world. It isn't just because our population doesn't match that land mass. It is because we have come to a country where we have created what Montreal-born playwright Olivier Kemeid calls the empire of the dispossessed. The twins in their stroller, the people who made room for them, are part of that continuing stream. As Canadians, we are all part of the politics of that empire.

My own experience as a refugee during the Second World War exemplifies this. I know very well what it is like to have room made for me, to know what it is like to go somewhere unknown and be taken in. Personally, my family never felt that anyone was making space for us that would not otherwise have existed. So, to me, always, Canada is open and spacious. Canada can welcome others as it did me.

I think this is very profound in the psyches of most of us Canadians. We don't know why we feel that way; that's just the way it is. We are busily creating our empire because we know what it is like to have nothing. I negotiated my space in this country just as somebody who would later come from Dar es Salaam, Ho Chi Minh City or Belgrade would do.

And I am sure that none of us, in negotiating that space, in becoming what we have become in this country, has stayed the same as we would have, had we remained where we were born. The context would have been so different, the conditions so varied, that, once here, we have negotiated something which I call a political space for ourselves.

This political space exists because Canada has given us a wide berth and a lodging that attaches us to something larger than simply our race or our culture or our religion or language. I'm convinced that it has to do with the geography, the space and the climate. We now belong to associations such as parent-teacher, neighbourhood ratepayers, Rotary. We have settled.

Moving beyond our checkered past

With the notable exception of the Indigenous peoples, we are all immigrants to this country. But our history of immigration has been tarnished. If all space is politically negotiated, we have certainly gone through times in which the politics have betrayed our ethical sensibility.

What distinguishes Canada from many other countries is that, once we had decided we would be inclusive, we did it consciously, with purpose.

There were also the years when we passed legislation to restrict immigration, such as discouraging the Chinese from entering Canada by inflicting the notorious head tax, evicting Doukhobors from the land they had worked and made fruitful for years in Saskatchewan, and refusing shamefully to take in Jews we knew were being persecuted in the 1930s.

But we have been able to acknowledge these disgraceful actions and, more important, we have been able to change and we have been conscious in making that change. Consciousness is also a political act on behalf of a country. People who behave in an unconscious manner do not know what they are doing and they will hurt, maim and distort the historical context in which they live. What distinguishes Canada from many other countries is that, once we had decided we would be inclusive, we did it consciously, with purpose.

We have learned much of this generosity from the way in which the Indigenous peoples welcomed us: They taught us how to use canoes to navigate the waterways that took us to the heart of the continent we then claimed as ours. They showed us how to live in the wilderness and how to survive the cold.

This generosity made it possible for us to have a long history in giving. For most of my life, we were a country that cared for the world. With institutions like the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), we gave aid in areas such as education, health and agriculture.

Graduates of universities went abroad with the World University Service and Canadian University Service Overseas. In the latter part of the 20th century, it was considered normal to go to newly independent Rwanda or Tanzania and work to establish universities there. We dropped racial barriers and opened our doors to the world.

Our climate has also been a formative force on our national character. Our climate *is* our character. You cannot live in a country with seasons that range from freezing to brutally hot without acknowledging a need for co-operation. After every major snowstorm there seems to be a front-page story about a farmer trudging through the drifts to invite stranded motorists to come and warm up or spend the night.

Reading these stories, we recognize ourselves. In the recent Fort McMurray fire, 1.5 million acres burned and 88,000 people were evacuated. Only two died – as a result of a traffic accident. In 2003, during a scorching heat wave that hit France, 14,802 mostly elderly people died from heat-related causes in their homes. Too few thought to knock on doors and ask if anyone needed help.

For some years now, there has been a phenomenon in coffee shops known as "pay it forward." Someone in line will pay for the next customer's coffee, and that person, in turn, will pay for the next person behind them. Eventually, of course, the chain is broken; someone doesn't pay it forward and the generosity ends.

But the fun is in seeing how long that takes. A few years back, a record was set in a Tim Hortons franchise in Winnipeg. Over the course of three hours, on a freezing morning just before Christmas, 228 people in the drive-thru line paid for the order of the next customer.

These acts are something that grow out of our inhospitable climate and the way in which we were originally welcomed by the Indigenous peoples.

Today, in any citizenship ceremony in Canada (and we have 2,900 a year), if there are 49 new citizens taking the oath, they will come, on average, from 25 different countries. This astounding feat is matched nowhere else.

Eighty-six per cent of people who move to Canada stay to become citizens – the highest rate in the world. (The U.S. rate is just half that, 44 per cent.) I believe people take up Canadian citizenship because they know, having lived here for three to five years, that we want them to be citizens. We don't declare love to them, because that's not what Canadians do, but they see that they will be able to be at ease here, that we are willing to include them and that they will be able to live their lives relatively free of rejection and stereotypes.

Immigrants who become citizens take it very seriously and, as the findings of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) survey, Ballots & Belonging, indicate, their exercise of the vote shows that. Immigrants who'd been Canadian citizens for less than 10 years turned out 70 per cent for the federal election last fall. Immigrants with more than 10 years turned out at 76 per cent.

Even before becoming citizens, immigrants volunteer at a rate of 38 per cent, which is slightly below the 45 per cent of people (over 15) who were born in Canada. But immigrants tend to donate more time – 162 hours a year, on average, versus 152. Immigrants are also just as likely to donate money, but they give more of it – in 2010, an average of $554 versus $409 for those who are Canadian-born. Even immigrants with lower incomes contribute more – those with an annual household income of less than $40,000 gave an average of $404 compared with $214 for their homegrown counterparts.

As for political engagement, 78 per cent of new citizens indicated in the ICC's survey that they had discussed the last election and searched for information about it and their local candidate. Three-quarters said they'd voted in their first Canadian election because voting is important and they wanted to have their voices heard. Now, 13 per cent of our members of Parliament are foreign-born.

Looking at these statistics, it is evident that the integration process fostered by citizenship is moving at a good pace. Not that we should be complacent. The ICC stats also show that (political parties, take note) only one-quarter of the new citizens had had candidates actually knock on their doors. And because newcomers are seizing upon the space being made for them, Canadian-born citizens should realize that they have to participate as well.

Giving all Canadians their rightful turn

Voting is only one aspect of the way in which we can help people to belong; the important thing about our relationship to each other as citizens and to the nation is the social mobility made accessible through our interaction with others, our public education, and through the democratic freedoms we enjoy.

Within the five or six years that newcomers usually have to wait to become full-fledged citizens in Canada, they learn how to assess what their life will be like if they commit to this country. This period of engagement seems to be particularly fruitful; it has been to our benefit and will continue to be – as of 2030, Canada's net population growth will be entirely attributable to immigration. This will make it possible for us to continue to nurture the kind of society we have established: its medical benefits, public education, cultural activities and, of course, infrastructure such as roads and hospitals.

If we do not have a steady increase in population, we won't have the money required to support all this. We need our immigrants and new citizens to become part of Canada if we are to maintain the country as we know and love it. And we will change and adapt as we receive people from around the world.

For most of my adult life, I have watched people drive through an intersection in my neighbourhood. It's a four-way-stop, and everyone always takes their rightful turn. Never have I seen an accident or someone trying to run straight through.

This is, for me, a metaphor of how we have behaved in Canada: We are willing to wait for our turn – because we know that we're going to get one.

THERE ARE FEW THINGS LESS CANADIAN THAN HATRED AND FEAR

Charlie Foran

September 17, 2016

This past Canada Day I sat at a table with people from Albania, Palestine and Afghanistan. They were candidates for citizenship, and I was moderating a conversation at a ceremony being co-hosted by Parks Canada and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC). Two hundred of us had gathered in a tent next to where the Rideau Canal meets the Ottawa River. It was a beautiful morning in the capital.

As so often during these roundtables, the conversation kept casting ahead to the future. Everyone had plans, both for themselves and their loved ones: better jobs, more education, kids who would most certainly grow up to be engineers and doctors.

The table was dominated by three sisters, a mother, one husband, and two small children – all of them from an extended Afghan family. Only a single sister was becoming a citizen that day – her older sibling already had citizenship; her younger was in the process of getting one – but family members were happy to talk. The women in particular wanted to share their astonishment at the difference Canada was already making to their lives.

Foremost was the miracle of gender equality. To find themselves in a society where women could be educated and employed, protected by law – and independent of lifestyle – was astonishing.

A congruent miracle was the blossoming of their waking dreams. Put simply, these Afghan women now felt they could dream aloud about what they and their children, daughters and sons alike, could expect from life, and might well achieve.

I asked why they couldn't grow such dreams back home. After a pause, the young woman about to swear her oath explained that, in effect,

instability, social custom and endemic violence had made difficult – or just too painful – even the private nurturing of hopes.

"In Afghanistan," she told the table, "I would get up in the morning, make tea, and then just think about how to survive the day. Nothing more." The Palestinian man nodded in agreement and the Albanian, an older woman, recalled with dismay her early adulthood under the dictator Enver Hoxha, who ruled her country for four decades until 1985.

The conversation has stayed with me. I am pleased that newcomers to Canada feel they can dream the same things many of us take as our birthright. I am also sorry that in other countries – and yes, for certain marginalized groups right here – such reveries remain fraught. Aren't the majority of us lucky to be living in a place of healthy dreaming?

All nations should keep talking to themselves about their collective societal project. (Only countries that respect freedom of expression get to do so, but that is a different, if not unrelated, subject.) For an immigrant nation such as Canada, these exchanges are essential.

They allow for assertions and reassertions of core principles and benchmarks. They also constitute necessary gut checks about gaps between rhetoric and reality, and challenge the too complacent stories we sometimes tell concerning how well we are doing.

But the accelerated evolution of Canada into one of the most diverse countries on the planet, its prosperity fuelled not so much by the constant inflow of newcomers as by their decisions to become citizens in large numbers, isn't the primary reason to keep talking.

Think of the planet as a circle. That shouldn't be so hard. No one really lives outside this circle – how could they?

Instead, it is the newness of this distinctly 21st-century nation, this "first postnational state" referenced by Prime Minister Trudeau earlier this year, that obliges ongoing conversations about our unfolding experiment in pluralism.

Experiments start from doubt and work toward discovery. For sure, we could use more doubt about how we have framed our history to date, most emphatically with regard to Indigenous peoples. We also may want to doubt our inherited notions of official languages and examine more closely the true engines of our economy, in particular the ways that diversity fuels prosperity.

At the other end could lie the discovery of the actual "space" we occupy together. That space is obviously geographic. But it is equally social, historical, linguistic and cultural. This Canada isn't what most of us imagine it to be – if it ever really was.

Identifying our emerging nation isn't wishful thinking. Not in 2016. In the year of Donald Trump and European nativism, of what Globe and Mail columnist Doug Saunders calls the global "reflex appeal to fear," such a project is a show of confidence in our experiment, and in our better natures.

This past week 67 per cent of polled Canadians apparently supported the proposition that immigrants should be screened for "anti-Canadian values." Is that worrisome? A little bit. But the poll itself, triggered by the crass calculations of a candidate for her party's leadership, may have served as an inadvertent reflex appeal to fear. Ask a simplistic question, get a simplistic answer. As always, it isn't hard to find the right group of respondents to go down a dark road of negativity.

To paraphrase the author Pico Iyer, alienness as an expressed "fear" is rarely about other actual people or places. It is most often an echo sounding from the pebble dropped into the deep well of our unexamined prejudices and unworthy thoughts.

The notion of immigrants suddenly arriving with the virus of "anti-Canadian values" – whatever those might be – isn't only ahistorical nonsense. How, for instance, would we have fared over the last century if we'd measured, by this arbitrary yardstick of acceptability, immigrants from early-20th-century Ukraine or post-Second World War Italy and Greece, 1980s Vietnam or dawn-of-the-millennium China and Korea. The exercise feels like not-so-thinly-veiled Islamophobia.

Such a response isn't just ugly; it is a collateral rejection of the wakeful dreams of those women and men at the citizenship ceremony in Ottawa. Are their hopes and yearnings not identical to our own? They sure sound the same. Likewise their unexamined prejudices and unworthy thoughts. Everyone has them, too.

It is important to speak frankly here. All of us are accidents of time and place. None of us did anything to deserve easier access to everyday dreams, and none of us can claim a superior genetic composition or a bigger, shinier heart. Maybe this truth is too obvious for most people to remark upon. Or is it too troubling in its denial of a sense of superiority based on nothing more than happenstance?

Try finding six degrees of separation between any two human beings in 2016. In Canada, in Toronto, you're lucky to get to three or four.

We're all that connected, at least by association, and we are all that interdependent, at least by being human. The rest, in a sense, is what we choose to make of our proximity.

Other people are scary and the world is a nasty place; or other people are neighbours and the world is a realm of possibilities. Nations are crumbling fortresses, armed to repel; or nations are complex spaces where citizens meet.

Think of the planet as a circle. That shouldn't be so hard. No one really lives outside this circle – how could they? Our challenge is one of empathy. Are we capable of it? Can we imagine the other? Respect the other? Live with the other?

We do have the small mercy of mutual dependency and the sweet expectation of becoming part of something larger and more expansive. And the circle promises this: You are right here with us and we are right here with you. Watch what we can do together.

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, the 26th Governor General of Canada (1999-2005), is co-founder and co-chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. She delivered the CBC Massey Lectures in 2014, entitled *Belonging: The Paradox of Citizenship*.

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6 Degrees
6 Degrees is the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's global forum exploring inclusion and citizenship in the 21st century. This three-day citizen space brings thinkers, doers, artists, politicians, and civil society leaders to Toronto each September to ask pertinent questions and find useful answers about one of the essential challenges of our time: developing inclusive societies.

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship
Powered by a passionate and committed national network, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) delivers programs and special projects that inspire inclusion, create opportunities to connect, and encourage active citizenship. The ICC is a national charity co-founded by The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul.

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