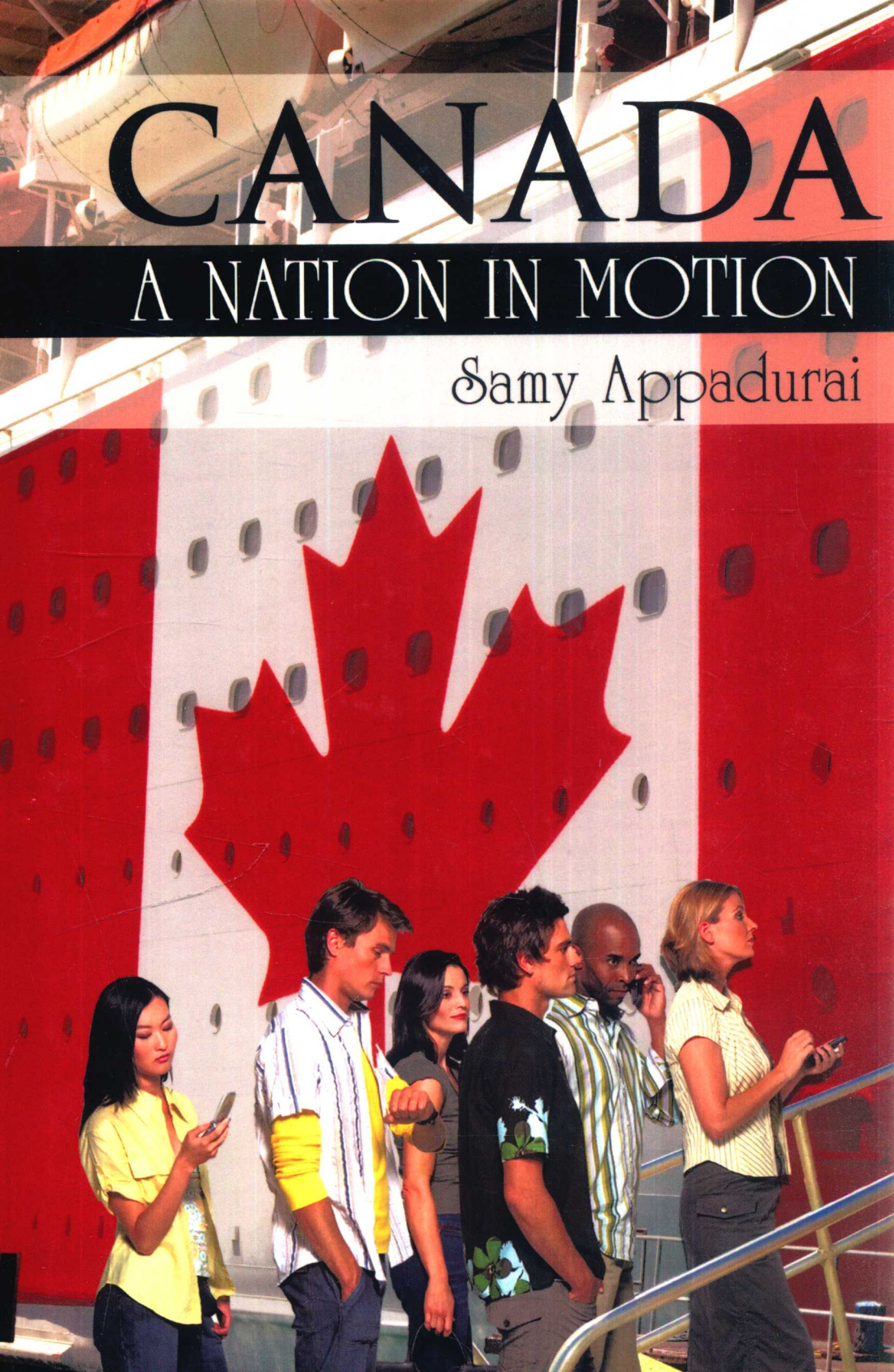


CANADA

A NATION IN MOTION

Samy Appadurai



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CANADA

FOREWORD

by
Dr. Andrew Linder

It is my very great honour to call to your special attention a man I have admired since I met him a decade ago, Mr. Samy Appadurai. He is a scholar, community activist, educator, policy advocate, and the host of a popular television program on Tamil One (Rogers.868). He could match the populist mayor of Toronto for the many calls to which he responds helping those who have difficulty understanding and joining that “Canadian Mosaic” which is accurately described as in motion, its trajectory not fully determined. That is why we need to listen to someone who sees matters equally from the perspective of an unstable world looking at Canada and from the point of view of a proud Canadian enchanted by and grateful to the land which gave his people refuge, as it had successive waves from its Scottish, British and Irish immigrants which followed the French to that astonishing variety of cultures which have arrived and continue to arrive to a land accurately and ironically described in Samy Appadurai’s first work by its title, *Canada—The Meat of the World Sandwich* (2009).

Of supreme value in this work is its author's deep attachment and gratitude to a country which gave his people an opportunity to feel at home that other nations deny, even when they grudgingly allow refugees fleeing dreadful conditions to enter. "Mr. Samy", as he is widely known in his community, takes to Canada like a duck to water. It is touching and all too rare to find at the beginning of a serious work on public policy, the author repeating the oath he took when he became a Canadian citizen. Clearly, Mr. Samy believes that his citizenship confers not only the benefits that make our country so attractive, but beyond that, obligations which we may pledge unthinkingly. Not so Samy Appadurai.

He is a man after my own heart, an "educator" in the best sense of the word, *a pundit*, "a teacher", as it meant in my youth, remembering my inspirations, my own teachers, in whose shadow I am not fit to walk. If there is any complaint, it is that the author of ***Canada—A Nation in Motion*** glides easily in this work among policy advice and deep thinking about the nature of human migration, and comes all too suddenly to startling intelligent and valuable advice to policy makers based on what makes great civilizations rise and fall. He comes from an ancient civilization with a long perspective and needs to be patient with a young giant, Canada, a country which does not realize its own blessings as the author makes wonderfully clear.

We "boat people", whether we came on Scottish or Irish ships earlier, or later on Jewish, Sikh or Tamil ships escaping dreadful conditions, or else by plane as a professional or investor seeing opportunities for upward mobility or simply a person who came here to breathe clean air and drink clean water, we need, all of us, recognize and show gratitude for that valuable gift we were given when we were allowed to land on

Canada's shores. My own family came to Canada in 1957 on a boat from Rotterdam sailing late in the season. It sank some two years later, one of the great disasters before travel by plane became the first step toward the global village in which my students Tweet before after, and regrettably during class. We were refugees from the Hungarian Revolution, as traumatized as those Tamil people who came decades later also by boat, an event which is explained in the most balanced and intelligent way in this work. Indeed, an admirable quality of *Canada—A Nation in Motion* is precisely its calm, common sense and clear-sightedness, the author's ability to see matters from the most varied perspective. That is especially useful when discussing matters such as immigration which generate passion and cloud judgment.

Samy Appadurai gives especially valuable advice in what has become a troubled area of government policy by which unworthy immigrants crowd out those absolutely needed if Canada is to prosper. My parents arrived in Canada over the objections of my "Jewish Tiger" Dad, an ardent Zionist intent on immigrating to Israel. But no, this was my Mother's "promised land" as she insisted to her last days, and she thrived here from the first playing something of a role Mr. Samy plays helping those who find the transition hard and Canada's social rules unfathomable. In those days, immigration was directed to those born to the British culture, and even in Quebec marked by a British Union Jack in one corner of the classroom, the old Canadian flag with a Union Jack in the other, the singing of British anthem along with the Canadian anthem each morning, and a very pronounced emphasis on "our" culture and heritage which was distinctly and narrowly rooted in the British Isles. Singing Christian hymns was very odd in a classroom largely Jewish, but Quebec's school system was divided according to the design of the original English and French people into a largely

French Catholic and a largely English Protestant system, giving my parents' beloved sons the choice of being altar boys at mass or singing Protestant hymns that I rather liked and sing loudly in the shower to this day. My point is that this was then a wonderful place, but not exactly comfortable with immigrants who did not like their food bland or understand British manners and the rites of the Church of England. Mr. Appadurai is very observant about this period, considering that he would not even have dreamt in those days that he would lead his sunset years in distant Canada.

My parents worked hard from the day we landed till they were no longer able to work. My father was a shoemaker and my mother a dressmaker, neither having much education as Jews in Europe who experienced what Tamil people experience more recently. There was little opportunity and much discrimination even in Canada, but gradually the country changed and became a wonderful land of opportunity. I assure you that we became rich and powerful as people by two factors without which success is not possible for any community. The first is hard work and the second education, but neither is possible without a social framework which eases tension and brings together the creative juices of among diverse cultures. It is "diversity in ethnicity" and Samy Appadurai's main point or "thesis statement", as I earnestly try to convey to my students over decades teaching university level writing skills.

This is not to brag but to underline that excellent thesis on which our future depends as a nation. I have an M.A. from McGill University and was awarded PhD in English from the University of Toronto in its glory days. These are two of the most prestigious universities in Canada, but having restrictions against Jews not long before I entered.

You can find online my publications, but pay special attention to my work on engineering education with Dr. Ahmad Ibrahim, especially our lecture at MIT in 2000. The lecture comes from a lifelong friendship and collaboration between a scholar of modernist literature and a world-famous expert on fuzzy logic, a Jew born a year after the Holocaust in Hungary with an aunt on the famous ship Exodus which carried the traumatized victims of evil racial policies to a new homeland, working with an army officer who fought bravely against my relatives in Israel in 1973. This is then a person presently writing a forward to a work by a gentleman of still another faith. Mr. Samy, who tells us that it is precisely our cultural differences which enrich our collaboration on a personal and professional level, not only within the narrow confines of my circle, but across our very unique nation which has something to teach the world about how people of the most varied ethnicity can live in harmony.

My education has brought and continues to bring me very important clients as a professional writer and editor, but it has been 43 years of teaching university level writing skills which brought me true joy, as it has an increasingly rare breed, a genuine educator, Mr. Samy Appadurai. His all too brief mention of his work as a teacher which most explains this man and endears him to me. One can only hope that Mr. Samy will take the time from his many other commitments to turn his attention next to education, an area in great need of his wise counsel as teacher and principal on three continents before he morphed into his other roles in a busy life where only wimps need sleep, it seems.

Still, I have often comforted parents from immigrant cultures who were alarmed by children like my brother and hero, Peter Linder, who did not heed the eternal plea of immigrant parents to “study, study,

study so you don't have to do what I had to do", and yet became a very successful man through means advocated in the old Horatio Alger stories, "pluck and luck". He rose from our poverty stricken background to become a giant of Canadian commerce, frequently on television and in newspapers as an expert on natural gas and oil prices, often testifying before government panels and owner of a successful hedge-fund in the oil patch. How amused I was at the wedding of my niece in my brothers extraordinary mansion only a little smaller than Casa Loma, a wedding only the Tamil people can throw, lacking only the groom arriving on an elephant dressed like a young rajah. I was standing beside my Mother who prophesied ruin and jail as my brother's future, as have so many Tamil mothers anxious about their children's future when they are not doing well enough to get into elite university programs. My Mother could not understand my brothers enormous success, but Samy Appadurai does when he pays tribute to our system of economic freedom and opportunity, and how important it is to preserve it against the leftist collectivist dream that I once subscribed to like so many people of my generation very accurately evaluated for its shortcomings in *Canada—A Nation in Motion*.

Samy Appadurai insists that the current social and political framework for all its shortcomings builds on Canada's startlingly varied cultures, a source of strength in a world where people are increasingly unwilling to live with each other. We may debate policy. Indeed, we should, as long as we put the interest of our nation first as loyal subjects who gave our oath when we became citizens. Mr. Samy is, it is quite evident, a conservative and I a person on the left, yet we live in a "global village" we are constantly reminded in this work. All around us is negative evidence of what happens when a culture tries to remain pure and shake off those of other cultures as a way to selfishly

progress. That path leads precisely to the conditions that brought the majority of immigrants to our shores fleeing war, ethnic cleansing and sundry horrors. Certainly, very few come to enjoy Canada's good climate, but all enjoy benefits too numerous to name, which is why it is good that Samy Appadurai names so many urging us to build on it and show it off with pride before the world.

I was especially moved in this work by a tribute paid to Jack Layton of the Canadian Left whose political testament seemed to have touched Samy Appadurai deeply. While critical of Layton's Quebec policies, political differences stood in no way a barrier to strong praise on a human level for Layton's help as city councilor on matters which engages Mr. Samy daily in serving his community. All this happened decades ago before the Tamil Diaspora brought this hard-working and creative community to our shores. In 1970 when I entered the graduate program in literature at the University of Toronto, I took courses in modernist literature with Marshall McLuhan, the media guru and professor of literature who invented the term "global village" so beloved by Samy Appadurai. This was long before the technical conditions that made it possible were evident. The Toronto of those days was bleak for someone who came from a much more sophisticated Montreal changed by Expo 67, the World's Fair, when a backward, provincial city discovered the world. It is worthwhile in this context to listen to Samy Appadurai's wise counsel in praising the government for its initiative in holding major international political and sporting events for exactly the same reason, that we are always on a world stage on which the varied perspective of our varied cultures are as valuable a resource as oil, iron, corn or minerals.

In any event, I was skeptical of the “global village” argument in 1970 for a good reason. While completing my M.A. at McGill University, I studied with a now very famous novelist called Bharati Mukarjee. In those days, she took her husband’s name and called herself Bharati Blaise because Mukarjee brought out a burst of laughter from those unfamiliar with Indian culture in general and her specific Parsee culture from Bombay in particular. She moved to Toronto where the recently arrived Asian immigrants, arriving in large numbers after Trudeau opened the gates, elicited very negative reaction initially. I personally witnessed, and on more than one occasion intervened, when a citizen whose own parents or grandparents fled dreadful conditions by boat berated a new arrival for speaking another language or eating spicy cooking. How things have changed, and yet Samy Appadurai is very attentive to that political and social framework gradually established in Canada which is a wonder allowing immigrants to feel at home and conduct community activities in safety, expecting to be treated with respect and as an equal in dealing with authorities, communities living in relative harmony, in fact a paradise when you look around, even more travel around the world and see conditions which are unthinkable in Canada.

As a scholar, Samy Appadurai substantiates by data the value of immigrants and gives very good advice on how properly structured immigration policy, eliminating the many who take advantage, is of enormous benefit, indeed an indispensable condition for our future success as a nation. Equally important are the wry observations and anecdotes which make abstract thought real, concrete and relevant. How passengers struggling to get on public transport against opposition turn on the less fortunate behind them, for instance, relates directly to how successive wave of immigrant communities behave when they

attempt to close the door after them to others who deserve also to get on the bus. Needless to say, not all who arrive on our shores do so in an orderly line, and there is very good advice on immigration policy our decision makers would be wise to listen to. The criticism of the “golden padlock” deserves special scrutiny, for on this fundamental error of pure uncontaminated cultures arose as consequence only ill will, rivalry, a barrier to our development as a people.

To cite one example, Canada lost two great novelists, Bharati Mukarjee and her husband Clark Blaise, an old-time Canadian and a great writer who needed this land as the source of his art, but lovingly followed his wife away from what was in 1970 as far from “global village” as possible. “Cowtown” it was called, the most provincial of the world’s large cities. I write this as the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) each year brings the world’s sophisticates to the most sophisticated of cities, changed from a provincial city of Britain’s colonies into a world-class wonder, many times voted the most livable city on earth. That is precisely the thesis Samy Appadurai defends eloquently and intelligently both with hard data, and equally important, personal observations which support the scholarly argument.

There is a long and involved account with many example of how all kind of great civilization arose when through migration different people came together, but instead of conquering and destroying one another to ensure the purity of their culture, they share what was the best and most advanced in philosophy, religion, technology, literature, indeed virtually every measure by which a culture is judged as advanced or backward. It is then with great pleasure that I read Mr. Samy’s account of a meeting on community affairs in a Chinese restaurant where he approves of the spicing. That’s saying a lot for those who

know Tamil cooking, an ancient art of a very high order now available everywhere in Toronto where there was in my youth only the horror of “Canadian-Chinese” food having no perceptible connection to the Orient. Mr. Samy’s eyes (and taste buds) always open to the world, he makes inquiries and expresses the most wonderful and innocent delight to find how Chinese cooking long ago migrated to India along with the migration of people and a wonderful example, he takes pains to demonstrate, how such wonders as Mohenjo Daro in Ancient India and a perfectly spiced dish in modern Scarborough arise from the same creative source in the migration of people and the successful blending of cultures, not as conqueror to conquered, but as equals.

My own favourite chapter in a wonderful work is Mr. Samy’s account of the horror that rises while he was teaching in Nigeria in a community where some people prey on one another and a school where teachers and authorities are indifferent to their students. No one can read this account of how Mr. Samy saves the life of a westerner at the cost of his own stolen car in getting urgent medical attention without thinking of how horrible it is to live in a community where violence and mistrust is not uncommon. And that’s most of the world. We take so much for granted together with all manner of good things we will certainly lose if we do not act wisely in a world hurdling toward disaster where life is “poor, nasty, brutish and short” unless we follow the advice of wise philosophers of the “social contract” like Hume and consider carefully the many recommendations Samy Appadurai makes.

Canada—a Nation in Motion deserves to be studied by our policy makers who make use too often of community leaders while neglecting that unique perspective which is rooted in all the ancient

cultures whose wisdom will ease Canada's way in a world "in motion". I look forward to future work by this author who grasps so accurately what makes our country the envy, and sometimes "the meat in the world sandwich".

INTRODUCTION

by
the Author

It is to begin with my love for Canada that prompted me to write my second book entitled “Canada—a Nation in Motion” and also the encouragement and the popular support that I received from readers around the world for my first book on Canada, “Canada—the Meat of the World Sandwich”. Along with actively participating in politics, journalism, public affairs, and social events of numerous public office, awards and recognitions I have received, I would like to mention two of them in particular. I have been a council member at the Ontario College of Teachers, appointed by the Lt Governor, and was awarded with the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada Medal for social service yet, I am a first generation immigrant. My views, opinions and thoughts are multidimensional in nature as a naturalized citizen of Canada and not only as one who has taken the following oath

“I swear (affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to her majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her Heirs and successors, and I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.”

For almost a quarter century, I have committed myself to being and living as a loyal Canadian. However I am also privileged that I was born, raised and completed my university education in Sri Lanka and got associated with Asian affairs and then spent almost two decades in both East and West Africa, actively involved in exploring the rural life, customs and traditions. My active participation and the interest in the public life on three continents are an invaluable asset and a firsthand resource that helped me in analyzing a variety of subjects critically, objectively and comparatively. I have tried my best in this book to balance the material and my opinions, without bias and I believe that you will certainly accept my points after reading my book from the beginning to end. As a freelance journalist, I have written numerous articles and have authored five books and being in Canada, a nation that respects and values freedom of the press and free expression, I have no fear or hesitation in expressing certain critical views.

My intent is not to provoke controversy, but rather to spark discussion and debate for I believe that it is through intelligent discussion that we as Canadians have and will continue to be a nation in motion.

A French journalist was quoted as saying “Canada is the best nation to live in and it is not necessarily refers and limits within the boundary of the province of Quebec, rather widely every part of this great nation. I am so pleased and encouraged to have such comments from a