

**Canadian Multiculturalism Falsified**  
**Letter to the Editor of the Montreal Gazette**  
**From William Johnson**  
**August 10, 2019**

The Gazette's Philip Authier got it wrong. In the edition of August 9, 2019, he wrote:

"While multiculturalism is used to refer to a society where people of different cultural backgrounds live side by side without much integration..."

False. Multiculturalism, as vested in Canada's constitution in 1982, does not isolate cultural minorities. On the contrary, it celebrates their contribution to Canada's diverse culture. Pierre Trudeau proclaimed it as a national policy in 1971 and explained:

Canada's citizens come from almost every country in the world and bring with them every major world religion and language. This cultural diversity endows all Canadians with a great variety of human experience. The Government regards this as a heritage to treasure and believes that Canada would be poorer if we adopted assimilation programs forcing our citizens to forsake and forget the cultures they have brought to us.

Multiculturalism, as he defined it, was not to be an isolated policy. It was to be "a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework." He qualified:

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

Multiculturalism meant that no one was to be stigmatized as a second-class citizen because of race, religion or national origin. At the same time, the cultural contributions of minorities were to be valued and promoted. Their languages and their cultural sensitivities were to enrich and expand Canada's capacity in dealing with the rest of the world.

But multiculturalism has constantly been misrepresented, particularly in Quebec, as abasing the status of the French language and culture to the level of Swahili or any other unofficial language. Totally false. Remember, no one did as much to promote the French language and culture across Canada as Pierre Trudeau.

PS - Robert Dutrisac a également faussé la portée du multiculturalisme dans son éditorial du Devoir du 10 octobre 2018 :

« Il est clair que le multiculturalisme post-national, qui rabaisse le peuple québécois à un statut de gros groupe ethnique appelé à coexister avec d'autres groupes ethniques au sein d'une diversité dépourvue d'ancrage dans une culture commune, ne peut convenir au Québec. »