

States and the developing countries.¹⁴¹ He has drawn attention to cosmopolitan practices apparent in Canadian culture, such as the large number of awards, the Governor General Awards and Giller Prizes, given to relatively new arrivals. He has plausibly argued that writers like M. G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry can turn back to and explore their own pasts, their countries of origin – in Africa or South Asia – as the paradigmatic question referred to by Canadian critics in their vast country ‘Where is here?’ has lost its urgency or even major significance. In turning back to their own countries these new contributors to a diversified Canadian literature can in their fictional works pose the question ‘What is there?’ and can expect a readership, that is sufficiently, perhaps even keenly interested in their fictional worlds.

If this trend continues and the policy of multiculturalism works, the (renewed) controversy over the alternative *national* or *continental* may soon again lose much of its significance. Joel Garreau’s provocative construction of regions cutting across the national border in North America may be supplanted by the emergence of cultural (and perhaps even economic) units extending across oceans, a phenomenon aided by the breathtaking pace with which the means of communication and cooperation develop. But it seems plausible to assume that both writers and readers will go on having an interest in ‘good fences’ so that they can continue discovering themselves in the fictional worlds created in their midst.

¹⁴¹ Cf. David Staines, ‘Canadian Literature at the Millennium’, in: *Canada and the Millennium: Proceedings of the 2nd Canadian Studies Conference in Central Europe*, Anna Jakabfi, ed., Budapest 1999, pp. 32-44.