



Is Canada Postcolonial?: Unsettling Canadian Literature

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How can postcolonialism be applied to Canadian literature?

In all that has been written about postcolonialism, surprisingly little has specifically addressed the position of Canada, Canadian literature, or Canadian culture.

Postcolonialism is a theory that has gained credence throughout the world; it is be productive to ask if and how we, as Canadians, participate in postcolonial debates. It is also vital to examine the ways in which Canada and Canadian culture fit into global discussions as our culture reflects how we interact with our neighbours, allies, and adversaries.

This collection wrestles with the problems of situating Canadian literature in the ongoing debates about culture, identity, and globalization, and of applying the slippery term of postcolonialism to Canadian literature. The topics range in focus from discussions of specific literary works to general theoretical contemplations. The twenty-three articles in this collection grapple with the recurrent issues of postcolonialism ? including hybridity, collaboration, marginality, power, resistance, and historical revisionism ? from the vantage point of those working within Canada as writers and critics. While some seek to confirm the legitimacy of including Canadian literature in the discussions of postcolonialism, others challenge this very notion.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Is Canada Postcolonial?* raises important and timely, if perhaps unanswerable questions, and offers a number of insightful tentative, non-definitive, and divergent-cum-contradictory answers. Indubitably both the wide-ranging textual analyses and the metacritical contributions open up new areas of thought, and anyone interested in the postcoloniality of Canada will find Moss's book very useful." (Dunha M. Mohr *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*, 28:2)

"At last is an extended debate on a crucial matter: the relationship between colonialism, postcoloniality, and national discourse. The sheer impossibility of answering the question posed in the title energises lively and informative discussion and debate, illuminating not only the subject of Canadian literatures but issues central to other fields. Twenty-three Canadian intellectuals consider Canada's literary history, the current status of literary discourse, and its likely future. The richness of the coverage, together with the inescapable indeterminacy, is encouraging to those of us who continue to believe in a Canada politically, socially, and intellectually uncompromised." (Helen Tiffin)

"In this deliberately 'unsettling' collection, Laura Moss asks if Canada is postcolonial. If you've never asked the question yourself, these essays make it clear why it's time you did. Not that the question has an easy answer -- far from it. For this book does not leap to easy absolutes; it wrestles instead with process and the possibilities of engagement. The apparently simple question in the title leads to a score of fascinating and more complex questions, about politics and the Canadian state, ethnicity and marginality, literature and the limits of definition. If and What if: the riskiness of the uncertain. The essays here discuss critical theory and practice, for example, but also political imperatives and invitations, pedagogy and personal responsibility, art, artifacts, and the rhetoric of difference. Passionate, earnest, argumentative, intelligent, and above all engaged, these essays ask us to think about what we think we already know about art and life, and to think again." (William H. New)

"Laura Moss has planted a provocative, timely question and gleaned twenty-two well-ripened critical responses. That the answers aren't 'yes' or 'no' but 'it depends' and 'let's keep debating it' makes this gathering both quintessentially Canadian and paradigmatically postcolonial. Here is where we can begin reorienting CanLit criticism for this unsettling new century." (John Clement Ball *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne*)

"This volume puts its finger on the pulse of the debate surrounding postcolonialism in Canada." (Sandra Hobbs *American Review of Canadian Studies*)

"Reflects...[and] extends current academic research and practice." (Christl Verduyn *University of Toronto Quarterly – Letters in Canada* 2003)

"Laura Moss's question, posed to twenty-two Canadian literature specialists, has elicited a fascinating range of responses....The sense of a conversation among the contributors is sustained by frequent cross-referencing among the essays....This is a timely, enjoyable and eminently readable book, which achieves range and diversity without sacrificing coherence." (Faye Hammill)

"An important, thought-provoking collection, ably edited by Laura Moss." (Penny van Toorn *Canadian*

Literature, 188, Spring 2006)

"*Is Canada Postcolonial?* is a highly readable collection of critical responses to a provocative and timely question. The diverse answers, provided by some of Canada's most eminent scholars, truly unsettle Canadian studies by examining the uses and abuses of currently popular postcolonial critical frameworks in the study of Canada and Canadian literatures." (Arun P. Mukherjee)

About the Author

Laura Moss is a member of the English Department at the University of British Columbia, and is on the editorial boards of *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature and Studies in Canadian Literature*. She edited Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, and her articles on international authors have appeared in journals and books.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kathy Hunnicutt:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed *Is Canada Postcolonial?: Unsettling Canadian Literature?* Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have some other opinion?

Karla Walker:

Precisely why? Because this *Is Canada Postcolonial?: Unsettling Canadian Literature* is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will zap you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I had been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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