

Canada: Images of a Post/National Society

Gunilla Florby, Mark Shackleton
& Katri Suhonen (eds.)



Peter Lang

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INTRODUCTION

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The theme of the 8th Triennial Nordic Conference in Canadian Studies was Images of a Post/National Society – Images d’une société post/nationale. Participants were invited to explore questions relating both to traditional and to current aspects and themes of society and culture in Canada, across a wide range of disciplines and approaches. Implicit in the slashed “Post/National” is the acknowledgement that there is not as yet a consensus about Canadian nationhood, some scholars arguing that Canada can still be considered a “national” society, whereas others see the emergence of a “post-national” condition. It is the hope of the editors that this volume of selected contributions may capture something of the interdisciplinary dialogue at the conference, which was held in Turku, Finland, in August 2005.

Issues of nationalism and post-nationalism have come to the fore in a major way during the last few decades, and these contributions address various aspects of the state (both “national” and “post-national”) from a range of perspectives: economic, political, literary, and cultural. Reflecting recent developments in an increasingly diasporic world, the focus of some of the articles is in fact not so much the state but rather statelessness, exile, and nomadism. These issues, however, should be seen against the background of the nationalist outlook that is articulated by a number of writers, particularly in Part II, “Images of a National (and Multicultural) Society”.

This volume thus explores the ever-elusive concept of “Nationhood” from a variety of Canadian perspectives. Indeed, the conference title was an invitation to discuss such perspectives from at least three potential viewpoints: the national, the post-national and, as a third alternative, the post/national, in which a sense of national identity did not necessarily cancel out a post-national consciousness. In line with much contemporary thinking, particularly in postcolonial theory, what emerges in this book is the acknowledgment that monolithic concepts like “the state” and “the nation” have been considerably weakened. Hugh MacLennan’s “two solitudes” alluded to Canada’s two “founding nations”; Linda Hutcheon’s “other solitudes” broadened the perspective to include multicultural diversity; but “post-nationality” goes beyond these

formulations to raise the question whether identity is more shaped by statelessness and exile than by belonging. "Exile" can be a burden, in which absent or shifting roots can contribute to a loss of self, or it may be a source of creative possibilities, which Edward Said calls "contrapuntal", a plurality of vision which gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous cultural dimensions. Both these aspects of exile are presented in this volume, particularly in the articles in Part III, "Images of Exile and Migration".

What also emerges from these contributions is a sense that the unstable realities of post-nationalism clearly affect more than just one society. This is abundantly clear from the global repercussions of 9/11 (touched upon by a number of contributors), but it also informs the other articles on political and economic themes in Part I. Canadian immigration policy, Canadian border relations, tourism in the Canadian North, the Canadian economy, and Toronto's future are all dealt with by seeing Canada from an international and even global perspective.

In the final part of the volume, "Visions of the Post/National State", a common theme running through many of the articles is the artist's refusal to accept a monolithic view of "Canadianness". The elision of rights, narratives, and histories, particularly those of ethnic minorities, is a continuous and still urgent theme. The disastrous ecological effects of global corporations (another monolithic voice) are also of increasing concern. Finally, it is in some ways fitting that a volume concerned with post/nationalism should end with images of flags, which for centuries have been seen as symbols of nation. It is an example of how artists can culturally mediate evolving post/national sensibilities. The artist's nationality is foregrounded, but the ideology of this global project is plainly post/national.

Part I. Political and Economic Aspects of the Post/National State

In "Immigration Policy and Literature: Contradictions of a 'Post-National' State?", Shauna Wilton examines Canadian immigration and integration policies since Confederation. She charts how an initial racist and assimilationist phase gave way to a phase of multiculturalism, promoting cultural diversity and tolerance, which in its turn was followed by the present, third, phase, the gradual closing of Canada's doors. Wilton argues that even if Canadian governments in the last few decades have advanced an image of Canada as a state that embraces many nations and ethno-cultural groups, immigration policies and the state literature for new immigrants present an image of the country that is less than inclusive. Wilton's study shows how Canada's self-image

cherishes tolerance, diversity, and multiculturalism, but, in practice, what is promoted is often neo-liberal individualism rather than a sense of a national community.

Multiculturalism in Canada can be paralleled by a preference for “multi-polarity” in Canadian foreign affairs. In “Resisting the Post-National: Canadian Critiques of the Geo/Cultural/Politics of Globalization”, Michael Keefer offers a spirited survey of Canadian contributions to the discourse of resistance to globalized post-nationalism. In his account of leading voices in the globalization debate, he singles out economist Michel Chossudovsky, whose analyses of the “deadly economic prescriptions” of the IMF and the World Bank produce a powerful image of the structural violence of globalization, and philosopher John McMurtry, who, like Chossudovsky, has been critical of the official account of 9/11 and of the wars following in its wake. Against this bleak backdrop, Keefer gives an account of a key concept of McMurtry’s philosophy of resistance and restoration, his theory of the “civil commons”; i.e., “human agency in personal, collective or institutional form which protects and enables the access of all members of a community to basic life goods”.

An important point made in “The Non-Vanishing Border: Change and Continuity in Canadian-American Relations”, by David G. Haglund and Joseph T. Jockel, is that in spite of the initial fears that the Free Trade Agreement with the United States would reduce the country to an American satellite, Canadian values have remained intact. So has Canada’s political independence, as shown by the country’s opposition to the war in Iraq and its refusal to participate directly in the new US missile defence system. Haglund and Jockel note that, if anything, Canada’s sense of identity has been boosted in the last few years. The border has also become more significant. Still, the authors express their scepticism of any simplified “values” argument and point to the ambiguous and transitory nature of national as well as regional values. Steering clear of the cliché of a values gap, they prefer to speak in terms of different political cultures and strategic cultures as they go on to explore Canadian-American cooperation on issues of strategic defence. By and large, when it comes to continental defence and security, the two countries see eye to eye. In conclusion, Haglund and Jockel point out that even if Canadians may have felt greater affinity with Europe than with the US over the war in Iraq, Canada has been a willing ally of the US in other conflicts. Moreover, the impact of the economic interdependence of the two countries should not be underestimated, they argue.

Alain A. Grenier’s article “Tourisme et nostalgie pour une espèce menacée qu’on appelle le Nord” adds an important dimension to the

political and economic aspects of post/nationality in Canada, by exploring how the Canadian North (together with its counterparts in Europe, Russia and the United States) is imagined by tourists and marketed by the tourist industry. The author argues that the tourists' presumed concern for ecological issues does not prove to be the major motivation for Nature tourism: rather, they are attracted by possibilities for the personal gains offered by far-away territories (with the help of less ecological means such as snowmobiles or ice-breakers). In order to respond to the illusions that motivate tourism, the industry proposes somewhat problematic visions of the North. The tourist industry portrays the North as an ideal based on a yearning for adventure, rather than as concrete territories, each with its own way of life. Thus, the North cherished by tourists and the tourist industry is by definition post-national: having little to do with the local reality of its inhabitants, it has instead been formed by images, dreams, and needs imposed on them from outside. Rather than encouraging this illusion, the author argues, the tourist industry could contribute to the development of a modern, culturally varied, and economically viable North.

John Robinson's article "The Post/National Society and the Canadian Economy" considers the question whether, as commonly predicted, nationalism would decline in the aftermath of World War II, as the nation state gave way to wider international groupings. Focusing on Canada, Robinson looks at both economic nationalism, such as nationalist arguments to justify market protection from foreign competition, and cultural nationalism, which is the support and appreciation of things national, precisely because they are national and encourage pride in one's country and its cultural productions. In practice, Robinson argues, if one interprets nationalism in terms of the power of the sovereign national state, then nationalism has declined since World War II. Modern governments, like Canada's, have been increasingly restricted as a result of international laws and treaties, and have less control over the private sector, which demands open access to imported consumer goods and services when required. Robinson concludes that economic nationalism in Canada will continue to be eroded, but as a result of higher standards of living, cultural nationalism, and the time and money spent on taking an informed interest in national history, music and art will no doubt be strengthened.

In "Canada's Largest City in a Post-National Society", Harvey Schwartz looks at the major problems facing Toronto in the 21st century and poses the question: What type of city is better suited to compete in a post-national society, a large amalgamated city or a decentralized one? Legislation to amalgamate Toronto's member municipalities in 1996 has not, says Schwartz, been a success, and the argument that "bigger is

better” and “better means lower costs” has not proved tenable. Amalgamation transition costs have increased the city’s wage bill, and harmonization of services in different parts of the city has been difficult to implement. Comparisons with equivalent US and European cities show that the preferred model is a decentralized city consisting of many municipalities. Decentralization would not be a feasible option at this late stage for Toronto, however, though increased funding from the federal and provincial governments would help improve the quality of goods and services in the city. Toronto does not stand in isolation but is the main engine of economic growth, not only for Ontario but also for the rest of Canada.

Part II. Images of a National (and Multicultural) Society

Images of a national as opposed to a post-national society form an important and complementary part of this volume. Publishing is a vital aspect of national image construction, which is explored in Carole Gerson’s “Imprint and the Nation: The History of English-Canadian Publishing through the Lens of L. M. Montgomery”. Tracing the sometimes parallel, sometimes diverging trajectories of English-Canadian publishing and of the national icon L. M. Montgomery, Gerson’s article takes us from the decade following Canada’s Confederation in 1867 to the era of transnational culture industries at the beginning of the 21st century. After some years with an American publisher, Montgomery switched to John McClelland in 1916. The 1920s were golden years both for English-Canadian publishing and for L. M. Montgomery; her fame grew, her sales soared, especially in the US. The Great Depression hit publishers and authors hard; the publishing industry survived thanks to the textbook trade, Montgomery compensating for plummeting investments by writing two new *Anne* books. After the boost given to Canadian culture with the establishment of the National Library of Canada in 1953, and the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957, Canadian publishers were soon in dire straits again as the textbook trade was taken over by US firms. Emily and Anne were, and are, doing well, though, including spin-offs like *The Anne of Green Gables Address Book*.

David Staines’s “*Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* in the Continuum of Canadian Literature” focuses on Stephen Leacock’s short fiction collection *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912), seeing it as a paradigm of Canadian small town fiction. Leacock’s sketches of life in the fictional Mariposa are loving evocations of a life that no longer exists, a tableau of late 19th-century Canadian life created at a time when the country had already undergone a process of inevitable transition. To

Mordecai Richler, Leacock was the founder of Canadian literature, and *Sunshine Sketches* was the first work to establish a Canadian voice. Staines points out that Leacock's *Sketches* influenced the work of key figures in Canadian literature, including Mordecai Richler, Alice Munro, and Rohinton Mistry. Following Leacock, all these writers wrote autobiographical recollections of their growth into adulthood in small communities, be that community St. Urbain Street, Montreal (Richler), Jubilee, Ontario (Munro), or Parsi Bombay (Mistry).

In "*Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* ou l'hiver de la société et de la littérature québécoises", Katri Suhonen proposes a parallel between the rise of Quebec nationalism and the symbol of winter in one of the most important novels of the 1960s in Quebec. This decade marks a turning point in Quebec's history, in which conservative and rural French Canadian society (socially undermined by the English community and culturally tied to the French heritage) becomes the modern, culturally and linguistically autonomous, and more liberal society of Quebec. Winter in Marie-Claire Blais's novel is a metaphor for transition: it imposes death and restrictions on human life, paralleling the restrictions of prevailing social orders, whereas the end of winter (i.e., the Quiet Revolution and its consequences) liberates human and natural life from temporary death and silence. During the 1960s, Suhonen argues, the literary production of Francophone Canada expands the reach of its cultural references in new directions by putting emphasis on the experience it shares with other Northern regions. Thus, by suggesting a parallel between Quebec's social evolution and the cycle of Northern seasons, the novel not only takes part in the creation of the Quebec national novel but signposts its post-national potential.

In "Engaging the Other in Rudy Wiebe's Early Writing: *Peace Shall Destroy Many* and *First and Vital Candle*", Janne Korkka draws our attention to two Canadian minority groups represented in Wiebe's fiction: First Nations and Mennonites. Contrary to the prevalent separation of the two groups in Wiebe criticism, Korkka argues that they are linked; both experience alterity under pressure from the dominant, though their experience and expression of otherness take distinct and different forms. Only very rarely do Mennonite protagonists in Wiebe's early fiction recognize a common bond with Canadian Aboriginals, and this lack of recognition leads to insularity and lack of communication and understanding. Wiebe's early work also shows that the author himself at times fails in his search for a language for approaching the Other.

In his article "Contemporary Issues in Canadian Plays by Jewish Writers", Albert-Reiner Glaap shows that "a specific image of Canada

as a post-national society is reflected in the ‘polyphony’ of contemporary Canadian drama”. The section of the Canadian mosaic focused on here is represented by three plays by Jewish playwrights, Emil Sher’s *Hana’s Suitcase*, Jonathan Garfinkel’s *The Trials of John Demjanjuk*, and *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* by Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. Taken together, the three plays serve to demonstrate how multi-faceted Jewish playwriting has become, while at the same time contributing to the overall picture of Canada’s ethnic and cultural diversity.

Another glimpse of contemporary drama in Canada is given in “L’absence du corps et la présence des images: le principe de réduction chez Denis Marleau”. Here Eve Irène Therrien analyses the multidisciplinary approach chosen by Quebec theatre director Denis Marleau when directing Antonio Tabucchi’s *Les Trois derniers jours de Fernando Pessoa* and Maurice Maeterlinck’s *Les Aveugles*. Therrien briefly presents the evolution of Quebec drama that initially looked for models and recognition in an idealized France. From the 1960s on, Quebec theatre turned to local and national issues in order to present critical, ironic, and symbolic readings of society. Marleau’s work reduces the presence of actors on stage to machine-like gestures and absorbs the spectator into the play. Therrien argues that by his special aesthetics, Marleau shatters the frontier between fiction and reality, visible and invisible, animate and non-animate, inclusion and exclusion, and encourages a profoundly intimate and individual experience for the spectator instead of the collective experience encouraged by earlier trends in Quebec drama.

Part III. Images of Exile and Migration

Janice Kulyk Keefer’s article “Images of a Ghost-National Society: Pumpkins, Orange Tents, and Chernobyl Coiffure” turns on the complexities of the immigrant experience and on the often conflicted relationship with the old country. The evocative title alludes, among other things, to the ghostly presence of a dark, tragic figure in *Manitoba Party*, by the Ukrainian-Canadian painter William Kurelek. Keefer takes a close look at a number of paintings by Kurelek and by Nataalka Husar, and she sees ghostly presences, guilt, and unease in their renderings of the Ukrainian heritage. “Ethnicity is haunted by history”, she writes. Keefer argues that being a Ukrainian-Canadian means being haunted by the ghost of the old country to a greater extent than are most other hyphenated Canadians, the reason for this being that the country has been marginalized into virtual non-existence due to imperialist pressures.

The pains of exile are also the theme of Gunilla Florby's "M. G. Vassanji and the Post-National Predicament". The Asian-African-Canadian novelist M. G. Vassanji's own experience of multiple exiles (he was forced to flee Kenya as a child, was raised in Tanzania, and eventually settled for a new life in Canada) finds expression in the grim lives of his in-between protagonists in such novels as *No New Land* and *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*. In these fictions, the present is often determined by the past, and earlier humiliations can be reenacted on a different continent at a later time. Although positive cross-cultural relationships are not infrequently found in Vassanji's fiction, the lives of Asian-Africans in Africa or Canada are not predominantly examples of positive hybridity. Vassanji can present the Asian community in exile as simultaneously oppressed and oppressors, both subjects and masters. Florby concludes that Vassanji's main contribution to the literary tradition of Canada is his rendering of the nostalgia and rootlessness of the migrant, which is the lingering effect of colonization.

In "The Young Generation's Images of Canada in Novels by Carol Shields, Thomas King and Eva Hoffman", Elisabeth Mårld writes about a kind of nomadism that transgresses cultural, political, and social codes. Mårld traces this nomadic consciousness in the young protagonists of three novels. Norah, in Shield's *Unless*, leaves her family and her university studies to become a beggar. The young Native American Lum, in King's *Truth and Bright Water*, commits suicide in a radical attempt to transgress national, ethnic, and economic borders. The immigrant teenager Eva, in Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, refuses to adapt to Canadian norms. Their resistance to assimilation, Mårld argues, is a reaction to the failure of society to protect and support the oppressed or deprived.

Úlfar Bragason takes us back to an earlier phase in the history of immigration in his article "Images of North America in Writings by Three Icelandic Authors: Matthías Jochumsson, Jón Ólafsson, and Einar H. Kvaran". Beginning around 1870, and petering out before the outbreak of World War I, a stream of emigrants left Iceland for North America. Initially, they headed mainly for the US, but after 1875 it was Manitoba that attracted the majority of Icelandic emigrants. Bragason's article reflects on the fluctuating attitudes to the new land on the part of Icelandic writers, "a fool's paradise", "the sweet land of liberty", "a golden land", the "land of the vigorous and the new", or the refuge of the outcasts of Europe.

In "Le Canada et les représentations du Nord dans l'œuvre de Xavier Marmier (1808-1892): substitutions et parallèles", Maria Walecka-Garbalinska discusses the 19th-century French traveller and writer

Xavier Marmier. Marmier was one of the first French intellectuals to encourage French Canadian nationalism, but, as Walecka-Garbalinska argues, there is a contradiction between his nationalistic objectives for French Canada and his literary description of it. Texts that are supposed to describe the people, values, traditions, landscape, and harsh conditions of French Canada are inspired by Marmier's earlier visits to the North of Europe. His enchanting descriptions are produced by a Southern imagination, imposed upon Northern cultures. Hence, what Marmier presents as the "national" characteristics of French Canada has in fact less to do with its local reality than with its resemblance to other Northern cultures. These parallels enhance one's understanding of the North as a post-national or a "transnational" territory, an area not infrequently described and defined by "others" in various social discourses (literature, tourism, etc.) in such a way that local reality and specificity are ignored.

Part IV. Visions of the Post/National State

The elision of the African-Canadian presence from the national narrative, and the way in which the work of two African-American women writers seeks to resist that obliteration, are the themes of George Elliott Clarke's "Strategies for Legitimizing Difference: Mixed-Race Resistance in the Works of Andrea Thompson and Lorena Gale, Two African-Canadian Writers". Clarke argues that (white) Canadian society seeks to evade "race" and considers blackness irrelevant to Canadian socio-political discourse. Andrea Thompson and Lorena Gale employ their own mixed-race identities to explore the drama of North American race relations, ironizing and challenging racist essentialism (on both the white and black side), in order to present a positive reading of being "brown". Thompson's poetry explores the occult, particularly world myths of female experience, asking the reader to look inward to determine a viable identity. Gale's more overtly polemical drama examines social identity with the eye of a realist and a historian. Clarke concludes that a white and sterile Eurocentric Canada is badly in need of the fertile reality of "colour".

In "Images of Canada in a Post-National Perspective: Janice Kulyk Keefer's 'The Waste Zone'", Britta Olinder studies how Keefer's long poem uses T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a haunting and ironic sounding-board to bring out some of the most burning issues of today: the disastrous effects that increased commercialization has on the environment, the gross injustices caused by corporate globalization, and the threats to western democratic ideals and to human rights. Keefer's poem was sparked off by the April 2001 summit of the thirty-four

American heads of state to reach an agreement on free trade. The meeting was held in Quebec City, and Keefer mixes snapshots of the demonstrations with larger vistas, national as well as international.

Rūta Šlapkauskaitė's article "The (Post/National) Body as a Carnivalized Historiographer in Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*" discusses the reexamination of national myths in Cohen's avant-garde novel. If, as Anthony Smith argues, the nation is a form of public culture and political symbolism, it is open to deconstruction and critique through the manipulation of those very symbols. Cohen, for example, exposes the (Catholic) Church's complicity in the Canadian colonial agenda through the erotic presentation of an alternative saint, the Iroquois Catherine Tekakwitha. Catherine becomes a metaphor for Canada, a body to be conquered, evoking feelings of guilt and histories of defeat and martyrdom. Cohen's novel plays off against the well-known Canadian insecurity about identity, challenging the reader to face the demons and anxieties of the nation's past.

The reinvestigation and re-presentation of the nation's past is also the theme of Mark Shackleton's "Tomson Highway's *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*: Imagining the Post-National Society". The article explores Tomson Highway's play *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, which focuses on a traumatic moment in west coast First Nations history, the dissolution of the rights of the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Thompson peoples. The play revolves around the presentation on 25 August 1910 of the Laurier Memorial, a petition made by three First Nation peoples in British Columbia, demanding the continuation of land ownership and fishing rights. The appeal made to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada's seventh Prime Minister, was never accepted. Shackleton sees Highway's play as an allegory of dispossession and loss, which is "post-national" in that it elaborates a specific historical conflict between Natives and non-Natives, but places it within a mythic framework that sees dispossession as a universal tragedy that goes beyond the confines of the nation state.

Another allegory of Native American life, and another reminder of historical injustices, this time by Thomas King, is explored in Markus M. Müller's "'All this water imagery must mean something'. On the Fluctuating State of Nations in Suzette Mayr's *The Widows* and Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*". Müller's analysis brings out how King's novel makes "clichés and stereotypes question, explode, and reconstruct views of American vs. Canadian national/communal self-definition". Like King, Mayr uses water imagery to address the issue of the nation state. The balancing act performed by the post-national state is bound up not only with cultural and ethnic backgrounds but also with

gender equality, an issue dealt with in *The Widows*. The novel relates how three elderly German-Canadian ladies, marginalized by society, travel across Canada to Niagara, where they jump over the Falls, the jump symbolically signalling their subsumption into the Canadian mainstream. At the end, Müller argues, the widows have come to embody both a transnational and a transcultural identity.

Gurli Woods addresses the hybridity of the Asian-Canadian experience in her article on Larissa Lai's *When Fox Is a Thousand*, a novel set in the diasporic Chinese community in Vancouver. By juxtaposing her analysis of the novel with clippings from an interview in which Lai discusses whether her coming from a "racialized place" has affected her writing, Woods highlights issues to do with the life-span and durability of one's roots, among them, in Lai's own words, "if a history – your own history – is so distant from you as to be unknowable, could this mean that you no longer have a right to it?" And are the myths of one's ancestors still empowering, even if one can only access them via selections and translations? Woods's article confirms that, in searching for the history and the myths of her ancestors, Larissa Lai has discovered "a selfhood that does not rely on either white or patriarchal expectations of what I/we should be".

In "D'une tribu à l'autre: François Barcelo", Voichita-Maria Sasu also explores the traces of the past. She begins with recent theories which see Quebec's identity in terms of ethnic and cultural plurality, rather than the former nation-based model. Sasu reads François Barcelo's novel *La tribu* as an illustration of this kind of post-national society, in which different communities are invited to assume cultural plurality and a collective identity that is not based on ethnic, linguistic or spiritual unity. Barcelo's novel describes an imaginary community (obviously Quebec) which recalls its past (that of French Canada). However, the novel proposes alternative humorous explanations for many commonly known events. By proposing an ironic version of the nation's evolution, Barcelo, in Sasu's opinion, reminds the reader of uncertain, plural, and shady aspects of history. In her interpretation of Barcelo's humorous "rewriting" of Quebec's history, Sasu therefore goes against the grain of the prevailing understanding that his novel is above all motivated by separatism.

In "Duelling Chronotopes: Pre-Colonial and Postmodern/Post-Colonial Time and Space in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*", Marlene Broemer's approach is to analyse Ondaatje's novel in terms of competing and conflicting chronotopes (pre-colonial, postmodern, and post-colonial), showing that the author places faith and hope in a return to the pre-colonial period, associated with a Buddhist sense of elongated

and quiescent time. *Anil's Ghost* is a novel by a Sri Lankan-Canadian author which makes no reference to Canada, yet in its portrayal of post-colonial conflict and civil war in Sri Lanka is intensely concerned with notions of nationhood and the post-national condition that have global relevance.

Jean Marcel's *Hypatie ou la fin des dieux* also highlights the importance of History in the understanding of the present. In "*Hypatie ou la fin des dieux* de Jean Marcel et le post/nationalisme?", Susan M. Murphy shows how Marcel questions the writing of H/history by a postmodern interrogation of literary and historical conventions. Murphy shows how various paratextual elements (e.g., metatextual inserts and non-chronological division and ordering of the text) question the historical "truth" of the story. Three different periods (Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the 19th century) and regions (Egypt, Israel, and Quebec) are linked in the novel by such textual devices. History is shown to be created with the help of different textual means and to be subsequently used in various nationalist discourses. "Post-National" in this analysis should be read as "transnational", for the novel creates links between different historical events and regional conflicts and their discursive and political exploitation, portraying thus the transnational, or better, universal nature of Quebec's dilemma.

Coda. Post/National Art

Finally, the international activities of Mail Art provide "a positive model for a post/national world", and the Canadian-based Nobel Peace Projects promote the view that the whole world is our home, according to Susan Gold/Smith in "Images of a Post/National Society: Nobel Flags of Peace Project 2005". She briefly explains the values and interests that motivate Mail Art and the genesis of the exhibit of over eighty Flags of Peace that she put together for the NACS/ANEC Turku Conference, selecting ten for this publication for "their international vision for peace and justice".

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