



The Labyrinth of North American Identities

Philip Resnick

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What exactly does it mean to be North American? Europeans have been engaged in a long-running debate about the meaning and nature of Europe. *The Labyrinth of North American Identities* generates a similar discussion in the context of North America: what do we learn about North America as a unit and its individual countries when we explore the idea of a shared North American identity? Combining cultural, anthropological, historical, political, economic, and religious considerations, Philip Resnick acknowledges the relative differences in power and influence of the United States and its North American neighbours but digs deeper to uncover shared characteristics that constitute a labyrinth of North American identities unrestricted by national boundaries.

To date, discussions of North America have largely revolved around the often technical implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or US homeland security. What has been lacking, by contrast, is a culturally-driven set of reflections. This book examines the legacy of indigenous cultures; the role of organized religion; pathways to independence; the role of imperial languages; manifest destiny; market capitalism and its limitations; democratic practices and failures; diverging uses of the state; new world utopias and dystopias; regional identities; and civilizational perspectives. What results is a vision of North America that defies any top-down attempt to impose a homogeneous "North Americanness."

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