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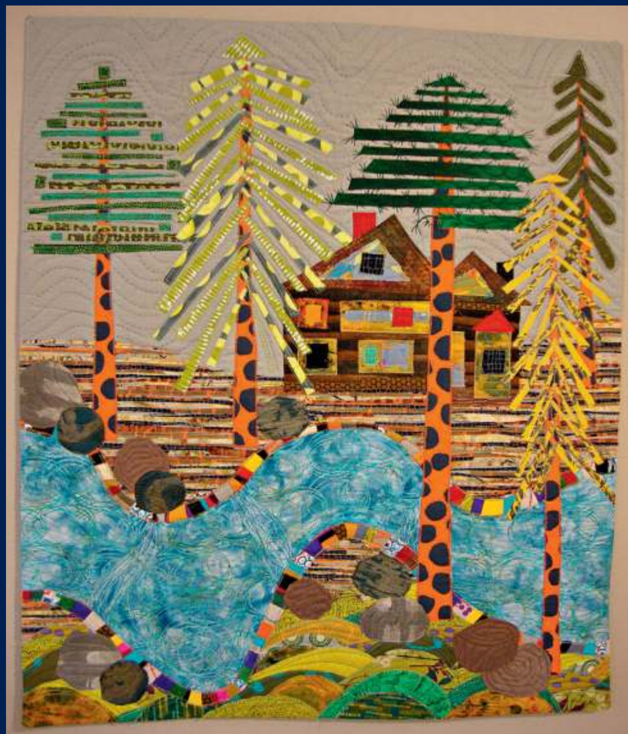

Narrating North American Borderlands

Thomas King, Howard F. Mosher, and Jim Lynch

Evelyn P. Mayer

PETER LANG EDITION

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The study centers on the presentation of the North American borderlands in the works of Canadian Native writer Thomas King's *Truth & Bright Water* (1999), American writer Howard Frank Mosher's *On Kingdom Mountain* (2007), and American writer Jim Lynch's *Border Songs* (2009). The three authors describe the peoples and places in the northeastern, middle and northwestern border regions of the USA and Canada. The novels address important border-oriented aspects such as indigeneity, the borderlands as historic territory and as utopian space, border crossing and transcendence, post-9/11 security issues, social interaction along the border, and gender specifics. The interpretation also examines the meaning of border imaginaries, border conceptualizations, and the theme of resistance and subversion.

Evelyn P. Mayer holds a M.A. in Conference Interpreting for English and French and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Mainz. She was a visiting scholar and researcher at Carleton University (Canada) and at the Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University (USA). She worked as a lecturer at the Universities of Mainz and Saarbrücken and currently teaches at Landshut.

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**“[…] looking beyond the nation’s borders,
and understanding how the nation is seen from vantage points
beyond its borders”**

Shelley Fisher Fishkin
(“Crossroads” 20)

“Drawing/Erasing the Border” (2006), by Lorraine Trecroce.

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1 Introduction: Border Contexts and the Notion of the Beyond

The history of Canada-U.S. bilateral relations is marked by shifts obvious in the way the border between the two nation-states has been managed, maintained, and negotiated. The Canada-U.S.[1] border was originally imposed on indigenous lands by the colonial powers in North America[2]. Nonetheless, aside from some border skirmishes or disputes in the 19th century, the border was friendly, open, and permeable for the local border residents and other border crossers. This was to change at the beginning of the 21st century. Instead of the so-called "longest undefended border" the Canada-U.S. border has become a controlled and secured border. The "thickening" (Ackleson 336) of the Canada-U.S. border is in fact a practice of rebordering. Border permeability and border mobility are increasingly dependent on border management and policies such as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)[3]. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 marked a turning point in the change from open to closed border. In the wake of 9/11, suspicion regarding this loophole in the U.S. defense system against terrorists was directed at the Canada-U.S. border due to seemingly insufficient controls, patrols, and lax immigration laws. Borders continue to play a key role in our ever-shrinking world marked by the opposing forces of globalization and simultaneous regionalization. Processes of recurrent bordering or debordering, i.e. thickening or blurring of borders, unfold constantly. Paradoxically, borders are increasingly important in the formerly so-called "borderless world" (Ohmae). Borders project a sense of order in a world that is in flux. The international boundary between Canada and the United States has moved much more to the center of public attention and scholarly interest since the terrorist attacks

1 The adjectives in the designation "Canada-U.S. border" are arranged in alphabetical order.

2 See "Drawing the Line Across North America" in Konrad and Nicol 64–70 on the history of the boundary demarcation.

3 The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative took full effect including at land and sea borders in June 2009 after the only partial enforcement at airports in January 2007. A "WHTI-compliant document" is required at the border to establish "the bearer's identity and nationality" (Department of Homeland Security/ DHS). <http://www.dhs.gov/western-hemisphere-travel-initiative> 8 May 2013.

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of 9/11 and ensuing rebordering efforts. This border plays a geopolitical as well as a symbolic role embodying a line of demarcation between Canada and the United States. It functions as an internal as well as an external border between these two nation-states and as a necessary paradigm for Anglophone Canadian vs. American[4] national identity construction.

Hence, it is not only a territorial expression of national sovereignty, but also a marker of cultural identities at the local, regional, and national levels. Indigenous identities, the struggle for sovereign rights, and land claims contribute to make the international border even more complex and contested. On the one hand indigenous peoples dismiss the Canada-U.S. border as superimposed on their ancestral homelands, yet on the other hand the nation-state is important as an interlocutor to reclaim land. Borders often defy intuitive logic, particularly if they are not geophysical borders such as mountain ranges or rivers. This arbitrariness leaves a person with a puzzled sense of why here is here and there is there, which also holds true for the Canada-U.S. border. The border is conceptualized in multiple ways, whether as "an interval of resonance" (McLuhan 73), a sieve, a semi/permeable membrane, a mirror of various kinds, a meeting place, in-between space, a (sanctuary) line, a wall, an "abyss" (Brown), a barrier, a fence, a "bridge" (Konrad and Nicol 29) or an open or closed gate. This study covers the full range of border expressions oscillating between the permeable and the non-permeable, the borderless air and the mended wall.

1.1 Poetic Border Approaches

By way of introduction two poems by William E. Stafford (1914–1993) and Robert Frost (1874–1963) are juxtaposed. Both U.S. poets are associated with border regions – Stafford with the Pacific Northwest and Frost with New England. Stafford's poem "At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border" emphasizes the days of a seemingly open and inconsequential border for law-abiding citizens and legal border-crossers, whereas Frost's poem "Mending Wall" (published in *North of Boston* in 1914) foretells the rebordering unfolding along the Canada-U.S. border in a post-9/11 era. Both metaphors, "At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border" and "Mending Wall" are spatial terms. The first one resembles an oxymoron combining the terms "un-national" and

4 "American" refers to concepts regarding a citizen or resident of the United States of America. For simplicity and coherence I do not employ the term "U.S.(-)American," frequently and primarily used by scholars in the fields of hemispheric, inter-American, Latin American, or Chicano/a studies.

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"monument". Usually, national and monument collocate and seem a natural semantic fit. This oxymoron underscores the ambivalent nature of the Canada-U.S. border. For Anglophone Canadians in particular this international boundary is more than a geographical division. It is a symbol of a distinct (Anglophone) Canadian national identity in contrast to the overwhelming presence of the United States. Indeed, for many Anglophone Canadians this un-national monument should rather be a mended wall. A similar predilection for a wall is also part of the U.S. psyche in terms of security insecurity. Eventually, only two options exist, either mending walls or mending bilateral relations. An open border is more perceptive to neighborly relations in a spirit of cooperation, whereas a wall that is actively maintained, even mended, signals isolationism and separation. Therefore, the concomitant message is one of division and distrust. Mending walls also foregrounds the experience that walls can deteriorate and even become obsolete over time. For a wall to persist maintenance is required. However, if the residents or neighbors deem other priorities more important than attending to a crumbling wall, this is a good sign for mended relations and thus mended walls are no longer called for. So the titles of both poems have the potential to subvert readers' first impressions, one undermining the official nation-state discourse along the border and the other one drawing attention to the need for mending walls.

1.1.1 "At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border"

This is the field where the battle did not happen,
where the unknown soldier did not die.
This is the field where grass joined hands,
where no monument stands,
and the only heroic thing is the sky.

Birds fly here without any sound,
unfolding their wings across the open.
No people killed — or were killed — on this ground
hallowed by neglect and an air so tame
that people celebrate it by forgetting its name.
(William E. Stafford)

In Stafford's poem every line is evocative such as "the air so tame." This, however, is no longer the reality. Due to surveillance along the forty-ninth parallel the air is potentially threatening, creating a feeling of insecurity and ambiguity. Above all, the unpredictable conduct of the border guards and allegations of racial profiling emphasize premonitions border crossers have, in particular after the full implementation of WHTI in 2009. Color lines in supposedly color-blind

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and post-racial societies such as the United States or Canada remain. The prefix of "post" with all its echoes is subtly referred to in the poem's title "At the Un-National Monument." The question arises of how the prefix "post" is similar or different from the prefix "un." The "post" presupposes a historical development, whereas the "un" simply negates the adjective "national" in the poem. The "un-national monument" is one that is not national, but a monument qualified by alternative notions.

If the border is perceived as "the un-national monument," it could be a trans-national, international, or even a post-national monument. A monument is usually erected by a nation-state or other group in order to commemorate or celebrate an event, a person, or a community. The goal is to construct history, memory, identity or "imagined communities" (Anderson), resembling a "metan-arrative" (Lyotard) written in stone. The questions are who creates monuments, for which overt and covert reasons and what is the specific function of such a monument. In the poem's title the Canada-U.S. border is described as both a monument and more importantly as an "un-national monument." The border as a demarcation of the nation-state is undermined since the boundary is un-national. This monument, whose name is forgotten, enshrines and celebrates the notion of the beyond.

1.1.2 "Mending Wall"

> '[…]
> Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
> What I was walling in or walling out,
> And to whom I was like to give offence.
> Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
> But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
> He said it for himself. I see him there
> Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
> In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
> He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
> Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
> He will not go behind his father's saying,
> And he likes having thought of it so well
> He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
> (Robert Frost)

The essence of Frost's poem "Mending Wall" is memorably put as the saying "Good fences make good neighbors" and despite "Something there is that doesn't

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love a wall / That wants it down" the border as a mended wall[5] persists. The word "mended" entails two meanings – both "reinforced" and "recuperated." Frost's poem suggests the dual nature of any wall or border thus highlighting both the maintenance and the overcoming of divisions as in mending relations. Borders are not inherently evil, because certain delineations can be useful to create a sense of belonging and an established order. However, borders become contentious if unequal power relations are manifest at a geopolitical boundary, hence excluding people for arbitrary and subjective reasons. The same holds true for bordering. Seemingly necessary for identity construction and belonging, bordering by extreme othering creates a smoldering problem. The duality of the border – the bordering processes as well as practices – becomes obvious.

Walls have to be consciously maintained to endure. The poem displays the differing opinions on the part of the two neighbors. It is not clear what nationality the neighbor has who wants to continue the exercise of "walling in or walling out" and whether the other neighbor is of a different nationality. The setting of "Mending Wall" is not explicit. It is a poem against bordering processes and practices between neighbors. By extension, this analogy can be used for the bilateral Canada-U.S. relations as neighboring countries and "Brethren Dwelling Together in Unity" (Inscription, Peace Arch, "History"). Critique of bordering, whether expressed spatially or verbally, is the focus of this poem.

1.1.3 Echoing the Poetic in Border Fiction: The "Un-National" and Walls

The borderline as a peaceful non-issue is highlighted in Stafford's poem, whereas Frost's poem alludes more to the image of a metaphoric battleground: "Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top / In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed." This military image portrays the boundary as a necessary demarcation among neighbors that is fiercely and consciously maintained and fortified. Frost's choice of words suggests the outdated nature of such an approach as it is more reminiscent of the Stone Age or savagery. However, Frost ends with the seeming need for delineation among neighbors. In stark contrast, the opposite message is conveyed in Stafford's poem: "This is the field where the battle did not happen, / where the unknown soldier did not die." Stafford highlights the pacifist character of the Canada-U.S. border, echoing

5 The walling dimension is also the focus of the special issue of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 27.2 (2012): "The (Re)Building of the Wall in International Relations." Guest editor: Élisabeth Vallet.

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Canadian John McCrae's iconic World War I poem "In Flanders Fields" (1915), even enshrined on the previous Canadian ten dollar bill[6]:

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow / Between the crosses, row on row, / That mark our place; and in the sky/ The larks, still bravely singing, fly/ Scarce heard amid the guns below" (McCrae). Juxtaposing peace and war, Stafford poetically argues that a sense of nationhood can also be forged, if at all necessary, without the traumatic experience of war: "No people killed — or were killed — on this ground / hallowed by neglect and an air so tame / that people celebrate it by forgetting its name" (Stafford).

It is revealing to see the different tone in Stafford's and Frost's poems written both by U.S. authors hailing from regions in close proximity to the border. Stafford's poem is utopian, even more so read in the wake of 9/11 and ensuing security primacy in the United States, and exacerbated by several terrorist acts since. In contrast, Frost's poem has more realistic underpinnings. Humanity ostensibly needs to erect safeguards to preserve peace and order. Bordering is the dominant theme in the three novels to be analyzed in detail in chapters three, four, and five. The quilt in Thomas King's narrative serves as such a defensive fence, or the remoteness of Kingdom Mountain in Howard Frank Mosher's fiction or the geopolitical boundary projected as a ditch in Jim Lynch's novel. Quite literally, two of Lynch's characters, Canadian Wayne and American Norm, are neighbors living in two countries and are only able to get along thanks to the international boundary between them. Even despite this border they will insult and provoke each other. In their case, good fences seemingly make better neighbors. The question is whether mutual understanding is the goal or simply peaceful coexistence. Ideally the wall, the fence, or the border can also be or become a place of encounters and negotiations for a brighter future.

Stafford's poem echoes McCrae's memorable lines of "In Flanders Fields," inscribed in the Canadian national imagination and symbolizing the importance of the First World War for Canadians' sense of nationhood. However, by naming his poem "At the Un-National Monument" Stafford poetically ushers in a postnational era. This utopian stance prevails in Mosher's work. Walls that are restored and rebuilt as in Frost's poem are also a feature in Lynch's novel, so are the transcending power of nature and birds alluded to in Stafford's poem. King's novel *Truth & Bright Water* is set on a water boundary. The water image highlights the

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6 "The $10 note features the first verse of John McCrae's poem […]" (Bank of Canada). <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/canadian-journey/quotation-excerpt-from-john-mccraes-poem-in-flanders-fields/> 8 May 2013.

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complexity and fluidity of geographical and geopolitical boundaries. Taken at a metaphorical level, physical boundaries and metaphysical borders are interwoven and permeate the lives of people locally, nationally, and internationally. This pervasive influence is strongly aligned with notions of power, nation-building, and metanarratives. The dominant discourse of a nation-state is recognizable at the margins of the political body and reveals the inner logic of the nation-state. In the case of the United States the focus is clearly on homeland security due to the lingering sense of vulnerability.

In contrast to the United States, the discourse of the Anglophone majority in Canada's multicultural and multilingual society is marked by identity insecurity. The perceived danger is intangible and not necessarily related to a perceived physical threat or terrorist acts. The danger consists in cultural assimilation and subservience. The Anglophone majority in Canada, despite the internal differences regarding the "two solitudes" (Hugh MacLennan), between urban and rural, East and West, the North and the rest of the country, indigenous peoples and newcomers, still values the Canada-U.S. border as a demarcation of identity. The border, though open for trade, travelers, and transportation, functions as a visible and felt boundary that marks the cultural difference between the United States and Canada (Mayer, "Romanized" 147). Diametrically opposed are the views held by Americans (Mayer, "Line Dancing" 71). In the U.S., due to the asymmetry and dominance on the North American continent in terms of the military and economic power, and the population size, the border with Canada is irrelevant for national identity construction. From a U.S. perspective, the Canada-U.S. border is a bulwark against the unwanted crossing of presumed terrorists, illegal migrants, or contraband.

1.2 Beyond, "Betwixt, and Between[7]"

The notion of the beyond,[8] the guiding principle of this study, is best embodied by birds "unfolding their wings across the open" (Stafford). The bird trope is part of all three novels discussed. In King's novel allusions to flying are to be found, for instance when Lum runs over the edge of the bridge or in the ghost-like character of Rebecca. In Mosher's novel flying plays a major role, too,

7 "Betwixt and Between" (Victor Turner).

8 See also the comprehensive study *Beyond Walls: Re-Inventing the Canada-United States Borderlands*, published in 2008 by Victor Konrad and Heather N. Nicol or my article "Beyond Border Binaries: Borderlines, Borderlands, and In-Betweenness in Thomas King's Short Story 'Borders.'"

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since the aviator and his biplane imitate birds. The most striking example of the transcending nature of birds is evident in *Border Songs*. In Lynch's novel border agent Brandon Vanderkool, called "Big Bird," acts as a birder, and a bird painter. He seems to fly across the border while accidentally stopping illegal migrants. Border-transcending "Big Bird" Brandon paradoxically contributes to reinscribe the boundary, though only a ditch in this region, with meaning. The natural bird songs are superseded by the socially constructed border songs sung by the Border Patrol. Nonetheless, in the end Brandon is "free as a bird," because he quits his job as a border agent.

The international boundary between Canada and the United States serves multiple, sometimes contradictory, purposes depending on the perspective and the status of a person wanting to cross. Notions of power, identity and citizenship, all interrelated, come to the fore through the magnifying glass of the border. Issues of only minor importance in other circumstances are overblown at this site. This "contact zone" (Pratt) and "third space" (Bhabha) at the nexus of national identity and state power functions as a breeding ground for new nationalisms, but also sends important unifying signals to overcome once divisive nationalisms. Unity is stressed by integrated borderlands, border regions, cross-border regions, and borderscapes, in addition to symbolic, liminal, or interstitial spaces along the Canada-U.S. border. Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park or the Peace Arch Park in the Pacific Northwest are locations that testify to the conceptualization of the border as a meeting place and overlapping zone. At the Peace Arch Park in Blaine, WA and White Rock, BC the "Hands Across the Border" festival used to celebrate the unifying message of the border until financial woes put an end to this cross-border celebration[9]. On a personal or institutional level, kinship ties and shared services on either side of the border underscore cross-border linkages. At the border in Vermont and Quebec the Haskell Free Library and Opera House[10] is another place of mutual cultural pursuits, in short, common humanity at the international boundary.

The relationship of indigenous peoples is complex regarding the Canada-U.S. border. The superimposition of the geopolitical, at the time colonial, boundary bisected certain tribes such as the Blackfoot in what is now Alberta-Montana or the Mohawks in Akwesasne, who have to deal with a fivefold administration due

9 Press Release. 28 Feb. 2013 from Peace Arch Association regarding "Hands Across the Border Cancelled." <http://www.peacearchpark.org/peacearchcelebration.htm> May 8, 2013.

10 The Haskell Free Library and Opera House is situated in Stanstead, QC and Derby Line, VT. <http://haskellopera.com/>.

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to their location. The Mohawk nation engages with Ontario, Quebec, and New York State in addition to the nation-states of Canada and the United States. Native peoples, whether subsumed under the national affiliations of Canada or the United States, experienced colonialism, relocation, forced assimilation, cultural genocide if not actual genocide.

1.2.1 Literary Analysis: The Confluence of Border and North American Studies

Memory, history, and everyday practices and processes of "bordering, ordering and othering" (van Houtum and van Naerssen), and concomitant debordering intersect at the international boundary between Canada and the United States. In addition to the geopolitical boundary the literary discussion focuses on deterritorialized borders in society as represented in fiction. Community borders, the color line, i.e. borders of ethnicity and race, as well as cultural identity borders are essential in any understanding of borders and bordering. For close investigation I have chosen three contemporary North American novels published at the turn from the 20th to the 21st century and in the first decade of the 21st century: Canadian Native author Thomas King's *Truth & Bright Water* (1999), American writer Howard Frank Mosher's *On Kingdom Mountain* (2007), and American author Jim Lynch's *Border Songs* (2009). These novels[11], published within a decade, are well suited to gauge current developments and changes at the Canada-U.S. border. Aside from the geopolitical boundary, symbolic borders and bordering practices feature prominently in their work.

The border in King's *Truth & Bright Water* is permeable for the protagonists with the small ferry across the river Shield. However, at the official ports of entry border permeability and therefore the mobility of the prospective border crosser is dependent on Border Patrol agents and the official "Script" (Lundy 136). The power of the sovereign nation-states becomes visible in the border crossing situation. In Mosher's *On Kingdom Mountain*, the border region is comprised of the larger borderland of Vermont-Quebec as well as the fictionalized microcosm Kingdom Mountain. In this utopian and interstitial space protagonist Jane Hubbell Kinneson, who is partly indigenous, reigns as the so-called Duchess of Kingdom Mountain. Lynch's *Border Songs* is also set at the border and in the

11 Though the spatial element in literary studies and the literary aspect in border studies have increasingly been addressed by various scholars, an analysis focusing on the three selected novels of this study has to the best of my knowledge not been undertaken before.

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borderlands of Cascadia in the Pacific Northwest. The author explicitly chronicles and extrapolates in a fictionalized way the outcome of security paranoia at the border after September 11, 2001 and the thickening of the border in the wake of measures such as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The local border community on both sides is subjected to fear and distrust leading to an escalation of paranoia and rebordering. A policed Border Patrol state emerges. Protagonist Brandon Vanderkool, though because of his unusual nature, undermines the solemn sovereignty of the state by discovering more illegal migrants and contraband while he is birding than seasoned agents while on duty.

The selection of the three border texts informs one another and showcases the importance of border novels for different groups of border residents. The context in which each fictional work is anchored is essential for the reader's understanding of the shifting functions of borders, borderlands, and bordering. My analysis traces these changes along the Canada-U.S. border and draws attention to the different levels of border permeability and of mobility for the various border crossers. The power of the nation-state, already contested due to globalization and simultaneous regionalization, and of national vs. regional, ethnic, or cultural identities is examined. The selected novels are ideal for analyzing how borders, borderlands, bordering processes and bordering practices are represented in fiction. It becomes possible to infer the reasons for that representation thanks to the centrality of the border and borderlands as a setting or bordering as a trope.

Diverse border regions between the contiguous United States and Canada feature in the selected novels situated in the East, the Prairies and Plains and in the Northwest. Each novel focuses on one main theme such as contemporary indigeneity in the borderlands (King), historical multi-ethnicity and third spaces in the Eastern borderlands of Vermont and Quebec (Mosher), and post-9/11 security imperatives and the ensuing repercussions to the detriment of local cross-border communities in the Pacific Northwest (Lynch). All three novels deal with negotiating socio-cultural spaces and identities aside from subverting, challenging, or transgressing mental, symbolic, socio-economic, ethnic and racial, in addition to geographic and geopolitical borders. In so doing these novels open up a whole spectrum of alternative borderlands and contribute to exposing, questioning, and discussing bordering.

Another overarching factor for the selection of primary fiction is the inclusion of significant lasting issues, for example social justice for Natives, the ecological dimension, the threatened rural life, and current affairs such as the thickening of the Canada-U.S. border. With the emerging field of border studies and in the context of transnational American studies, it is therefore promising to closely

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examine borders, borderlands, and bordering in fiction. Literature is an expression of cultural identity and an avantgardist mirror of societal change. Indicators for special techniques and tropes employed, presumably more frequently in border fiction, particularly in indigenous writing include: the use of the trickster figure (typically in Native writing), of magical realism and of occasional humor and irony. The links between the geographical border, symbolic borders and identity borders are examined and discussed. I also show how borders are drawn, maintained, blurred, or erased. Notions of in-between spaces, borderscapes, borderlands, and related spatial conceptualizations and metaphors are at the center of this interdisciplinary study.

1.2.2 Interdisciplinary Significance: Borders, Borderlands, and De/Bordering

The expanding field of border studies, originally firmly grounded in geographical, historical and political paradigms, includes an increasing focus on the humanities and border poetics (Schimanski and Wolfe). The content, the locales as well as the disciplinary perspectives regarding border studies proliferated (Wastl-Walter; Wilson and Donnan). Along the same lines, American studies are understood as transnational American studies highlighting the transnational or hemispheric turns and other spatial concepts. A reconceptualization of American studies and Canadian studies as North American[12] studies at a number of European universities puts the spatial turn institutionally into practice. The spatial element is one of the decisive factors of transformation behind the new contours of American studies in a globalized world. Both border studies and transnational American studies, the two main fields of this study, have experienced a significant expansion of interests, foci, and theories. It is therefore a promising undertaking to combine these two multi- or arguably interdisciplinary fields and gain new perspectives for the textual analysis of contemporary border fiction in North America. Going beyond nation-state and ostensible disciplinary binaries Native[13] studies are primarily applied to indigenous writer Thomas King's fictional work.

12 A note on terminology: By "North America" I mean the United States of America and Canada.

13 The adjectives "Native," "indigenous," and "aboriginal" are used in connection with studies and other nouns. Referring to "Native" peoples in Canada "First peoples" comprise "First Nations, Inuit, and Métis," whereas in the United States "Native Americans," "American Indians," or tribal affiliations are categories of reference. The terms are employed according to the indigenous person's preference and self-designation. This list is neither meant to be a comprehensive nor an authoritative list.

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The goal of this analysis is a broad discussion and examination of contemporary novels taking into account diverse voices that add their own notes to this chorus of contemporary cultures. Because of the breadth of the topics and backgrounds dealt with an interdisciplinary approach is most useful and different conceptualizations from multiple fields are applied to the three novels. This confluence of approaches sheds new light on the Canada-U.S. border precisely by the complementary nature of the fields in question. Dissonances are part of the new music emerging from the analyzed border fiction; a new border song develops, resounding the primary and secondary sources of this discussion. The border is thus in terms of McLuhan an "interval of resonance" (73). Taken literally the border is an inter-zone, resonating with people living at, crossing, and working near the Canada-U.S. border. The border elicits a reaction. It is similar to jazz in that there is the border call and border chorus's response. Call and response alternate and improvisation, fluctuating notes, and blue notes reign supreme. Situated at the confluence between on the one hand approaches and theory from the humanities and on the other hand from the social sciences, this study shows the need for a complementary analysis in order to adequately address the phenomena of borders, borderlands, and de/bordering in Canada-U.S. border fiction.

1.2.3 Procedure: Situating Canada-U.S. Border Fiction

The themes of the two juxtaposed poems by Stafford and Frost, addressing border demarcation and border invisibility as well as debordering versus rebordering, set the stage for the theoretical underpinnings of the literary analysis. These poems represent an aperture in the critical application of concepts emanating from the fields of transnational American, Canadian, and Indigenous studies on the side of the humanities and from border studies in the tradition of the social sciences.

Starting in the theoretical second chapter of this study, the shifting binaries and the transcending notion of the beyond are framed in terms of spatial elements in North American studies and cultural and literary elements in border studies. Disciplinary boundaries are transcended and notions of parallax, palimpsest, and "worlding" are highlighted. The third chapter analyzes Thomas King's novel *Truth & Bright Water*, published pre-9/11, telling the story of two Native young boys, cousins. In this novel Native questions of social justice within a settler society are explored. The Canada-U.S. border is not only the geographical setting, but also serves as a line of demarcation between the White and the Native worlds involving issues of class, race, and ethnicity. Chapter four is centered on Howard Frank Mosher's novel *On Kingdom Mountain* combining some of the Native and ecological ideas in

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rural 1930s Vermont. The setting is Kingdom Mountain, a unique place and colorblind utopian space straddling and transcending the boundary between Canada and the United States. It is a novel beyond border binaries, suggesting a Bhabhian "third space." The fifth chapter examines Jim Lynch's novel *Border Songs*. The author, a former journalist, directly responds to the rebordering and thickening in his home region in the Pacific Northwest, also known as Cascadia. Brandon Vanderkool, the protagonist, is an American Border Patrol agent, who falls in love with a Canadian smuggler. The concluding chapter summarizes the study and highlights its significant contributions to the fields of transnational American studies and border studies focusing on the notion of the beyond, subversion and resistance as well as new border concepts and imaginaries.

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2 Theoretical Frame: At the Interface of Literatures, Cultures, and Borders

A new understanding of the reasons for and nature of borders, borderlands, and bordering as represented in fiction benefits from the confluence of theories from the realms of literary, cultural, and border studies. The gap in approach between the study of literatures and cultures on the one hand and the study of borders on the other is narrowing for good reason. The spatial turn in American and Canadian studies in conjunction with the cultural turn in border studies helps to transcend the disciplinary divide. Thus, this study is a contribution to both the spatially inflected humanities and the culturally turned social sciences. A critical analysis of the representation of the Canada-U.S. border, borderlands, and bordering in contemporary North American fiction contributes to an understanding of the underlying border concepts. Border studies can draw conclusions for innovative conceptualizations regarding the ontology and epistemology of borders, while literary studies can include fresh spatial insights in the discussion of contemporary North American novels.

This interdisciplinary study primarily draws on the relevant theories and literatures from the fields of transnational American, Canadian, Native/Indigenous, and border studies. In this regard, "interdisciplinary" must be distinguished from "multi-," "trans-," and "post-disciplinary" approaches. To be truly interdisciplinary also new methods need to be used in order to avoid mere "fashionable branding" (Wilson and Donnan 16). The prefix "inter" suggests an inclusive discussion of pertinent theories from different fields, already multiple and diverse in and of themselves, and highlights emerging joint perspectives beyond disciplinary boundaries. Joel Pfister states pertaining to American literary studies: "American literature was complexly 'interdisciplinary' and 'postdisciplinary' generations before the academy had to invent such terms and approaches to counter its own disciplinary fragmentations of knowledge production. Literature is about life, and life, unlike the academy, is not divided into disciplines" (31). He also underscores the synergy effects: "If theory, historical studies, and interdisciplinary and postdisciplinary approaches can change literature – the way we read and value it – perhaps literature can return the favor" (Pfister 33). Different viewpoints inform and support one another.

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For the purpose of this study I will focus on central concepts related to borders and influential paradigm shifts in order to conceptualize specifically the Canada-U.S. border fiction. With globalization and the spatial and cultural turns, notions of transnationalism have become increasingly important and redefine American as well as Canadian Studies. Native studies are a crucial perspective for comprehending indigenous viewpoints regarding the border and border literatures. Postcolonial concepts such as Homi K. Bhabha's "Third Space" and the theories and ideas of Salman Rushdie, Edward Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak permeate these fields and have entered my analysis. Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" represents a key concept in American studies. Shelley Fisher Fishkin postulates that "the transnational becomes more central to American studies" ("Crossroads" 22) and calls this shift "the transnational turn" ("Crossroads" 17) in her presidential address to the American Studies Association on Nov. 12, 2004[14]. The spatial turn, whether conceived as transnational, hemispheric, or inter-American, has paved the way to a complete reconceptualization of the originally more U.S.-centered field of American studies. In the wake of these recent developments, American studies have become "New" or "Transnational" American studies. Theoretical concepts pertaining to globalization, cosmopolitanism, or cultural studies are additional important factors. For the theoretical underpinnings for a special genre of "border literature" or "border fictions[15]," Claudia Sadowski-Smith's work is informative.

Similarly, Canadian studies are reconceptualized as "Trans.Can.Lit" (Kamboureli and Miki). The research conducted by Cynthia Sugars and Linda Hutcheon in the realms of postmodernism and postcolonialism has helped to shape the discipline. Canadian studies are increasingly more polyphone and include voices by formerly marginalized groups, whether gender- or ethnicity-related. At the outset, Canadian literature was a national project limited to reflecting Canada's double position as a postcolonial country, yet also implicated in a colonial relationship with the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. In the second decade of the 21st century Canadian literature is plural. Influential concepts in Native studies include Thomas King's and other Native scholars' discussions of postcolonialism

14 American Studies Association's Annual Meeting "Crossroads of Cultures," held in Atlanta, Georgia on November 11–14, 2004.

15 E.g. Sadowski-Smith, Claudia. "Border Fictions." *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction*. Gen. Ed. Brian W. Shaffer. Vol. II: *Twentieth-Century American Fiction*. Patrick O'Donnell (Vol. Ed.), David W. Madden (Vol. Ed.), Justus Nieland (Vol. Ed.). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 465–69.

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against the backdrop of non-Native definitions and Gerald Vizenor's "survivance" focusing on questions of agency, representation, and sovereignty.

2.1 Poetic Prisms: The Cultural and Literary Turns in Border Studies

In the globalized world of the 21st century, a McLuhanesque "global village," border studies can serve as an important prism to analyze transnational developments. Research in border studies is significant as clear-cut distinctions between nation-states become blurred and new as well as several forms of identification multiply:

> As spatially bounded cultures erode and conditions of 'in-betweenness' and 'homelessness' increase while diversity and code-switching become routine […] [there is a] new relevance in exploring 'literal' borderlands and their crossings, in order to understand the new 'metaphoric' borderlands of the postmodern age. (Wendl and Rösler 1)

The decline of the construct of nation-state is at the center regarding the concept of borderlands: "The precise and once presumed fit between nation, state and territory is being challenged in political science as in other disciplines, through concepts such as border regions, borderlands and border landscapes" (Donnan and Wilson 58). New scales emerge offering conceptual possibilities formerly not present in notions of the national.

A bilateral Canada-U.S. focus is the underlying principle for this study due to "the importance of viewing any boundary from both sides" (Donnan and Wilson 22). Furthermore, the cultural dimension is at the core of my analysis as "culture is the least studied and least understood aspect of the structures and functions of international borders" (Donnan and Wilson 11). In order to remedy this lack culture is more and more taken into account in border studies: "In fact, culture has become a pre-eminent aspect of border studies in most disciplines, and has certainly begun to play a more prominent role in all fields" (Donnan and Wilson 62). Cultures are no longer regarded "as if they were pure, territorially bounded and ordered in systematic categories […] [but are rather viewed as] more conflicting interstitial domains of paradox, fuzziness and ambiguity […]" (Wendl and Rösler 11). This leads to the development of new models such as "creolization," based on sociolinguistics, or one that draws on the arts and uses, for instance, the terms "collage" and "mélange." There is yet another notion, this time related to biology, called the "hybridity" concept. Wendl and Rösler state that "hybridity serves mostly as metaphor for new postcolonial forms of fluid identities […]" (11). Homi K. Bhabha reveals his understanding of the theory of

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cultural hybridity in his seminal work *The Location of Culture*: "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (4). The emerging field of border studies has undergone a profound transformation towards a greater emphasis on the cultural dimensions. Originating in taxonomy-oriented boundary studies, current border studies focuses on a variety of borders, approaches, locales, and phenomena. Within this expanding field the aesthetic elements including border poetics are gaining ground.

2.1.1 Border(ing) Studies, Border Theory, and Border Poetics

Geography, history, and political science were the key disciplinary influences for the field of border studies that should have been more aptly called boundary studies during the initial phase of boundary research. However, new conceptualizations have emerged. Boundary studies have given way to genuine border studies. Not only geographical or geopolitical boundaries matter, but also cultural, linguistic, or mental borders, borderlands and borderscapes, and bordering processes and practices. The field of border studies is reconceptualized as "*bordering* studies" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412). The field has a critical edge, encompassing new questions of bordering and reassessing the place of the humanities within the traditional social sciences domain of border studies. The notion of the beyond and multiplicity is of paramount importance, because "geopolitical borders cannot be understood as discrete, fixed and dichotomous" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 406). Henk van Houtum defines a border as "a necessary and unfixable continuum between openness and closure rather than a line" and cautions against the increasingly more widespread viewpoint, due to 9/11, of a border "as a line of security and protection, often coinciding with an inward-looking reproduction and canonization of the history and culture it is believed to contain" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 405).

Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan postulate a scholarly, cultural and comparative turn in border studies and thus distinguish roughly two phases, i.e. earlier border studies and present-day border studies. The authors contend that the first phase of border studies lasting until the 1990s was characterized by four key components, namely the U.S.-Mexico border as point of reference or "hyperborder" (Romero), linkages between nation and state, borders as margins and disciplinary concerns (Wilson and Donnan 13). The current period of border studies features six characteristics: a cultural focus, the strengthening of ethnographic methods, an epistemological shift towards processes and products, a fragmentation of states, internal and external bordering and a reassessment of

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the peripheries as central factors (Wilson and Donnan 13). In the *Companion to Border Studies* the future of border studies is described as comparative and multiple. Referring to just one geographical setting is only seen as possible if at least incorporating methods and approaches from several disciplines (Wilson and Donnan 20).

With the cultural turn and new developments the field is now more diverse than ever, international, multi- and interdisciplinary (Wastl-Walter 1–8). The contributions of non-traditional fields are valued and encouraged. Critical border studies deal with the ethical implications, the ontology and epistemology of borders, and border(ing) studies focus on the processes of "bordering, ordering and othering" (van Houtum and van Naerssen). The substantial shift from classifications of boundaries to questions of bordering in the age of transnationalism, globalization and simultaneous growth of new nationalisms is a shaping force in the field. The "banal nationalism" (Billig) surfaces not only in mega sports events such as soccer tournaments or the Olympics, but also in the rise of new nation-states. On the one hand, "the end of the nation state" (Ohmae) was proclaimed, but on the other hand there are more nation-states in the world today than ever before. From a government, state and national identity point of view borders matter despite the transnationalism.

Numerous border-related terms and concepts exist in the scholarly discourse of border studies. The very name of the field projects the underlying conceptual assumptions. Key terms for any border analysis are: boundary versus border, borderlands, and bordering. The terminology needs to be clarified in order to avoid confusion: "Social scientists occasionally claim precision, though even they employ a range of terms – border, borderland, border zone, boundary, frontier – which sometimes pass as synonyms and at other times identify quite different phenomena" (Donnan and Wilson 15). Consequently, essential terms and concepts must be defined. In current border studies a decisive distinction is made between boundaries and borders. The term border is a multifaceted expression that can encompass geographical boundaries as well as symbolic borders, whereas boundary, strictly speaking, refers to geophysical demarcations. This is in line with the shift from boundary to critically oriented, diverse and multidisciplinary border studies.

Along the Canada-U.S. border different borderlands can be classified according to level of integration, disciplinary perspective or what kind of litmus test can clarify whether or not a borderland exists at all. Oscar Martínez has developed a typology of borderlands, comprised of alienated, coexisting and interdependent, integrated and figurative multi-sited borderlands (qtd. in Wendl and

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Rösler 10). In contrast to that taxonomy, Wilson and Donnan summarize different definitions regarding border areas in a disciplinary manner as "geography's border landscapes," "history's borderlands," and "the notion of 'border regions'" in political science (10).

Other scholars also stress the identity component in all its multiplicity: "borderlands: the culturally indeterminate areas where identities and political affiliations are constantly negated and negotiated. Central to its overall theme is the negotiation of identity, whether it be individual or group identity, and the problems of contested or fractured identities" (Éigeartaigh and Getty 1). Yet other definitions focus on power instead of identity: "Borderlands are sites and symbols of power" (Donnan and Wilson 1). Mary Louise Pratt offers a related concept to the one of borderlands, the "contact zone," defined as "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (7). Ken S. Coates and John M. Findlay argue to replace borders with borderlands as an analytical tool: "One way to open up understandings of boundaries is to look for *borderlands* instead of *borders*, to consider the boundary not solely as a dividing line but rather as the backbone of a region in which people on either side of the line have key things in common" (ix). Borderlands are crucial for research, for instance one leading journal in the field of border studies is aptly called *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

Bordering can transcend locality and include the formation of liminal spaces, the construction of clear divisions and distinctions between "us" and "them," or create a sense of order. Bordering processes and practices entail othering, ordering, constructing, maintaining, crossing, transgressing, blurring, and deconstructing boundaries and borders. Going beyond border binaries and establishing an in-between space, a Bhabhian "third space," could be a result of bordering processes and practices. Bordering occurs in social relations between people, but it unfolds as well on urban, regional, or national levels. This phenomenon has echoes in the simultaneous globalization and deterritorialization forces.

Borders can be conceived as tools of colonialism and lingering nationalism. This also holds true for the Canada-U.S. border. This border locale used to be neglected in border studies due to the default point of comparison, the U.S.-Mexico border. In the 1980s and 1990s research on the Canada-U.S. border was a new focus within border studies. After 9/11 not only scholarly but also media attention shifted to include the Canada-U.S. border. The higher profile of the Canada-U.S. border in addition to the diversifying field of border studies have strongly influenced or even made possible my approach to contemporary Canada-U.S. border

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fiction. Only now a contextualization and critical interdisciplinary analysis can be pursued.

Non-tangible issues such as culture feature prominently in current border studies. This holds true as well for what Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe coined “border poetics” within a border aesthetics frame (40). Border poetics uses literary approaches as a valid method to gain a new understanding of the nature of contemporary borders, borderlands and border cultures. Issues of power, citizenship, and identity come to the fore without foregoing poststructural, postcolonial, and postmodernist influences on border theory. Border research has become more holistic, multi- and interdisciplinary or even postdisciplinary (Wilson and Donnan 3) and includes such concepts as “geo-philosophical” (van Houtum, “Mask” 60) and critical readings of borders, borderlands, and bordering processes.

The diversity of the field of border studies becomes obvious when comparing different scholarly approaches to conceptualize theoretical border constructs, for instance in visualized models. In this regard, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly’s model (qtd. in Konrad and Nicol 51; Brunet-Jailly 6) as well as Victor Konrad’s and Heather Nicol’s revised model (Konrad and Nicol 55) need to be taken into account. Some scholars focus on border management, others on border culture, and yet another group of scholars deals with ethical questions. These different, equally elucidating, studies complement one another. Critical border studies dealing with ethical and philosophical questions and the shift towards bordering are of particular interest regarding the border poetics lens of the present study. The focus therefore is on these critical and newly emerging issues.

In their *Companion*, Wilson and Donnan distinguish between “border theory” and “border studies” (2) and relate border theory to “this intersection of the metaphorical negotiations of borderlands of personal and group identity” (2). “Border studies” on the other hand are defined as “the geopolitical realization of international, state and other borders of polity, power, territory and sovereignty” (Wilson and Donnan 2). An interdisciplinary approach is essential for a topic within the realm of border studies focusing on border culture. Border studies simply transcend academic disciplines as the very nature of borders themselves illustrates: “International borders provide physical manifestations of the need to cross boundaries in order to appreciate the complexity of the whole border social system. They are the embodiment of what is demanded of border scholars, who must often transcend the limits of their academic discipline in order to contribute to it” (Donnan and Wilson 59). Hence, the topic of borders and border crossings is important in more than just one discipline: “The

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current fascination with borders and border crossings thus extends far beyond anthropology into literary theory, cultural studies, media studies and beyond" (Donnan and Wilson 35). Donnan and Wilson describe comparative research in the field of border studies as necessarily interdisciplinary: "The convergence in method and theory which the comparative study of international borders demands, along with the interdisciplinarity necessitated by such an effort, will create a corpus of scholarly work difficult to pin down to any individual academic field" (61).

The turns to bordering and critical border studies are essential. Border security, border management, cross-border trade, transportation issues, tourism, and environmental questions are addressed, but questions regarding identities, cultures, the ontology and epistemology of borders are now at the fore. The imagination, the elusive, the abstraction, the metaphorical, all ideally grounded in the Canada-U.S. border form the foundation of this study. These understandings and conceptualizations of the Canada-U.S. border, borderlands, and bordering inform my contribution to the fields of transnational American, transnational Canadian, and Native studies.

Border poetics and a bordering instead of a spatial turn in transnational American studies can be promising for future research as "[w]hat the map cuts up, the story cuts across" (Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* 129; qtd. in Perera 201). A poetic and aesthetic emphasis towards an "*ethics of aesthetics*" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 416) is called for. The Border Aesthetics Project at the University of Tromsø headed by Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe specializes in the analysis of the aesthetic dimensions in border studies. The tangible and practical aspects need to be complemented by the elusive and impractical to create pragmatic border studies. This pragmatic move can lead programmatic border studies in the best sense of the term, being multiple, diverse, egalitarian, and not privileging the material over the imaginary and immaterial worlds. The imaginative dimension is a key component because "a border may be read as, among other things, a semiotic system, a system of images and imaginations" (Sidaway 163).

2.1.2 The Canada-U.S. Border/lands

The often ambivalent Canadian response to the United States, particularly in terms of national and cultural identity construction, comes to the fore at the international boundary between the two countries. The Canada-U.S. border dates back to the colonial imposition of an international boundary between what should later become Canada and the United States. Three main parts of the

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physical boundary between Canada and the United States exist, namely between the contiguous United States and Canada, Alaska and the Yukon, and in the polar North between Canada and its Arctic neighbors, including the United States. Along the Canada-U.S. border, also known as the Line or Forty-Ninth parallel, are a number of borderlands with a varying degree of integration, such as Cascadia, the Prairies and Plains, and the New England-Quebec region. Cascadia is an ecological and utopian, an "ecotopian" (Ernest Callenbach), conception. Indigenous concepts feature prominently. The Salish Sea was renamed Salish by the indigenous peoples. This anti-colonial rewriting, renaming by reclaiming, has echoes in the notion of Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" and its unifying potential. The Prairies and Plains region used to be the West, a differing cultural concept in the United States and in Canada. Notably, there is a mental border in terms of conceptualization. The myth of the West is glorified in the U.S. and exhibits so-called American values of freedom, self-reliance, and justice. It is part of the American dream that no longer has a hold on the present-day imagination. The West in Canada is marked by order due to what would later become the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the now iconic Mounties. So order was closely linked to the border. The border separated two worldviews and also two judicial systems. Despite being trapped between the colonial powers, the indigenous peoples used the colonial imposition to their advantage.

By drawing boundaries the indigenous peoples were almost erased. This colonial legacy still lingers and is evident in land claims, lawsuits, discussions regarding identity, sovereignty, cultural autonomy, and economic disparities. The settler society and colonizer of Native peoples was a colony itself in its national origins. This can be said, at least partially, for both the U.S. and Canada. The parallels go beyond this rather negative aspect also to include some positive aspects. It is precisely this similarity which often leads to Canada's fear of assimilation and cultural domination by the United States. The Canadian national unity is threatened by diverging forces such as Quebec's separatist attempts, multiculturalism, strong regionalism, a sense of Western alienation, and indigenous claims. For this reason Canada needs and welcomes the border, particularly the Anglophone Canadians, to distinguish between Canadians and Americans. The Anglophone Canadian stance towards the U.S. mirrors the Quebec stance and ambiguity towards the rest of Canada, i.e. Anglophone Canada. The border between Canada and the United States is thus essential for the attempt to construct a unified national identity. However, the challenging forces towards such unity, are also characteristic for the constitution of something resembling in a diverse and elusive way Canadian national identity. These diverging yet paradoxically

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also unifying influences are the very plurality, the diversity, and the indigenous, Northern, and Quebec facts in Canada. Cynthia Sugars states that the absence of Canadian culture is its presence, defined by bordering: "The more that Canada is identified as lacking in culture, the more that absence is identified as characteristically Canadian; the more amorphous the culture, the more it must be fixed within national boundaries" ("Marketing" 149).

While surveying and establishing the boundary, the already long-established indigenous nations have been ignored. The white colonizers drew the line along the forty-ninth parallel in the West and through the Great Lakes, along the 45th parallel and in the middle of the St.Lawrence River in the Eastern part of the continent. In so doing lands of indigenous nations were bisected. One telling example are the Blackfoot, vividly described in Thomas King's short story "Borders." The linear rigidity of the arbitrary border is apparent in its very designation as "the Line". The Line bisects aboriginal lands. The mapping does not take aboriginal rights into account which leads to such cases as the Akwesasne reserve which straddles the boundary and has a five-part interlocutor: two Canadian provinces, one American state, and two nation-states plus the aboriginal autonomy on the reserve/reservation. This proves a complicated situation when dealing with cigarette or other contraband smuggling, not to mention human trafficking as portrayed in the movie *Frozen River*.

The Line considers neither the first peoples nor the eco-systems nor the natural environment. To counter these problems, the International Joint Commission (IJC) was founded dealing with water and clean air issues. This should not be confused with the International Boundary Commission (IBC) which works on the physical demarcation and maintenance of boundary markers. In the history of the Canada-U.S. border there were some skirmishes such as with the Fenians in the East or the so-called Pig War on the San Juan Islands due to sometimes contested surveying and land allocation. More errors have led to strange locations such as Point Roberts in the Pacific Northwest. However, positive examples comprise festivals and cross-border partnerships such as "Hands Across the Border" at Peace Arch Park in Blaine, WA and White Rock, BC, unfortunately discontinued, international peace parks, or the Haskell Free Library and Opera House in Vermont and Quebec straddling the boundary between the United States and Canada.

The Canada-U.S. border was conceived as a binary. However, all along the border are cross-border regions, borderlands, or "borderscapes" (Perera). These borderlands display a border(lands) culture and the border is not a dividing, but rather a uniting line. The residents in these cross-border regions have more

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in common with their neighbors on the other side of the line than with their compatriots in other parts of their nation-states. An in-between space or a Bhabhian "third space" emerges. Borderlands go beyond border binaries.

In foreign affairs the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon marked an important shift in interaction at the border: "After September 11, 2001, the boundary between Canada and the United States became more apparent. The boundary line itself did not change, but crossing the border became more protracted, less civil and generally more complex" (Konrad and Nicol 1). People became much more aware that there indeed is a border between the two countries and this new perception was translated into finding novel ways to connect with one another on both sides of the border enabling exchange and trade. The United States-Canada border has a dual though somewhat paradoxical nature:

> In the post 9/11 period two apparently opposing yet fundamentally integrated forces are emphasized. One is the entrenchment of the boundary. In a sense, the wall between the United States and Canada became higher and less permeable when homeland security became a major issue in the United States. Yet, as the border was reinforced, corridors of commodity flow and interaction were expedited.
> (Konrad and Nicol 3)

The thickening of the Canada-U.S. border in the wake of 9/11 and the full implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative thus threatens locally grown border culture. The borderlands residents have less opportunity to interact because of perceived hassle at the border. Negative changes at the border include long lines to cross the border due to more thorough checks and longer questioning by the border guards, alleged racial profiling or to have sufficient and more proof of citizenship and identity then before. The effect consists in less frequent and less spontaneous cross-border visits, travel, and shopping. Problems in the borderlands indicate problems on a national scale.

In a North American context the beginning of border studies lies with the U.S. – Mexico border. Gloria Anzaldúa was a pioneer in that regard with her seminal work *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Having been for a long time in the shadow of the U.S.-Mexico border, the Canada-U.S. border is now holding its own due to increased interest related to security issues. The Borderlands Project by the Canadian-American Center at the University of Maine was a research project whose purpose was twofold, namely to increase awareness of Canada and the United States as border neighbors while at the same time publishing a monograph series and essay collection in the years from 1989 through 1991. The publications lent themselves to further investigations on various aspects concerning

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American-Canadian relations, the Canada-U.S. borderlands, and the international border (McKinsey and Konrad iii–iv). This research conducted by scholars such as Victor Konrad, Clark Blaise, Roger Gibbins, and Russell Brown laid the foundation for border research specific to the Canada-U.S. border. The world has changed rapidly since 1989 to date. A reassessment in light of the globalization, the war on terror, and the ambivalent phenomenon of a simultaneous resurgence of nationalisms and supra-national endeavors is needed.

2.1.3 Border Conceptualizations: Parallax and Paradox

Human border actions aside from crossing the border are conceived as blurring, transgressing, subverting, erasing the border on the one hand (i.e. making the border disappear, in short unmapping), or maintaining, demarcating, drawing, thickening the border on the other (making the border reappear or stay, in short mapping) and also fall into these dichotomies. Within the concept of the border as a bridge inclusion is important, whereas functions and metaphors such as sieve, filter, shield, dividing line, and "sandbags resisting America" (Fraser) are associated with the border as a barrier. These border binaries need to be transcended as the globalized world in the age of transnationalism is much more complex and interconnected.

Metaphors for geopolitical boundaries are manifold. Certain characteristics are stressed in the designations for the Canada-U.S. border, such as the outdated cliché of "the longest undefended border." Peace, friendship, being cousins, and sharing connected roots and a continent hold true for the case of Canada and the United States. The border does not exist in and of itself, but is socially constructed and inscribed with significance: "The reality of the border is created by the meaning that is attached to it. A line is geometry, a border is interpretation" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412). The understanding of borders varies depending on viewpoints. The reasons for bordering can be related to desire and fear:

> These sensitivities, nevertheless – desire and fear – constitute some of the most basic motivations for the drawing of borderlines and for their persistence. […] And their apparent contrariety – desire *versus* fear – helps explain why borderlines signify so differently, why they encode such differing presumptions, depending on the direction from which people look at them. (New 76)

The parallaxic function of borders and border crossings to provoke new paradigms needs to be stressed as Pedro Carmona Rodríguez posits: "[…] going across any border, be it geopolitical or metaphorical, signifies a negotiation of the poles between coloniser and colonised, the civilised and the uncivilised, the global and the local, engendering a powerful relativism that questions the very

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border" (Rodríguez 27). He foregrounds the linkage betweeen border crossings and paradigm shifts: "Crossing is, therefore, a strategic parallax for the articulation of a multi-layered revision […]" (Rodríguez 27). However, the border is also paradoxical as the border is made and unmade at its emplacement: "The border is not empty or readily pliable; it is a paradoxical zone of resistance, agency, and rogue embodiment" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr ix). Borders fulfill several functions concurrently. These functions fall into the categories of the border as a bridge, a barrier, a parallax, and a mirror-like or self-referential stance. The barrier function whether conceived as a wall, an abyss or a dividing line, is pervasive. The bridging function is harder to conceive, though it is constitutive of borderlands, understood as a border area or border region coming together at and because of and beyond the physical boundary. The constructed nature of geopolitical and physical boundaries is overcome by building bridges in case of rivers or by opening ports of entry at land borders so that the boundary becomes a door and quite literally a window of opportunity for exchange and mutual understanding. The multifaceted and elusive character of symbolic borders and of the lines between the imagination and reality underscore multiplicity, ambiguity, and fluidity. The border is also a meeting place. It is at the border that differences are negotiated and residents on both sides of the border become aware of their similarities despite the line that tells them how different they supposedly are and should be. This local cross-border culture rethinks the border as marker of national sovereignty, identity, and citizenship.

Borders and visual, written or oral representations are inextricably linked and play a crucial role in shaping and reflecting human perspectives. It is a circle, between vicious and virtuous, of merely representing preconceived notions and concepts and transcending such representations by adding a new twist, by writing back, and by subverting through surprise. Border binaries and the Cartesian linear scheme are thus overcome. Instead of lines, circles and zones are more representative of the complexity and, in fact, impossibility of representing actual bordering processes and practices. The indigenous worldview is marked by circular conceptualizations. The border resembles a "Janus face" (van Houtum, "Mask" 59) and functions both as a mask and a mirror.

In "The Mask of the Border," Henk van Houtum conceptualizes the border as a "verb" (50), a "fabricated truth" (51), and as "the mask of the nation" (55). The masking dimension entailed in bordering practices and symbolized by the boundaries of the nation-state is vital despite a globalized and seemingly shrinking world. The border is multiple: "A border is […] much more than a protection wall behind which one hides or takes refuge. It is also a threshold […]"

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(van Houtum, "Mask" 59). Therefore, the border must be understood as a "Janus face" (van Houtum, "Mask" 59) signifying beginning and end symbolized by the Roman god Janus. The "sphere of trust" within the border is simultaneously constitutive of the ostensible "fear for what is out there, beyond the self-defined border" (59). The dualism represented by the Janus face envisioned as "[…] the centripetal, inward oriented and the centrifugal, the outward oriented face" (59) is further complicated by the notion of the "beyond". Going beyond border binaries highlights the complexity and dynamic nature of borders and borderscapes along a "Janus-continuum" (59). Borders are marked by an "ontological multidimensionality" and represent "a necessary and unfixable continuum between openness and closure rather than a line" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 405). In sum, "a territorial border is the continuous production of a mask" and resembles a "masking of reality" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412). This is linked to the construction of national identity as "nations nowadays mask and brand themselves" and a metaphorical "national masked ball" is staged, where citizens "perfom the nation" (van Houtum, "Mask" 55). Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Eric Hobsbawm's and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* come immediately to mind. The nation-state itself resembles more and more "a dated one-dimensional mask of a multi-layered multiplicity of identities […]" (van Houtum, "Mask" 55).

Reconceptualizing border metaphors is promising and therefore the two-fold, Janus-face devices of the border as a mirror and at the same time mask is explored. Masks are also part of the "carnivalesque" (van Houtum, "Mask" 55) and masking can be a charade. The term charade displays the deceptive nature, yet in a somewhat playful manner. McLuhan invokes the metaphor of the "rear-view mirror" (73). He suggests that Americans looking in such a mirror perceive "how the Canadians sidestep the impact of these new media, keeping a sort of stasis in place so characteristic of the northern ability to juggle fierce separatism and regionalisms without cataclysmic finality" (73). The mirror reveals the nature of Canada to Americans. The Canada-U.S. border resembles a "one-way-mirror-wall" (Berland 476). Thanks to Canada, the United States is "more acceptable" to other countries according to McLuhan: "Since the United States has become a world environment, Canada has become the anti-environment that renders the United States more acceptable and intelligible to many small countries of the world […]" (73–74). In short, mirrors reveal and masks conceal. The different labels for the border highlight certain characteristics such as self-referential ones with regard to the mirror or comparative components as is the case of the masking metaphor.

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The geopolitical boundary is generally envisioned as a line distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens, people belonging to a nation-state and people foreign to that geopolitical entity. The notion of "borderscape," originally a term coined in 2007 by Suvendrini Perera in her article "A Pacific Zone? (In)Security, Sovereignty, and Stories of the Pacific Borderscape" published in *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge* and expanded upon by Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, blurs that binary. The scholars contend: "We use the concept 'borderscapes' to emphasize the inherent contestability of the meaning of the border between belonging and non-belonging" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr xxviii). Identity aspects are essential for the definition of borderscapes. The masking function of the border is echoed again in this innovative concept: "The term *borderscape* reminds one of the specter of other senses of the border, of experiences, economies, and politics that are concealed" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr xxix). Movement and action are parameters of this new spatial construct: "The borderscape is thus not a static space" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr xxx). Bordering, belonging, and becoming are related to this conceptualization.

Borders are "alternately flexible and fixed, open and closed zones of transition as much as institutional settings" (Loucky and Alper 12). The level of permeability of the border and of the movements across it depends on the border crossers' citizenship, ethnicity or, in short, their identity. Customs and goods are of interest, but increasingly a person's identity is central to controlling cross-border mobility due to the perceived threat of terrorists, criminals, and illegal immigrants crossing the border. The power imbalance is striking at the border because of the power vested in a border guard by national sovereignty and the law. Despite all these conceptualizations of borders, borderlands, and bordering the human aspect is paramount and yet often neglected or commodified. State power, embodied by the border guard, and individual agency personified by the border crosser, clash or need to be negotiated at the border in terms of identity, citizenship, and belonging. Prospective border crossers such as "[…] migrants, refugees, tourists and shoppers" (Donnan and Wilson 107) and "line dancers" (Mayer) are required to reveal their identities. Citizenship is more crucial than the purpose of visit. Agency is linked to citizenship or immigration status and whether the border functions as bridge or barrier: "Just as borders may be both bridge and barrier between these spaces, so their crossing can be both enabling and disabling, can create opportunities or close them off" (Donnan and Wilson 107).

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The perspectives on the Canada-U.S. border differ depending on which group one belongs to, which geographic area is involved and whether the frame of temporal reference is historical, pre-9/11 or post-9/11. As an Arab American or Arab Canadian it is harder to cross the border due to alleged subconscious or even less subtle ethnic profiling, for instance by security at airports. Security plays the most important role for Americans as opposed to Canadians. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) made this clear as crossing the border is increasingly problematic, even for mainstream Canadians and Americans. Additionally, Canadian border guards are armed, a shift from prior policy. In the asymmetric relationship between Canada and the U.S., Canada values cultural assertion against the perceived cultural domination or imperialism of the U.S. above anything else. As members of ethnic minorities, the function of the border is different. In the same vein Natives have their own sense of the bordering processes at the border. For Native Americans and First Nations the border has played, and still plays, an important role in their lives, because it is closely linked to their land and treaty rights. The Iroquois Confederacy, for instance, is entitled to enjoy special border crossing privileges, as enshrined in the Jay Treaty of 1794 and the 1814 Treaty of Ghent. However, more often than not, the United States and Canada have attempted to circumvent these entitlements (Grinde 169).

Bordering and belonging are inextricably linked. Bordering takes place constantly. A sense of belonging is linked to a sense of place, a sense of roots, of history, and genealogy. Therefore, belonging is closely related to the imagination and reminiscent of Salman Rushdie's "Imaginary Homelands." Some metaphors are helpful in expressing and encapsulating the essence of belonging to a nation, a culture, a group, or a place, and having a sense of self. "Belongers" (Konrad and Everitt) belong. Van Houtum underscores the need for "becoming" instead of "belonging," of "routes" instead of "roots" ("Remapping" 415) and also invoking "human rhizomatic be*comings*" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 413).

Borders by their very nature lead to binaries and automatically conjure up the dichotomies of inclusion vs. exclusion, unity vs. disunity, and converging vs. diverging views and lifestyles. Nonetheless, borders and bordering are human-made and can be changed: "We are not only victims of the border, but also the producers of it. B/ordering ourselves and Othering the Other is something we do ourselves" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 415). Borders and seeming border binaries are more complicated than evident at first glance due to the self-referential stance represented by the border and the ensuing notions of parallax and mirror.

The border between Canada and the United States works as a safeguarding line since historical times. After the American Revolution, the Loyalists sought

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refuge in Canada. During slavery via the Underground Railroad runaway slaves fled to Canada or during the Vietnam War draft resisters evaded across the border. The border was thus inscribed with various meanings for different groups of people. Indigenous people in history crossed the border depending on where they were safe from prosecution. The border works as well as a dividing line. This border conceptualization is particularly pertinent regarding culture and sovereignty. Canadians like to emphasize that they are not Americans. The border has an othering function and distinguishes between us and them. Therefore the border is closely linked to the formation of national identities. Due to globalization the function of borders and the borderlands may have changed, "[b]ut their continuing significance as a mediation space between Canada and the United States endures" (Konrad and Nicol 44).

Geopolitical boundaries and national identity construction are inextricably linked. Belonging is different from becoming, as belonging tends to fix identities, whereas becoming is more processual: "A politics of becoming, by contrast, is a politics that disavows search for essences and homes. It is a politics of movements and flows, of identity games and fragments" (Rajaram 279). This complexity drives new conceptualizations of borders, borderlands, borderscapes and bordering highlighting the importance of parallax despite seeming border paradoxes.

2.2 Border Prisms: The Spatial Turn in North American Literatures and Cultures

As a prism breaks the light into different colors, border prisms in the study of literatures and cultures highlight individual and newly emerging spatial concepts related to borders, transnationalism, and postcolonialism. This spatial turn, to employ a mobility-based metaphor, is truly a "border," if not a full-fledged "bordering" turn. American studies have become transnational, hemispheric, or new:

> The spirit of American Studies owes its life to the constant probing, by scholars of American Studies, of the boundaries of their own discipline. Whereas some scholars argued that boundaries of American Studies should continue to be defined by the borders of the U.S. nation-state, sometimes including dialogic approaches between Canada and the U.S., this nation-bound conception of American Studies was contested at the turn of the twenty-first century.
> (Banerjee et al. ix)

The spatial turn transforming American studies from an overly national to a transnational practice, is genuinely a decisive force in the new conceptualization of present American studies in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

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Winfried Siemerling states that there is "an ongoing debate about the role of national boundaries in the study of literature and culture, a debate that in the case of the United States includes the question of 'America'" (1). He foregrounds the role of borders by positing that "[…] the multiple challenge remains of actually reading across borders, charting their uneven implications, and 'figuring' what is articulated within, between, across, and through them" (Siemerling 1). This border-related thinking within American studies is indicative of the important conceptual role that borders play on a theoretical level aside from their geopolitical presence.

In this study North American literatures and cultures understood as comprising the literatures and cultures thriving within and beyond the United States and Canada serve as the point of departure. As all the terms employed are somewhat fuzzy and as some related theoretical constructs and concepts are contested, this framing of the spatial element in North American literatures and cultures is by design selective. Here the focus is on spatially-inflected paradigm shifts in the fields of American studies and Canadian studies. The field of Native or Indigenous studies is also addressed in the theoretical intersections. What I call "the notion of the beyond" permeates these conceptual considerations. Therefore it is counterproductive to have a linear and seemingly hierarchical listing of fields and spatial turns as the underlying structure of this chapter. However, in order not to subsume any of the three major fields discussed – American, Canadian, and Native studies – in a homogenizing and universalist category, these fields are treated each in its own right, but by highlighting parallel paradigm shifts.

2.2.1 Transnational American Studies

> 'Transnational American Studies' appears to be a geographically expansive theme because it invites border-crossing forays. Yet although transnationalism is an approach, not a place, the word brings particular geographies to mind. Some places – such as coastal areas (as suggested by scholarship on the Atlantic World and Pacific Rim), global cities, frontiers, and borderlands – are understood to be more transnational than others. (Hoganson 123)

Spatial axioms are of paramount importance in present-day American studies. Transnational American studies include a variety of spatially-inflected approaches "beyond a literary-nationalist embrace of US exceptionalism" (Levander and Levine 3). The point of reference for conducting research within an American studies paradigm is expanded to include "border-crossing forays" (Hoganson 123). American studies encompass the transnational and spatial thanks to the "[…] extension of traditional perspectives on the United States or

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North America to comprise the larger spaces and issues of, among other, even more complex trajectories, Atlantic Studies, Hemispheric Studies, Studies of the Americas, and Pacific Studies" (Hebel 1). American studies have become a multi-faceted and spatially conceptualized field that focuses more and more on transnational, hemispheric, inter-American, or North American understandings of and labels for the field.

In this regard the spatial, cultural, and transnational turns come to the fore. Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Claire F. Fox contrast the internationalization of American studies with emerging transnational American studies concepts and underscore

> unresolved tensions between attempts to be more inclusive of international perspectives on the United States on the one hand and new Americanist concerns with domestic issues of race and ethnicity and their transnational expansion through emergent geographical models, such as the Americas, the trans-Pacific, the black Atlantic, and the circum-Atlantic on the other. (6)

The "hemispheric perspective" belongs to these "emergent geographical models". Therefore geography features prominently in the studies of literatures and cultures. The spatial turn must hence be linked to the newer "transnational" turn. Sadowski-Smith and Fox see and thus reconfigure the hemispheric approaches "draw[ing] on the wave of 1990s inter-American scholarship" (6) in the sense of "a more synthetic 'inter-Americas studies'" (6). The hemispheric element needs to be studied separately in the fields of Latin American, Canadian, and American studies.

These "new" American studies are less nationalistic and favor the peripheries in a postcolonial fashion echoing Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spatial concepts such as Paul Gilroy's "black Atlantic" have been crucial. The transnational developments alter American studies in a lasting way, since "at the present moment, the field of American literary studies finds itself at an exciting and potentially revolutionary point of transformation" (Levander and Levine 2). This signals a sea change despite the roots in earlier paradigm shifts: "Gender, race, ethnic, and women's studies helped to transform the canon during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and new developments in hemispheric, transatlantic, transnational, and postnational studies have raised questions about the very viability of American literary studies […]" (Levander and Levine 2). The former core of American studies, a geographical focus on the United States in a bounded conceptualization – albeit marked by internal diversity and multiculturalism – , is no longer a given. Spatial and border-related

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thinking has come of age and critically informs nation-bound concepts opening up new spaces of negotiation.

Transnational American studies, echoing postmodernism and particularly postcolonialism, emphasize the fringes and margins: "In other words the alienating process which initially served to relegate the post-colonial world to the 'margin' turned upon itself and acted to push that world through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentred, pluralistic, and multifarious" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 12). Not only geographical and disciplinary borders are transcended, but also theoretical obstacles to new conceptualizations are overcome in a postcolonial de- and ensuing recentering of former marginal literatures and approaches. These paradigm shifts have led to a spatial reconfiguration of the object of study in American studies, as the field is marked by a "[…] will to push beyond the nations's boundaries or (as the rise of border and diaspora studies suggests) to think from their edges and peripheries" (Gillman and Gruesz 229). In the transnational or some might argue postnational age of the discipline the category of the nation is often replaced or complemented by other spatial perspectives: "The nation has become just one point on the spatial scale of American literary studies along with locality, region, nation, hemisphere, climatic zone, trade zone, and so on" (Gillman and Gruesz 229). The local and the global exert an influence on the fresh conceptualization of American studies in a transnational vein.

2.2.2 Transnational Canadian Studies

Transnational Canadian studies have evolved in similar, yet different ways, as compared to American studies. Both fields highlight the transnational, but in Canada the postcolonial legacy and being in an asymmetric relationship with the United States changes the parameters. The new paradigm in Canadian studies is "Trans.Can.Lit" (Kamboureli and Miki). The transnational element is increasingly stressed: "[…] in contemporary Canadian literatures, the nature of that (necessarily non-local) *ethnoscape* has notably shifted from the cosy utopian *nationscape* of cultural nationalism to a restless borderless *globalscape*" (Darias-Beautell 346). However, Eva Darias-Beautell adds a cautionary note by describing it as an "oversimplification when applied to the ongoing and ever complex processes of space production that are happening in Canada today, which do not necessarily do away with the project of the nation, but make its borders more permeable to previously antagonistic notions such as globalization" (Darias-Beautell 346). Canada, Canadian studies, and Canadian literatures have to find their place in a newly emerging pattern of local versus global influences. The

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category of the national and cultural nationalism, particularly with regard to the feared cultural dominance on the part of the United States, remain salient, but increasingly only as one voice in the chorus of contemporary cultures.

The United States serves as an important opposing force in Canadian studies: "From its early origins in the 1940s, the Canadian studies project has been shaped by attempts to articulate the specificity of Canadian nation- and statehood in relation to the United States" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 14). The U.S. is crucial in any definition of Canadianness, whether national, literary, or political. Both American and Canadian studies have a national frame of reference, which holds true as well for literature: "Originally rooted, like American studies, in nationalist attempts to link literary production to the nation-state, Canadian studies have therefore always been a comparative, North American undertaking that focuses on both the United States and Canada" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 14–15). Misconceptions as to the role Canada could play in other spatial conceptualizations persist: "The exclusion of Canada from hemispheric frameworks is often grounded in assumptions about the country's internal homogeneity and similarity to the United States" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 15). Canada is still marginalized in the discussion on hemispheric or inter-American studies.

The canonization within Canadian studies, similar to American studies, has undergone a significant shift towards the seeming margins: "'Canada,' with its primary inscriptions of 'French' or 'English,' its colonialist and essentialist identity markers, cannot escape a fragmentary framework" (Bannerji 327). Fragmentation and plurality are seen as a reflection of current lived experience in multicultural Canada. Multiculturalism as official policy is also controversial at times: "The Canadian multicultural model represents a vivid example of the contradictions raised by the official search for national unity in national disunity" (Darías Beautell 46). Canada is multiple and includes many internal divisions and specificities, whether the Anglo-Franco dualism, the Eastern versus the Western provinces, or the notions of the North and the indigenous presence. As an alternative to the Canadian "mosaic" scholars have also envisioned it as a "kaleidoscope." Janice Kulyk Keefer for example sees "Canadian culture in terms of a kaleidoscope rather than a mosaic" (Nischik, "Introduction" 2, footnote). This revisioning opens up more flexible space concepts, as a kaleidoscope changes patterns and is less fixed in its plurality than a mosaic. Therefore, increased scholarly attention is paid to Black Canadian history, literature, and culture. In *Moveable Margins: The Shifting Spaces of Canadian Literature* this becomes clear: "Whatever margins that were established over a period of time have shifted in multiple ways over the last several decades as the corpus of Canadian literature insisted on

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being redefined and reformulated" (Kanaganayakam 2). Plurality, giving voice to marginalized groups, and critically reflecting on the role of Canada as a settler society and at the same time postcolonial country has become paramount in Canadian studies. Joanne P. Sharp distinguishes between the post-colonial temporal prefix "post" in the sense of "after" and the postcolonial critical "post" in the sense of "beyond" (Sharp 4). The name inherently refers to "colonialism" which is critiqued by a number of scholars such as Thomas King ("Godzilla").

The concept of the border plays a paramount role in Canada, Canadian studies, and Canadian literature: "To write, represent or reflect in Canada is to write to, about, against and sometimes across the border" (Berland 474). The geopolitical boundary between Canada and the United States delimits Canadian national and cultural identity, particularly for the Anglophone majority of Canadians, as opposed to the overwhelming presence of its southern neighbor. The United States perceives the Canada-U.S. border quite differently, if at all. For U.S. residents and citizens this international boundary is perceived in terms of security, not culture. The conceptualization of the Other is very different in the asymmetrical relationship of the two nation-states: "This is the truism north of the 49th: Canadians live and write as though the border is everywhere, shadowing everything we contemplate and fear; Americans as though there is no border at all" (Berland 474). This perceptual difference also permeates Canadian studies and Canadian literatures.

2.2.3 Native/Indigenous Studies

Indigenous studies address questions of postcolonialism, legitimacy, the right to represent or talk for indigenous peoples (sell-out vs. impostor) and the nature of the attribute indigenous. Naming and labeling are contested. Moreover, the question must be asked if indigenous writers are writing back against neocolonial or imperial projects by the settler society in the case of Canada. Native or Indigenous studies or American Indian studies needs to be differentiated from ethnic studies, as the Native peoples precede any ethnic presence in North America and the very notion of ethnicity is socially constructed by the dominant group: "Most Indians see ethnicity as an invention, a cultural construction structured within an Anglocentric, monocultural matrix" (Cook-Lynn and Howe 151). A postcolonial critique becomes apparent and a call for an acceptance of the plurality of cultures can be heard. A crucial difference between ethnic and Native studies is the role of immigration: "Immigration is a fundamental organizing principle in Ethnic Studies and as such makes the integration of American Indian Studies into the episteme of Ethnic Studies problematic" (Cook-Lynn and

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Howe 152). Native peoples did not immigrate to the United States or Canada, but have been there since times immemorial. They are the First Peoples, reflecting Canadian aboriginal designations of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The main distinction between ethnic groups and indigenous peoples is that the ruling powers superimposed the nation-states of the United States and Canada including bisecting tribal lands and co-opting Natives in Eurocentric bodies politic instead of granting self-determination and sovereignty: "The primary issue that frames US-Indian relations, then, is not racist exclusion from citizenship but forced incorporation into the state [...]" (Rifkin 342). Natives do not necessarily want to be part of Western nation-states or vote for seemingly ongoing colonial nation-states and politics.

This study focuses primarily on the Canadian discourse of aboriginality, because as Sadowski-Smith and Fox postulate that "[t]o this day indigenous peoples constitute a much higher proportion of Canada's total population than they do of the United States[...]" (28). The Native novel selected for this study is claimed as Canadian despite the dual heritage of its author, Thomas King as both Canadian and American and at the same time Western and Indigenous. Nonetheless, if pertinent, indigenous perspectives from the United States are included. Some tribes and bands first and foremost affiliate with their tribe and not the colonial nation-state and thus do not accept the superimposed geopolitical boundary between Canada and the United States (see Thomas King's short story "Borders"), so designations such as U.S. or Canadian matter less, if at all. As much as pan-indigenous ideas can be helpful in terms of solidarity and politics, the diversity of tribal nations cannot be overlooked, hence "[a]ttention to tribal nation-specific rather than pan-indigenous contexts" (Cox 356) needs to be paid.

Globalization helps or hinders indigenous issues such as land claims, economic, and social empowerment. There is a debate whether or not Canadian indigenous peoples are truly in a postcolonial state. Indigenous writers actively contribute to that discussion and theorize about the current state of indigeneity, policy, representation and righting the wrongs of the past. For Canadian and Native writer Thomas King "postcolonial" is inadequate, imperial and still colonial ("Godzilla"). He is very critical and skeptical as to the content of this label and, as a Native writer, does not agree with it. King distinguishes four types of terms to better address and express what "postcolonial literature" supposedly signifies. He uses "associational" literature instead and the terms "tribal, interfusional, [and] polemical" (King, "Godzilla" 243). His fiction is "associational," since the focus is on the Native community, is non-judgmental, and has no real conclusion. King summarizes his reimagining of the term post-colonial: "Unlike post-colonial,

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the terms tribal, interfusional, polemical, and associational do not establish a chronological order nor do they open and close literary frontiers. They avoid a nationalistic centre, and they do not depend on the arrival of Europeans for their *raison d'être*" (King, "Godzilla" 248). Therefore, these suggested terms are original to Native concepts and do not need a point of reference in the prior existence of colonialism.

Blood quantum, quotas, and tribal policy with casinos are a major source of contestation and conflict within the Native community. However, there is also an indigenous renaissance. Politically on a global scale indigenous peoples' rights are strengthened by the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" adopted on 13 September 2007. The UN inaugurated the "Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" in 2005. More locally, exhibits on aboriginal art between traditional and new art forms or reappropriations of aboriginal motifs such as in graffiti or hip hop are prominent in the public sphere (Vancouver Art Gallery). The same holds true regarding the visible presence of art and cultural artifacts such as totem poles, welcome figures, or aboriginal sculptures and graffiti in the Pacific Northwest. Reminders pertaining to the Native ownership of the land, such as on the campus of the University of British Columbia, are displayed publicly.

Ralph Bauer states that "[…] it may seem surprising, even paradoxical, that the study of Native American literatures in the New World remains by and large one of the fields that is most segregated along disciplinary lines defined by Eurocentric borders dividing nation-states and languages […]" (238). "Hemispheric studies" can be seen in ambivalent terms by Natives because of the process of land claims and sovereignty at a time with increasing hemispheric influences over nation-states (Bauer 238 referring to Jennifer Andrews and Priscilla Walton). Jennifer Andrews and Priscilla L. Walton, in their article "Rethinking Canadian and American Nationality: Indigeneity and the 49th Parallel in Thomas King," see hemispheric studies as a continuation and further development of border studies as well as of purely inter-American studies in the sense of merely remodeling American studies (600). Transnational aspects are emphasized in such a hemispheric reading not without dismissing the still needed national concepts, particularly in the case of Natives, as Andrews and Walton contend: "Indeed, King's writings – and in particular his attentiveness to the Canadian-US border-crossing experiences of his Native characters – demonstrate that the simultaneous need for and undermining of nation-state structures go hand-in-hand for indigenous peoples" (601). Native peoples need the nation-states to assert their sovereign rights and make land claims (Andrews and Walton 601).

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King presents the tensions surrounding borders for Natives and the need to negotiate their identity and position within a bordered world mostly oblivious to Native sovereignty and sense of belonging and community. Native "survivance" (Vizenor) is needed.

2.3 Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries

As territorial boundaries continue to matter in the globalized world of the 21st century, so do disciplinary borders persist in the academy. Nonetheless, new paradigms have emerged and essentialist, homogenizing forces have been challenged. Therefore, the nation as a referent is contested giving way to alternative conceptualizations such as inter-American studies or hemispheric studies. Within the newly emerging transnational American studies and transnational Canadian studies the postnational and other spatial concepts are proposed by some and contested by others depending on the subject positions and interpretive lenses regarding these paradigms. In this interdisciplinary analysis, these conceptualizations resonate particularly well: North American studies, the "worlding" notion as discussed in American and Canadian studies, comparative border studies, and finally the notion of palimpsests.

2.3.1 North American Studies

> "Not associated with any particular nation, North America sheds light on 'America's' shadows by evoking the *limits* of 'nation,' and the liminal spaces of its borders" (Siemerling 1–2).

The spatial conceptualization of North America goes beyond individual nation-states. By the geographical emplacement North American studies, particularly if based on approaches within the German academe, focus specifically on Canada and the United States. This context can be a larger framework such as hemispheric or inter-American studies, whereby continental aspects of comparison and contrast are included. Winfried Siemerling posits: "In the collocation 'North America' the second word refers clearly to a continent, not a country, and it includes cultures in North (of) America like those of Canada" (1). Canada is therefore not the junior partner but the equally important partner in North American studies within a larger hemispheric framework. He stresses the relational and decentered aspect of "North America," re-placing the term "America" as a continental designation and not taking it as a synonym for a powerful nation-state: "North America is a relational designation that marks it as Northern *part* of a larger entity, which it does not claim to stand for or represent – yet which it could

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certainly draw on for contextual and differential self-understanding alike" (Siemerling 1). The United States is thus not to be erased, but rather seen as one out of several analytical axioms in the study of the literatures and cultures situated in the geography of North America. Thanks to the relational positioning also other points of comparison present themselves such as oceanic perspectives: "This very emphasis on *relational* articulation invites as well other relational locations, for example in various Atlantic perspectives or those of the Pacific Rim" (Siemerling 1). The benefit of a designation such as "North America" and by extension "North American studies" is the co-presence and co-significance of multiple perspectives, Canadian and U.S. viewpoints, within a larger hemispheric setting. No one country is privileged as the center from which everything else flows, but several centers complement each other.

Latin America and Canada have comparable perspectives on the United States. The nation-state is seen as a protection against U.S. domination and imperialism, "a guarantor of sovereignty from the United States" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 8). However, the hemispheric turn is not perceived as a "threat" in Canada (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 20) in contrast to Latin America, where this turn is linked to the threat of globalization and "Americanization" (Brunner qtd. in Sadowski-Smith and Fox 8). As opposed to American studies, Latin American and Canadian studies use transnational approaches by default:

> Since their inception, Latin American and Canadian studies have encompassed comparative 'inter-American' or 'North American' orientations without being themselves scholarship on the United States. The two fields are thus well situated to challenge many of the exceptionalist premises that, despite New Americanist efforts, continue to inform post-national American studies work on the hemisphere. (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 7)

According to Sadowski-Smith and Fox the new paradigms within American studies are still falling short of a truly transnational and hemispheric approach, where the United States is not used as a frame against which everything is measured. This viewpoint needs to be seen in context and be considered from various angles in order to achieve a fair balance in the assessment of the development of American studies as a field. The influence of postcolonialism has paved the way for reimagining American studies, because these "postcolonial rethinkings of US ethnicity within Chicana/o-Latina/o and border studies frameworks have become central to the emergence of New Americanist positions and more recently, to the hemispheric perspective within American studies" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 20).

Canadian scholar Albert Braz posits that Canada is often overlooked in conceptualizations of hemispheric and inter-American studies. Regarding the

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concept of North America, Braz's "North of America: Racial Hybridity and Canada's (Non)Place in Inter-American Discourse" containing the word "(non) place" is pertinent. Braz bemoans the lack of Canadian visibility in "inter-American discourse" ("North" 79). He relates this "general elision of Canada" (Braz, "North" 80) to two causes: "First, Canada remains extremely ambivalent about its spatial location. Second, hemispheric studies have become increasingly oriented along a US/Hispanic America axis" (Braz, "North" 80). Canada matters in a North American and hemispheric context thanks to its multiracial precedent and its sheer size. He calls for "bringing the north of America into America" (Braz, "North" 80). Braz argues that in Latin America many people allegedly use the term "the United States of *North* America" ("North" 81, emphasis added). The adjective North equates North America with the United States at the expense of Mexico and Canada. Even though the appropriation of the term "America" as a synonym for the United States in common parlance is undone, Latin Americans thus commit the same appropriation as the U.S. does with Latin America by using the term "North America" solely for the United States. One misnomer is replaced by another. The United States remains a hegemonic state in the northern part of North America. A misguided attribution of the term North America for the United States in order to avoid the erroneous labeling of the United States as America therefore also needs to be avoided. Canada would otherwise be worse off than Mexico, as "Mexico is absorbed into the Latin American world. Canada, in contrast, is driven off the map" (Braz, "North" 81). Geopolitically, Canada would become invisible in such a scenario and cease to be taken into account in the hemisphere or North America.

Braz juxtaposes García Márquez's comment on the common usage of the term America for the United States with Canada's place in that equation. Braz posits "[…] by virtue of both its invisibility to the other inter-American states and its own lack of identification with the larger land mass where it happens to be situated, at the beginning of the 21st century, Canada remains largely a country without a continent" ("North" 86). Canada's "ambiguity about its spatial location" ("North" 86) is probably due to being located at the outer edge of the continent and having only one major neighbor along its land border, the United States. The U.S. is bigger in terms of inhabitants, more powerful in terms of military force and economic production and climatically at an advantage. Canada's asymmetric relationship with its overbearing neighbor is one contributing factor to its marginalization in the hemisphere. According to Braz, Canada is disengaged in the western hemisphere due to location-related ambivalence ("North" 86). Focusing on North American studies instead of hemispheric or inter-American studies

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could thus offer a re-evaluation of Canada's place in the North of America transcending outdated nationalist paradigms.

2.3.2 The Notion of "Worlding"

"Worlding," though a multifaceted and diverse term, is a salient notion to rethink the study of literatures and cultures in a North American context and beyond. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak credits Martin Heidegger as the source of inspiration for her concept of "worlding of a world": "My notion of the 'worlding of a world' upon what must be assumed to be uninscribed earth is a vulgarization of Martin Heidegger's idea […]" (Spivak, "Women's Texts" 260). She elaborates on her understanding of worlding in a colonial context marked by power differentials and warns against a "worlding" process: "What is at stake is a 'worlding,' the reinscription of a cartography that must (re)present itself as impeccable. I have written […] of the contradiction involved in the necessary colonialist presupposition of an uninscribed earth" (Spivak, "Rani" 263–64). Spivak suggests that there is an "epistemic violence of the worlding of worlds" (Spivak, "Rani" 267). "Worlding" entails these characteristics, but can also be perceived differently.

On the one hand, particularly from a Canadian perspective, "worlding" is understood according to Spivak's definition and usage of the concept. Yet, on the other hand, "worlding" is reinvigorated and re-read in contrast to comparative frameworks, for instance in the research conducted by Susan Gillman and Kirsten Silva Gruesz. This second notion of "worlding" encompasses understandings of global or globalized literatures, also echoed in John Muthyala's article "Reworlding America: The Globalization of American Studies," in which Muthyala calls for "remapping the disciplinary boundaries of American studies and the reconceptualization of American history […]" (99). Aside from "worlding" and "reworlding," Leahy also suggests the "idea of 'counter-worlding'" (63) in analogy to and extending the "notion of 'counter-discourse'" (Leahy 63).

Cynthia Sugars in "Worlding the (Postcolonial) Nation: Canada's Americas" ponders the question of Canada and Canadian studies in hemispheric or inter-American, in short in transnational and postnational, conceptualizations. She also discusses the special situation of Canada as a settler society and, simultaneously, postcolonial nation-state which, additionally, is situated in the shadow of the superpower of the United States. Sugars postulates that her article's title echoes Spivak's term of "worlding," used originally with regard to the "Third World" (Sugars 45). According to Sugars "worlding" in the sense of Spivak "describe[s] the ways colonized space is made to exist as part of an imperialist, internationalist world order" (Sugars 45). The danger becomes apparent that "[i]n similar

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ways the postcolonial might be understood to be 'worlded,' and hence defused, in the context of international space" (Sugars 46). So Sugars cautions that "[t]he worlding of Canada would seem to render the national location irrelevant, or at best amorphous" (47). Along the same lines, Herb Wylie suggests a compromise between multiple forces in order "[t]o steer between the Scylla of a homogenizing, parochial localism and the Charybdis of a potentially imperializing hemispheric scope" (58). Hemispheric concepts are thus no panacea and need to be evaluated from multiple perspectives.

In "Worlding America: The Hemispheric Text-Network" Gillman and Gruesz state that in American studies the labels "comparative" and "transnational" have become omnipresent and that there is indeed a "proliferation of adjectives like *comparative* and *transnational* in recent American studies" (Gillman and Gruesz 228). These two terms are similar yet different. The scholars illustrate the different connotations of each adjective by referring to a metaphorical drawing-compass. According to this analogy, comparative American studies use one fixed center from which to perceive similarities and differences with other coordinates:

> Imagine a drawing-compass with the sharp, fixed arm resting upon one point while the movable arm extends outward, marking variably smaller or larger circles around that center. Figuratively speaking, the comparative Americanist positions such a compass over a map of the worlds, planting its fixed arm firmly in the United States, then adjusts the other to encircle a different geographical space […].
> (Gillman and Gruesz 228)

The critique entailed in this analogy is the U.S.-centric approach which refers to the United States as the normative center of comparison. Furthermore, it implies a random or opportunistic approach reminiscent of neocolonial ways of carving up the world by means of geometry and ensuing lines on maps. With the help of a geometric tool, a ruler, the world was divided and ruled by empires. Consequently, American studies characterized by "deeply problematic nationalist assumptions underlying the discipline" (Sadowski-Smith and Fox 5–6) are increasingly conceptionalized internationally. Gillman and Gruesz outline how a drawing-compass approach in and of itself must not be a means to perpetuate U.S.-centric perspectives, but can be used equally as one way to broaden the scope of analysis and decenter the disciplinary viewpoints. This different approach is the transnational one: "To extend our analogy: a transnational analysis would draw multiple circles, replanting the foot of the drawing-compass in different, central points, moving across different scales of observation" (Gillman and Gruesz 229). This multiplicity of perspectives is the cornerstone of transnational American studies.

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Gillman and Gruesz go even beyond this concept after having shown the implications of the designations "comparative" and "transnational." They highlight "the inadequacy of the term *transnational*" (Gillman and Gruesz 230). In so doing, they follow Christopher Connery and Rob Wilson's proposition to use "*worlding*" (Gillman and Gruesz 230) as a prefix, "showing [the nation] to be simply one point on a scale rather than the determining unit of analysis" (Gillman and Gruesz 230). The nation, to be precise the United States as a nation-state, is no longer the sole point of reference for analysis. In "Worlding" American studies the –ing form is used to underline the contrast with the word "world" which functions as an attribute in contested notions such as world literature: "The gerundive form *worlding* deliberately detaches itself from the nominative *world*, which for many drifts dangerously toward a totalizing ethos of global homogenization and commodification" (Gillman and Gruesz 230). The new approach of "worlding" stresses the evolving nature of American studies and the continuous shifting of multiple perspectives: "Ultimately, then, we want to push American literary studies beyond anti-exceptionalism, beyond comparativism, and even beyond the transnational turn, to think in a *worlded* way" (Gillman and Gruesz 230). The notion of the "beyond" is at the fore and constitutes the core of transcending preconceived and limited notions: "A worlded analysis would plant the foot of the drawing-compass somewhere and sometime else than an 'America' conceived of as the inevitable center and beginning" (Gillman and Gruesz 230). The United States is drawn as "en-compass-ed" in the "beyond."

A "worlding" perspective or "Globalizing Literary Studies" (Giles 384) present themselves as new approaches. Rachel Adams, in "The Ends of America, the Ends of Postmodernism," introduces the idea of "globalization of American literature" (249). She postulates: "Since the 1990s, many critics have proposed that nation-bound categories of literary study be replaced by alternative geographical frames such as the Caribbean, the Americas, the Black, the trans- or circum-Atlantic, the Pacific Rim, continents, hemispheres, and worlds" (Adams 268). This "creative remapping" is productive in literary analyses and leads to a shift in attention towards marginalized authors' innovative insights regarding established works of literature (Adams 268). The danger lies in the perpetuation of binaries; hence this study's goal is to go beyond border binaries by implementing transnational concepts: "The potential pitfalls of hemispheric American studies lurk, then, in any attempt to transpose the age-old epistemological binaries that have burdened American studies (culture/nature, ideology/experience, Europe/America, Self/Other, *otra/nuestra*) to a hemispheric scale" (Bauer 242). As a consequence, these new approaches to the study of literatures and cultures in North

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America need not fall prey to the very notions they set out to prevent in the first place. Even though "nation-based approaches to literary study had simply become superannuated" (Giles 384), concepts still need to be grounded without recurring to nationalist paradigms or privileging a center of power.

2.3.3 Comparative Border Studies

The spatial or rather transnational turn in American studies is indeed a "border turn," thanks to the proliferation of "border" paradigms. The border turn epitomizes the spatial turn. Nicole Waller cautions regarding the transnational as a panacea, while fully embracing it:

> The question becomes, then, whether and how it is possible to think beyond the national without becoming blind to its persistence, its resilience, and the numerous acts of its reinscription, and how exactly to make the tensions between the national and the transnational fruitful for our study of American culture. (Waller 247)

Waller foregrounds the opportunities inherent in in-between spaces and border-passing literary characters.

Mita Banerjee describes the paradoxical situation of post-9/11 American studies. She observes the dual phenomenon of "the seeming obsolescence of borders and a resurgence of border surveillance after the events of September 11, 2001" which in turn requires conceptualizing "transnational American studies" in the light of "the renewed importance of borders after 9/11" (Banerjee 7). The seeming opposite "between a political redrawing of borders and the simultaneous borderlessness of American studies as an academic discipline" (Banerjee 7) needs to be negotiated. She concludes: "An American studies without borders may hence have to be approached not with caution, but with care" (Banerjee 20). A further reminder is not to merely use terms such as border crossings and other spatial markers as buzzwords, but to highlight the meaning of these concepts:

> In this postmodern era of contested boundaries, border transgressions, building bridges, remapped geography, and unbounded nations, scholars are focusing on conjunctures, disjunctures, intersections, and interconnections. Noticeable enough, most of the academic discourse in recent decades is rarely devoid of such theoretical jargon. (Acosta-Belén 240–41)

This study's goal is to go beyond mere jargon and use border-related concepts for a distinct purpose.

Sadowski-Smith proposes "new border studies frameworks" encompassing comparative, international, and transdisciplinary approaches (275). The humanities and social sciences complement one another in this endeavor. She

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distinguishes "border studies in the US humanities" (Sadowski-Smith 276) such as Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* from border studies in the social sciences. Sadowski-Smith foregrounds the importance of the U.S. variety of border studies in the humanities as "central to the reconfiguration of US American studies beyond their original focus on the US nation-state into hemispheric and transnational perspectives" (276). She further postulates that transnational approaches include a number of different concepts that, however, are not often linked:

> Transnational scholarship often examines connections between US ethnic and racial communities and their geographies of origin – within models such as the Circum-Atlantic, the Black Atlantic, and the Trans-Pacific – and includes foreign-based scholarly perspectives on the United States (Desmond & Domínguez, 1996; Patell, 1999), though few connections between these various frameworks exist. (Sadowski-Smith 276)

Sadowski-Smith underscores the importance of "border studies paradigms as both critical methodology and geographical perspective" (278). She concludes:

> Comparative border studies may constitute one such approach for situating American studies within global dialogues and transnational contexts that can bring together humanities approaches to borders as sites for the critique of US nationalism and empire with the increasingly more comparative emphasis in the social sciences on international boundaries. (Sadowski-Smith 284)

This mutually beneficial confluence between new complementary and transcending paradigms in both the humanities, social sciences, and beyond is further deepened in the discussion of remapping and rewriting strategies highlighting palimpsests.

2.3.4 Palimpsests: Remapping and Rewriting

Shelley Fisher Fishkin comments on developments after her call for the inclusion of transnational perspectives in American studies in the fall of 2004. She states that "the vast body of work in transnational American Studies that has appeared since 2004 tends to fall into three rough, interrelated categories" (Fishkin, "Mapping" 31). These categories comprise "*broadening the frame*," "*cross-fertilization*," and "*renewed attention to travel and to how texts travel*" (Fishkin, "Mapping" 31). Fishkin links the presidency of Barack Obama with his international background to "an opportune time for scholars in American Studies to reject parochial approaches to your object of study in favor of a broader view" ("Mapping" 45). She suggests "a potentially fruitful 'next step' for the field of transnational American Studies – a step designed to develop new ways of collaborating across borders

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and thinking beyond borders" (Fishkin, "Mapping" 45). In conjunction with rapidly increasing digitization of documents, Fishkin proposes the development of "Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects – DPMPs for short," and pronounced "as 'Deep Maps'" ("Mapping" 47). These multifaceted Deep Maps would share certain characteristics, despite their heterogeneity: links to digitized materials, a "focus on topics that cross borders, and would include links to texts and images in different locations," and accessibility, for instance through open access ("Mapping" 47). The mapping component according to Fishkin is palimpsestical:

> Deep Maps are palimpsests in that they allow multiple versions of events, of texts, of phenomena (both primary and secondary) to be written over each other, with each version still visible under the layers. They involve mapping, since the form of display […] would be a geographical map that links the text, artifact, phenomenon, or event to the location that produced it, that responded to it or that is connected with it in some way. They are projects rather than products because they are open-ended, collaborative works-in-progress. (Fishkin, "Mapping" 47–48)

She concludes: "By requiring collaboration – across borders, languages, nations, continents, and disciplines – Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects would bring our interdependence – as scholars, as citizens, as human beings – to the foreground" (Fishkin, "Mapping" 66).

The power of geographical boundaries and symbolically inscribed borders in society derives from the mutual acceptance of the border and its ensuing qualities. If such acceptance is not given the powerful elites ensure the meaning and the related consequences of the border by marking, enforcing and maintaining it, adding "the invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger). Seemingly the border has always been there and is a given. It is a non-issue for debate and portrayed as natural. As linguist Ferdinand de Saussure already pointed out, signifier and signified are arbitrary. Meaning is attributed. Maps depicting states and migration in a reductionist and selective process to further political goals are complicit in "geopower" and "cartopolitics, drawing-table politics" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412). Van Houtum's observation regarding "cartopolitics" is applicable to colonial geopolitics in North America. The Native presence in North America was colonized, subdued, re- and dislocated and ultimately erased in terms of power, sovereignty, and self-determination. This is reminiscent of the cautionary note that "where borderlines and dots become dominant, people are erased. Cartopolitics in its core, therefore, is cartographic cleansing" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412). This "cartographic cleansing" amounts to Native cleansing and cultural, if not actual genocide in terms of the indigenous nations in North America.

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The Western practice of mapping is either an instrument in perpetuating outdated, linear and hegemonic perceptions, or it contributes to undoing colonial legacies and righting the wrongs of the past by writing back thanks to "remapping" or "unmapping" and by using innovative ways to depict movements (van Houtum), flows, and circles. In the same vein Graham Huggan in "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection" posits that in post-colonial literatures maps are deconstructed and then reconstructed differently in a post-colonial manner. He uses Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic maps as case in point of more organic maps. Niall Lucy points out the difference between an "arborescent" and a "rhizomatic" book (14). Trees are marked by roots and hierarchies, whereas a grass-like "rhizome" "is always on the move, always forming alliances with the world outside itself as it keeps on spreading across and across the surfaces of things" (Lucy 14). Rhizomes are linked to "heterogeneity" (Lucy 14).

Deleuze and Guattari enumerate a number of principles regarding the "rhizome": connection and heterogeneity (96), multiplicity (97), asignifying rupture (99), cartography and decalcomania (101). Particularly the principle of cartography is of significance in this context. With regard to rhizomes the philosophers posit: "The rhizome is altogether different, *a map and not a tracing*" (Deleuze and Guattari 102). They postulate with regard to maps: "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation" (Deleuze and Guattari 102). Moreover, according to the philosophers, "[a] map has multiple entryways" and "[t]he map has to do with performance" (Deleuze and Guattari 102). They further foreground the notion of the beyond encapsulated in the rhizome:

> The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots. Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. (Deleuze and Guattari 112)

Maps and boundaries are inextricably linked. Boundaries are tangible implementation and physical representation of seemingly factual maps. However, maps are seen as exposing a significant bias and perpetuating the power and literally the perspective of the cartographer and the mapmaker's commissioners. A map is more of a "palimpsest" (Huggan 120), being rewritten and represented time

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and again. Native mapmaking practices are diametrically opposed to the western way of cartography: "For many American Indian peoples, the land was often its own best map and demanded knowing first on its own terms, almost as if the topography itself possessed some sort of volitional authority" (Nabokov 242). The Native procedure is as follows: "Before representing it, for instance, some native traditions expected you first to listen to its stories and learn its names, to follow it with your feet or to find a way to dream at its most propitious locations" (Nabokov 242). Natives first participated in "a range of such knowledge-engendering practices *with* the landscape" (Nabokov 242). The opposite was practiced by non-Natives, "appropriating space by first naming and drawing it, and only then by striding over or settling what was thereby already your own(ed) conception" (Nabokov 242). The Native way is the "*map-as-experience*" (Nabokov 242). Cultural specificity is entailed in mapping: "What needs general recognition is that maps are purely conventional, that convention determines perception, and that this perception is culturally specific" (Belyea 140). Native maps do not fall into the trap of framing and creating grids as opposed to Eurocentric colonial mappings: "The most striking and important characteristic of native maps is that their network of lines is unframed, hence independent of a spatial grid or ground. In contrast, the frame of a traditional European map determines its form and function as a spatial construct […]" (Belyea 142).

Critical cartography exhibits "an ethos and a practice, a Kantian process of questioning" (Crampton and Krygier 24). The critical potential of this approach lies with "map artists," "everyday mappings," "counter-mappings," "map hacking," and "theoretic critique" (Crampton and Krygier 25). Van Houtum challenges the reductionist and "static" depiction of "borders as two-dimensional lines on a map" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 407). Three-dimensional maps are best perceived as globes. The line can become a circle, the two-dimensional map a multidimensional globe shaping new processes of mental mapping. Other multidimensional possibilities open up through social and other interactive networks, particular in the virtual and global world of the internet. This is in contrast to older two-dimensional grid-like conceptions of "state-border gridism" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 408). Van Houtum foregrounds the pervasiveness of the "state-grid approach to mapping borders" perpetuating people's perceptions of borders and maps along the lines of "the nineteenth-century ideal of the nation-state" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 407). Grids in all their forms are mechanisms of control that help to create and maintain an illusion of order in a globalized, interconnected world of creative chaos and unpredictability. Questions of power and agency due to hierarchy and implicit value judgments need

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to be reconceptualized. Mapping is complicit with our mindset: "A map cannot escape being productive; it fabricates an image, a lens on the world. It frames our minds and thereby our world" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 410).

Maps and metanarratives constructing and perpetuating nation-states with clear-cut boundaries complement one another in order to cement the power of the nation-state. Both the oral enunciation, i.e. the story-telling (van Houtum, "Remapping" 412), and the visual representation convey a reductionist and simplified version of the "transnational complexity and multiplicity" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 407) that borders, bordering, and border crossers exhibit. Just as writing back in a postcolonial sense or as a counter-narrative, counter-mapping is also relevant (Wood) to shift our attention, our "mindscape" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 406) to the silences and absences not represented in the stories and maps of the nation-state. A postcolonial technique is Edward Said's "contrapuntal" concept. Remapping could entail the conceptual movement from maps to metaphors, metaphors being more fluid and imaginative, and conceptualized as "the art of unmapping borders" in the sense of to "think, imagine, feel, and narrate" (van Houtum and Strüver 21). It is van Houtum who calls for "remapping" borders. He counters the enforced state-mapping with a call for an "*ethics of aesthetics*" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 416) regarding visual representations of spaces and places and "a *choreo*graphy of space" "instead of only *carto*graphy" (van Houtum, "Remappping" 414). He proposes the transcending of a static map by creating "dynamic" people-focused maps. The notion of the beyond thus informs mappings, maps, border practices and border processes.

Borders and Border binaries are represented and transcended in significant ways in contemporary Canada-U.S. border fiction. Characters cross, subvert, maintain or draw borders and boundaries, live in the borderlands or negate and negotiate border binaries, not least for instance between the White and Native worlds. Postcolonial and transnational readings, critical and spatial viewpoints are necessary lenses for the analysis of border fiction. The goal is to examine why and how borders, borderlands and border binaries, in short de/bordering, are represented in contemporary border fiction. One direction is the use of liminal figures such as tricksters and ghosts in a magical realist vein. Additionally, the predominance of border themes, indicating a special bordering turn, contributes to a spatially informed reading. The borderlands or interstitial spaces transcend borders as does the border setting. The plot of border novels highlights remapping and rewriting strategies. The fictional world is remapped, reconceptualized and rewritten. Borders and boundaries are blurred and undermined. Fiction focusing on borders, borderlands, and de/bordering thus informs new

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conceptualizations of spatial processes and practices in times of globalization and concomitant regionalization. Palimpsest-like the maps of research agendas and urgent issues are written and rewritten according to the phenomena and requirements of the present period. New approaches at the interface of literatures, cultures, and borders are therefore required to respond satisfactorily to the complexity and multiplicity of the present situation as imagined and depicted in the border fictions located along the Canada-U.S. border.

Theory supports and deepens the analysis of the novels and in so doing also in turn furthers the underlying theoretical frame in an interdisciplinary way. In this study the theory in the fields of transnational American studies, Canadian studies, indigenous studies and border studies is applied conjointly to combine spatial, cultural, and literary elements in the three contemporary North American border texts. The focus on borders, borderlands, and bordering in different contexts and settings, though grounded along the Canada-U.S. border and in the borderlands, unites this study. Humanities and social sciences merge perspectives in order to better understand the nature of and reasoning behind lingering borders and bordering in the globalized twenty-first century. The analysis of fiction illuminates the mental constructs in the social construction of borders and the human need for "bordering, ordering and othering" (van Houtum and van Naerssen).

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3 Thomas King's *Truth & Bright Water* (1999): Native De/Bordering

Alberta-Montana Borderlands. (Focus and emphasis added).

Canadian author Thomas King adopts a Native perspective in his writing. His subject position as a Native North American writer permeates the novel in terms of characters, plot, and setting. This parallax as compared to other contemporary fiction by non-Native writers, whether from the U.S. or Canada, is enriching for the reader's understanding and cultural awareness regarding Native issues. Border readings of various texts inform the reading and understanding of borders in geopolitics, society and lived experience. Consequently, Native perspectives on land, colonialism and current socio-economic situations are exposed by King's *Truth & Bright Water*. The Native voice complements the generally accepted truths of contemporary life and history in North America.

Theoretical constructs espoused in the previous chapter come to the fore in the analysis of King's novel. The borderscape of the river dividing and uniting the

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Canada-U.S. border region and the Native and White worlds is featured prominently, also in the novel's title. The subversion of the colonial legacy drives the plot and the actions of the protagonists such as trickster-like Monroe Swimmer. King's literary designation of "associational" ("Godzilla") literature is evident in his novel as the web of the Native community spins the narrative thread. Vizenor's concept of "survivance" punctuates the stream of narration, whether in the actions of Tecumseh's mother Helen or in the subversive art of Monroe.

King crosses, blurs, and subverts many borders in his life and works. He creates fiction and non-fiction, is a writer-professor[16], and contributes to and theorizes Native fiction in a North American context (e.g. "Godzilla"). He reached a national audience through his 2003 CBC Massey Lectures published as *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. His theoretical stance is critical of an exclusionary discourse. King states: "I don't try to set up a wall between myself and my readers with what I know and what they don't" (Gruber, "Storytelling" 268). His accessible fiction is nonetheless permeated by subtle theoretical convictions. Regarding King's novel Robin Ridington posits: "The book reads history as story, and story as history. It shows the reader both sides of its mirrored images" (89). King suggests that story and history are two sides of the same coin and often undistinguishable ("How I spent" 313). He tells the story of Bella and links history, story, and the quest for authenticity: "Bella, if she exists, believes that history and story are the same. She sees no boundaries, no borders, between what she knows and what she can imagine" (King, "How I spent" 313). The importance of the imagination transcending seemingly hard facts is evident in *Truth & Bright Water*, for instance in Native artist Monroe Swimmer's trickster-infused "survivance" (Vizenor). King's self-perception is encapsulated in the notion and practice of "storyteller" (Gruber, "Introduction" 4). Stories are at the heart of Native identity. Narratives are therefore avenues of understanding, and King stipulates: "The truth about stories is that that's all we are" (*Stories* 32).

The author cannot be classified and subsumed in only one category: "Part Native, part white, part American, part Canadian, risen from early poverty to reasonable material comfort in his later life, from flunking his first year of university to becoming a full professor, King defies any clichés about 'authentic Indians,' not only in his writing but as a person" (Gruber, "Introduction" 4). King complicates border binaries: "Conjoining in himself the two partly collapsed dichotomies of Native and non-Native, Canadian and U.S., King regularly portrays how racial

16 Thomas King is Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph, ON, Canada. <https://www.uoguelph.ca/sets/sets-thomas-king> 6 July 2014.

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and national dividing lines work – and do not work" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 122). To encompass King's fictional universe multiple perspectives are needed. Due to his heritage, interpretations of his work benefit from varied angles. Therefore, North American viewpoints, Native perspectives and Greek mythology inform the analysis of *Truth & Bright Water*.

King's father is of Cherokee and his mother is of Greek descent. The writer did not grow up within a Native community, but his mother made sure that he learned about his Native heritage and visited family in Oklahoma (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 4). The father left the family when King was five years old. King, though being of mixed descent and being born in the United States, is usually considered a Native writer from Canada.[17] However, at times, due to his birth in the United States, U.S. critics emphasize his American birthplace (Andrews and Walton 604). King's Cherokee heritage, a tribe not "native" to Canada, does not allow for describing King as a Canadian Native writer:

> As a writer born in the United States, but who considers himself Canadian and holds Canadian citizenship, he embodies two nationalities. On a cultural level, moreover, his status throws those demarcations into question, since as a Cherokee who moved to Canada, he can be read as a Canadian writer and a Native writer, but he cannot be a Canadian Native writer because Cherokees are not 'native' to Canada. (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 13)

He can only be a Canadian writer or a Native writer, yet he himself through his biography undermines those clear-cut delineations between Canadian, American, and Native. The borders are fluid and shifting. King and his fiction can be contextualized within the field of Native literature or Native studies. Conceptualizations of Native literatures in a North American context are multiple,[18] as critical works in the field show. The term 'Native literatures'[19] includes Native

17 Identity issues feature prominently as national canons are part of identity politics, linked to the nation-state, citizenship, sovereignty, regionalism, ethnicity, historiography, and metanarratives.

18 Native literatures' oral roots and the appropriate rendering into writing need to be taken into account as well as Native conceptions of western literary forms such as the novel or short story and the impact of English as lingua franca instead of Native languages. Native literatures are heterogeneous and Native writers can be of mixed heritage and know their Native cultures only indirectly, yet still be described as Native writers. The nature and contours of established canons and academic disciplines dealing with indigenous content are challenged.

19 The classification of literary works as American, Canadian or Native literature is a contested issue.

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American or American Indian literatures as well as First Nations' or First Peoples' literary productions. Other theoretical challenges are linked to classification and the role of Native and non-Native critics alike.

King's novel *Truth & Bright Water* needs to be seen in the light of going beyond border binaries – i.e. the representation and literary transcendence and deconstruction of borders, the creation of borderlands, and the acts of and need for bordering and concomitant debordering in contemporary North American fiction. In this regard the use of irony, comic reversal, and trickster discourse are important, mainly deconstructing stereotypes, Western ideas, and preconceived notions about Natives and indigeneity.

This study illustrates how a critical analysis of *Truth & Bright Water* enriches the understanding of the use and prevalence of borders, borderlands, and in-between spaces. The analysis serves both literary and border studies with the new focus on border poetics. Scholars Jennifer Andrews and Priscilla L. Walton consider hemispheric studies as a continuation and further development of border studies as well as of purely inter-American studies in the sense of merely remodeling American studies (600). Transnational aspects are emphasized in such a hemispheric reading without dismissing the still needed national concepts, particularly in the case of Natives, as Andrews and Walton postulate: "Indeed, King's writings – and in particular his attentiveness to the Canadian-US border-crossing experiences of his Native characters – demonstrate that the simultaneous need for and undermining of nation-state structures go hand-in-hand for indigenous peoples" (601). Native peoples require the nation-states to assert their sovereign rights and make land claims (601). King presents the tensions surrounding borders for Natives and the necessity to negotiate their identity and position within a bordered world mostly oblivious to Native sovereignty and sense of belonging. According to Arnold E. Davidson, Priscilla L. Walton, and Jennifer Andrews Native characters in King's works feel alienated precisely "because they are continually negotiating the borders between their tribal reserves and the world beyond, which is typically dominated by Eurocentric values" (134). The scholars refer to "alterna(rra)tives" (134).

Truth & Bright Water[20] is set on the Canada-U.S. border, in the U.S. town of Truth and the Canadian reserve of Bright Water in the Alberta-Montana

20 To date, all five novels by Thomas King feature the word "water" or in one instance "river" in the titles. This underlines the importance of the notion of fluidity, the natural world, and water-related symbolism (Gruber, "Storytelling" 266).

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borderlands. The border is the Shield River located between Truth and Bright Water. The plot revolves around two Native adolescent cousins, the first person narrator Tecumseh and Lum. As is the case for Lum, who is associated with "Geronimo's tragic history" (Ridington 90), Tecumseh "is both himself and a character from Indian history" (Ridington 91). Tecumseh mirrors some of King's own childhood experiences. King's mother was a hairdresser as well and the beauty shop was part of their home in a warehouse (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 4). Tecumseh and King are both predominantly raised by their mothers and cross many borders. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews contend: "[…] King's childhood involved a continual movement between communities and across various racial and cultural boundaries" (4). The novel is truly "associational" (King, "Godzilla" 245), focusing on the community and offering no definitive answers. The famous Native artist and returning "lost son" Monroe Swimmer functions as a focal point of the narration and repatriates stolen Native bones. This fictional character is also akin to King, since both move back and forth across the Canada-U.S. border (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 10).

Border binaries are established, blurred, and transcended. Humor, irony and comic subversion, in addition to a multi-layered plot and an intriguing set of characters, are King's means to hold the narrative together. On the one hand King emphasizes the arbitrariness of the border and on the other hand he stresses the distinctiveness of certain Native experiences such as the colonial past, the oftentimes disadvantaged situation in the present and an uncertain future. Lived experience and fiction mirror each other highlighting Native practices and processes of de/bordering. The novel addresses gender roles, family relations, intergenerational dialogue, and social justice issues in the fictional Native and non-Native worlds. King does not shy away from contested issues such as western anthropology and the role of art and museums. He portrays the problems regarding "Orientalism" (Said) and essentialism and ironically and humorously subverts them.

3.1 "Turtle Island"[21]: Border Crossings and Transgressions

King experiences borders, tries to subvert them in his writing and holds a strong interest in the spaces between various borders: "Yet he is also extremely interested in the spaces 'in-between' those borders, whether they are literal or figurative" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 4). Davidson, Walton, and Andrews address

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21 Turtle Island is the indigenous concept and designation for North America, linked to creation stories.

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the need for "cross-border readings" (27). They "demonstrate the ways in which the power of narration has the ability to contest and undermine dominant borders and boundaries" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 28). New spaces emerge and "nation is predicated upon narration" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 28) echoing Homi K. Bhabha.

In the novel's title, *Truth & Bright Water*, the ampersand symbolically represents the border river uniting and dividing Truth and Bright Water as well as the United States and Canada. The ampersand signals the pervasive presence of borders, borderlands, and de/bordering at all levels in this novel. Spatial understandings include ambiguous in-between spaces, in the form of geographical borderlands or regarding identity construction: "For Native peoples, the space between the borders of the nation-state and the lands that were historically occupied by a tribe generate gaps in meaning that allow writers, like King, to explore oppositional definitions of identity and community" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 17). Davidson, Walton, and Andrews go beyond discussing border binaries and underscore that borders "[…] have political and physical consequences, consequences to which King's fictions consistently draw attention" (17).

3.1.1 Fluvial Boundary: The Stygian "Shield"

King starts his novel with a vivid and detailed description of the Shield River, representing the boundary between Canada and the United States, and the transformation the river displays in its course. It is a river that "begins in ice" and then "the water warms and deepens, and splits the land in two" (1).[22] This shifting and fluid binary epitomized by the river is evident throughout the novel and the river acquires a high symbolic value in the plot. Playing on the ice connection, the name of the river in *Truth & Bright Water*, the Shield, is meaningful, too, as it refers to "the Canadian Shield" and additionally to "Plains Indians shields" (Ridington 90). This is significant as "[s]hields are icons that actualize the power of stories. Shields bring stories to life. The symbols on shields are intertribal and, like Plains sign language, facilitate communication across the divides of particular languages" (Ridington 90). The shields fulfill interpreting roles bridging gaps of understanding. In the same vein the river Shield bridges the chasm between

22 Wherever the source in this chapter's text refers to King and only states the page the citation is taken from Thomas King's *Truth & Bright Water*, one of the three main primary sources of this study. In order to guarantee readability, the same approach for in-text citations is adopted for the chapters on Howard Frank Mosher and Jim Lynch regarding the analysis of the respective main primary sources by these writers.

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two countries and two worldviews by representing a liminal space of opportunity. For Monroe the land along the river between Truth and Bright Water is the "centre of the universe" (251). It is his homeland and sacred.

The border river dichotomy, though, is overcome since it is simultaneously a liminal space of opportunity, negotiation, and transformation. Furthermore, the fluvial border is blurred by floods and crossed by ferries and by people being immersed and submerged in the water as in the case of Monroe Swimmer or Lum. The river between Truth and Bright Water is not only a dividing line between the United States and Canada, but also between the white world and indigenous ways of life on the reserve and ultimately between the modern and more traditional ways: "One side is Indian, the other white, but the characters cross often, if not easily, from one side to the other" (Ridington 89). The towns may be oppositional, but the characters in the novel cross frequently, and the dichotomy becomes fuzzy despite one town being situated in the United States and the other in Canada as King writes: "Truth and Bright Water sit on opposite sides of the river, the railroad town on the American side, the reserve in Canada" (1). The dualism of the place names Truth and Bright Water, corresponding to "Sweet Grass, Montana and Coutts, Alberta" and against all odds "[t]he harsh one [being] Canadian" (Ridington 89) is reflected explicitly in the novel's title. Using the main settings as the title is proof of the decisive function geography has in terms of narration. Place names like Bright Water are self-explanatory and serve as an immediate link to the water trope. King transcends border binaries in his writing: "His texts, by writing and transgressing the border that divides Canada from the United States, show the forty-ninth parallel to be precisely that: a figment of someone else's imagination" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 13).

The river Shield is completely crossed by the old and tiny ferry. The passengers need to pull the chord themselves. It is the closest connection between Truth and Bright Water, because the bridge was never completed. The residents of Truth do not often use the ferry, as the only reason to go to the reserve would be during Indian Days. Moreover, everyone except Tecumseh and his mother owns a car (42) and can use alternative routes. Going by car is the easiest way, but a time-taking detour. However, when walking the bridge, people, in particular children or teenagers, can get stuck on the bridge. The fire department in Truth then has to help out the Native kids from Bright Water trapped on the bridge, a task they dislike because it requires an extra effort. The children shall simply stay "on their side of the river" (41). The fluid border is porous, at times dangerous, and some locals even embrace the dividing and segregating function of the Shield. The border river is thus a chasm that must be bridged, which is done by "Charlie

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Ron's ferry" (42), a "landmark" (51) in Helen's opinion. Due to the lack of a car, Tecumseh and his mother have to cross the river in the ferry when they want to visit for example Tecumseh's grandmother in Bright Water. In contrast to Tecumseh, his mother nostalgically enjoys the ferry and sees the crossing as a journey giving her time to reflect on the perpetual nature of the river (51–52). Helen highlights the river's presence and with it the continuation of Native worldviews dating back to time immemorial (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 143). Davidson, Walton, and Andrews stress King's focus on the mutability and fluidity of borders and Native concepts overriding and subverting Western notions of borders, states, and nation-states (143–44). In contrast to Greek mythology, where Charon transports the dead in a ferry across the river Styx, in King's novel there is no ferryman. Instead Helen, the Native mother shares with her son Tecumseh the Native mythology precisely in this liminal space between life and death. The ferry's movement is compared to "[pitch] and [roll] like a log in a flood" (51). King describes the special moment in the middle of the river: "[B]y the time we get to the middle, the river is gone and it feels as though we're floating above the clouds and that if we were to fall, we'd fall for years before we'd find the water" (51). The beyond and at the same time the in-between transcend the binary restrictions to mental and physical mobilities. This resembles again Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic understandings: "A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze and Guattari 115). The middle ground is celebrated:

> The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (116)

The Shield, border and Stygian river, resembles such a Deleuzian and Guattarian stream. Helen "stops pulling for a moment and looks over the edge of the bucket" (52). She reflects on the river's perpetual presence "since the beginning of time" (52). By pausing in the middle of the river before resuming the crossing the importance of the border is stressed. Then Tecumseh pulls them over the river and Helen starts singing a song from "*The Desert Song*" Tecumseh dislikes (52).

Water flows and floods geographic borders. The river is the fluid border that divides Truth and Bright Water, but that can also transgress the riverbed. Hence, the boundary is blurred and the two sides connected, bridging the binary opposition by overflowing into both countries. The Shield washes away garbage from the Bright Water landfill or items are taken to the river by the prairie wind,

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but many things are also dumped into the river deliberately (8). The river is "figured as both boundary and bin" (Bates 146). In the river Shield toxic waste is illegally dumped, but also Native remains are buried there, taken from museums by Monroe. The ethical dimension is further enlarged by Lum's suicide; he is going over the edge and drowning. The river Shield covers and hides some illegal activities, but cannot shield and protect Lum from despair and domestic violence. The Shield, imbued with multiple border meanings, is a symbolic space of negotiation and symbolizes the flux of life and the fluid nature of human beings. It is an ever-changing in-between space. The river swallows up everything, indiscriminately, for instance "the skull found in the river among the other waste function[ing] as a disturbing disruption between body and waste, past and present" (Bates 147) or a presumably decomposing dead body. The police find Lum's remains in the river along with garbage and the yellow barrels (259). Therefore, the river is reminiscent of the mythological river Styx, a border and concomitant connection between the realms of the living and the dead, a threshold and liminal space between life and afterlife.

The Styx is also the river that lends Achilles his powers except for his heel which is not dipped into the magical waters since his mother holds the child at his heel. King's character Lum does not have a mother to prevent his death by going over the edge on the bridge. On the contrary, Lum's mother's song siren-like leads to his death, to the metaphorical river Styx, the Shield. Longing for his beloved late mother, nothing shields Lum from the lure of the underworld. She has preceded him on the way to that other realm, the afterlife. For Lum choosing death over life is ostensibly more life-affirming and active than the passive suffering as an object of violence at his home. His loyal companion, his dog Soldier, is with him in the transition from the here to yonder. Lum flings himself into the void, the fluvial and Stygian abyss of the border river. His extraordinary dog acquires human-like qualities and soldiers on with Lum in the battle that is called life. Unlike mythology, where the "hound of Hades" Kerberos / Cerberus exudes an air of malevolence, the dog Soldier is a friend to Lum and source of consolation. He presumably accompanies Lum to the gates of Hades. The dogs called the Cousins in the novel resemble more the image that "the hound of Hades" conjures up in people's minds. As is the case in Greek myth, the Cousins fulfill a gatekeeping function: "Lum figured the missionaries brought the dogs with them to keep the Indians in line" (38). They are menacing and it is the dogs' eyes that create this sense of trepidation: "They never barked, which made them seem friendly, but if you got up close and looked into their eyes, the only thing you would see was your own reflection" (39). As Tecumseh's grandmother explains

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"dogs helped to guard the camp" against ghosts in former times (39). Analogous, in the underworld the mythical dog also keeps the ghosts of the deceased at bay.

Greek mythology complements the critical analysis of *Truth & Bright Water*. At the same time the inclusion of Western foundational myths constitutes a border crossing between Western mythologies and Native worldviews and cosmologies. King as a crosser and transgressor of many borders literally embodies both Native worldviews and Greek mythology thanks to his mixed cultural and ethnic heritage, precisely hailing from Native and Greek cultures. Ridington explains that "[s]ome characters in the author's story bring together family and myth" (98). She suggests that the name of Tecumseh's mother, Helen, "is a nod to King's partner and colleague, Helen Hoy. At another level, though, the author's use of the name ties the story to Helen of Troy, a semi-mythic character from King's Greek heritage" (Ridington 98).

The traditional narratives of border rivers include the crossing of the Jordan and the crossing of the Rubicon, in this latter case the river symbolizing a point of no return. In the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* the Jordan is described as "a boundary of the Promised Land" (460) and the notion of crossing occurs frequently. In King's novel the question remains open what the Promised Land signifies. Since the bridge over the border river is not completed, economic opportunities do not materialize. The reserve is neither the Promised Land nor the "land of milk and honey;" it is rather a "Paradise Lost" (Milton). Upon the arrival of the European settlers in North America and with the impositions of colonial borders in addition to the decimation of the buffalo, the original state dating back to time immemorial is gone on Turtle Island.

3.1.2 Unfinished Bridge: Ambiguous Ampersand

Reflecting the ampersand "&" of the novel's title *Truth & Bright Water*, the steel bridge looms large over the river. Therefore, the partly built bridge is a symbol of incomplete unity and concomitant visual division. The unfinished bridge is ambiguously, at one and the same time signifying unity and disunity. The title of the novel, *Truth & Bright Water*, features the ampersand as a visual border marker of simultaneous unity and disunity. This graphic sign is indicative of the function of borders at which converging and diverging forces are at play. King's spelling highlights the simultaneous connection and division between the two places, the two countries, and the non-Native and Native worlds. The ampersand "&" visually divides and creates a binary as does the Canada-U.S. border, while at the same time uniting opposites on a semantic level. Moreover, the American location is mentioned first and the Canadian reserve second, signaling hierarchies

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entrenched in the public subconscious. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews attribute this phenomenon to "long-standing Canadian fears of Manifest Destiny" (141). Though military incursions into Canadian territory are unlikely, American cultural imperialism is ongoing as is U.S. economic dominance in Canada. This in turn strongly influences "constructions of Canadian national identity" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 141).

The bridge in King's novel "serves as a central trope" (Goldman 284) and represents a "wasted state" (Bates 145), synonymous with a wasted opportunity to connect the cross-border community. Catherine Bates describes the promise the bridge apparently holds as "an illusory image of a smooth border crossing that never takes place" and juxtaposes the bridge's seeming potential with its abysmal threat, "the fatal, failed border crossing that constitutes the novel's tragic climax" (Bates 145) alluding to Lum's death by jumping off the bridge. A shortage of jobs ensued because the construction of the bridge remains incomplete (36). Three years earlier in the narrated time a new highway was supposed to "pass through Truth and cross into Canada at Bright Water". People were excited about visitors stopping by on their way to Waterton, Banff, Glacier or Yellowstone, but when the bridge was halfway constructed, work stopped. The construction workers left, not before barring both ends of the bridge with chain-link fencing (38). An unfinished bridge now stands in the river between Truth and Bright Water. This fictional setting of the in-between space, of the not-anymore and not-yet, symbolized in that barred unfinished bridge is a reflection of Native-White relations. Bates posits that King opens up possibilities for rethinking seemingly stable conditions due to this unfinished bridge: "But this wasting away, while signifying neglect, also provides permeability […]. It is this precarious possibility offered up by the rusting webs of iron mesh – of experiencing the wasting while recognizing what it allows us to see – that brings to light for us the potentially productive messiness of King's border confusions" (Bates 146). The bridge represents "a monument to and metonymic symbol of the border" and thus "signifies both an irrevocable *problem* with the border and a potential reimagining of it" (Bates 146).

In the prologue the mood created by the bridge is one of gloom foreshadowing the tragic role of the bridge in the ending of the novel: "But beneath the bridge, trapped between the pale supports that rise out of the earth like dead trees and the tangle of rebar and wire that hangs from the girders like a web, the air is sharp, and the only thing that moves in the shadows is the wind" (2). Words like "trapped," "pale," "dead trees," "web," "sharp," and "shadows" forebode the tragedy. The bridge is dangerous and the fence supposed to block the

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entrance onto the bridge no longer fulfills its function. Ambiguity persists as the fence is "more a hazard than a barrier" (255). Stepping on the wire of the fence Tecumseh discovers that the fence "sways under [his] feet, alive and dangerous" (255). Tecumseh describes the bridge as "a skeleton, the carcass of an enormous animal, picked to the bone" (256). The bridge has anthropomorphous qualities. Lum comments that the bridge smells like "rotting" (256). The reference to the animal carcass conjures up images of buffalo carcasses, connecting the dashed hope for an improved economic situation for Natives due to the unfinished bridge to the destroyed Native livelihood of the buffalo. The bridge is described as having "dead openings between the ribs" (256) and the wind personifies danger. The wind is an antagonist for someone on this high bridge in the fog rising above the river: "There's nothing to hold on to out here and the wind knows it. It grabs my arms and legs" (256). Lum's death is revealing: He needs to escape the confines and violence of his earthly life. He yearns for death as he imagines his late mother beckoning him with other-worldly songs to visit her yonder.

3.1.3 Cross-Border Communities: Truth & Bright Water

The novel's title *Truth & Bright Water* does not only refer to the two main settings, but alludes to two different worlds and worldviews. King addresses the White and Native as well as the American and Canadian societies and depicts life in a small town versus life on the reserve. Border binaries become apparent by and by. Tecumseh and his mother live in the U.S. town of Truth and moved there from the Canadian reserve of Bright Water, presumably motivated by Tecumseh's father living in Truth (14). The notion of "truth" plays a crucial role in the development and structure of the novel. Within the fictional community, competing stories are told about other people and events. Here truth is relative and things might not be as told. The better told story succeeds, regardless of the truth. King deliberately delays information and lets the reader discover the fictional world through the eyes of the adolescent first-person narrator Tecumseh. When Tecumseh mistakes a kite for a bird, then later discovers, the "truth," the reader makes the discovery along with him. Therefore, it is shown that appearances can be deceptive, which is a stark contrast to the novel's title apparently claiming the "truth," although as a place name. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews observe that the dual geographic positioning visible in the title makes sure that truth is south of the forty-ninth parallel and hence alludes to "colonial perceptions that still circulate in Canada regarding American superiority" (141). It is a hegemonic U.S. truth indicative of a hierarchy in public opinion and perception in terms of Canada-U.S. relations. The truth was claimed by the colonizers and

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they displaced the Natives in the name of the truth masking the underlying motives of land, greed, and power. Therefore, Truth is the name of the American town, not the reserve.

King is concerned with the notion of truth and the blurred border between the real and the imaginary. Evoking the term and the notion of truth is prevalent in King's work, since aside from the novel discussed, King published *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*. Helen Hoy titled an essay on her partner and husband Thomas King "The Truth about Thomas" (Hoy 289). King experienced that attitudes towards him were characterized by stereotypical ideas about how Natives are supposed to be. Someone told him "You're not the Indian I had in mind," an incident King relates in a chapter bearing this phrase as the title (King, *Stories* 31–60). The shaping influence of imaginary concepts of what it means to be Native, whether noble, savage, or vanishing, strongly influences him and he writes back. He does not angrily admonish, but instead reverses stereotypes and employs humor and irony to raise awareness about stereotypical thinking and false assumptions.

The streets of Truth are organized in a big grid following the railway tracks. Geographical boundaries have symbolic effects and an identity dimension apart from their physicality. They unite and divide, symbolically and geographically. This binary opposition is evident in the railroad tracks: "The railroad tracks run east and west, and cut Truth in half. If you're in a car, you can only get from one side of town to the other at the level crossings, but if you're on foot, you can cross anywhere you can scale the fence or find a hole in the wire" (70). Truth is divided into two parts. On a metaphoric level this is what kind of truth is revealed in the narration, namely partial truths. Other partial truths include the incomplete bridge across the border river. The notion of truth, like the U.S. town of Truth, is shown to be socially constructed, particularly regarding the geopolitical nature of borders, binaries, and other geographic divisions. In transforming the epistemological notion of truth into a place name, King ironically comments on and questions established notions of truth, whether religious, historical, or geopolitical.

A major street in Truth is called Division Street. There are technically two by this name, thus "Division Street" embodies a binary. Division Street is likened to the river. Both street and river share a rough direction:

> For the most part, Division Street runs east and west through Truth, but like the river, it doesn't run straight. It comes into town from the south, turns west, and follows the tracks to the level crossing. Then it heads north for half a mile, turns east, and runs straight until it dead-ends in front of the fire hall. (30)

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This seemingly arbitrary or unpredictable pattern, in fact presented as a verbal map by King, can confuse first-time visitors as "there are two Division Streets, one that is north of the tracks and one that is south of the tracks" (30). This is an apparent dichotomy. Altogether, there are three physical division markers, the tracks, the Division Streets, and the river. The only natural boundary is the river. The other two dividers are human-made in the American town of Truth. These geographical divisions are mirrored in community divisions or borders. Tecumseh's parents, who have separated, own shops on opposite sides of the railroad tracks. Elvin has his shop on the south side, whereas Helen has her shop on Division Street North (30). The father works as a carpenter and is very ingenious in his profession. Occasionally he "does a little smuggling" (31).

Bright Water is also related to the notion of truth, because the metaphorical water is not muddy, but bright instead. Truth and bright water, as in the novel's title, complement one another. Water is the source of all natural life. Bright water is also reminiscent of the collocation bright future. The question arises whether or not the Native reserve holds a bright future for the community. During Indian Days it certainly seems to be thriving, however the unfinished bridge and the barrels in the river are a constant reminder of inequalities, the affluent, and the poor. Societal borders become evident, particularly between the Native and the White worlds. Income disparities create a rift between Natives and Whites: "Indian Days are the only time we make any money without having to fill in a form" (22). Some residents hope for lots of German and Japanese tourists for that particular reason. The reserve needs to create jobs, but the landfill project is not approved because of environmental reasons. The garbage is beginning to slide into the river (22). Skee, the owner of the Railman's, tells Tecumseh that the railroad only gives Indians temporary employment in the summer because Whites do not want to do that kind of work or as Skee puts it "they can't find a bunch of whites dumb enough to do the work" (36).

3.1.4 Border Performance: State of the Art, Art of the State

Several characters perform borders and their crossing, in so doing showing the varieties of border performance and also the art of enforcing said borders by the nation-state. Money is to be made with illegally depositing waste: "Landfill economics" (152). Lum elaborates on his observation by cynically linking waste to buffaloes as a way to make money and a livelihood: "'Garbage,' he says, his voice hissing into the wind. 'The new buffalo'" (153).

Tecumseh and his father Elvin cross the border on their way to Blossom. Elvin wants to smuggle barrels that contain "bio-hazardous waste" from Truth

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to Bright Water. The hospital waste needs to disappear and for that Elvin is paid. Cigarette smuggling is no longer profitable, since Canada dropped the taxes on tobacco (82). The father relates to his son that the border guards do not allow dogs across the border and adds wryly: "Used to be the same for Indians" (83). Tecumseh and Elvin drive to Canada in the father's truck and before crossing Elvin disposes of "seed" and "booze" and informs his son about prisons from a comparative perspective (85). Elvin tells Tecumseh that "Canadian jails are worse than Mexican ones" for one reason, namely that "Mexican jails are full of Mexicans" whereas "Canadian jails are full of Indians" (85). Natives are not described as Canadians in this instance.

The father sees the world very realistically with a sense of indifference, sarcasm, and irony. Elvin is familiar with the stereotypes. He uses them to his advantage, whether at the border or in his woodshop making souvenirs for tourists. As a marketing strategy Elvin signs and numbers his artifacts to make them more authentic and to receive a higher price for them (80). Father and son pass the American border and come to the Canadian border station where the border guards ask about alcohol and tobacco and check the back of the truck. They do not find anything and one of the guards says "Welcome to Canada" (86). Elvin knows which action triggers what kind of reaction and plays along: "As we clear the border, my father looks at me. 'They love that dumb Indian routine. You see how friendly those assholes were'" (86). Eva Gruber contends that King makes the Native strategy of fooling the border guards explicit and thus creates identification and self-recognition with the readers (*Humor* 74). Elvin sees the irony that the Prairie View dump does not want the garbage: "They don't mind making the mess, but they don't want the job of cleaning it up" (141). He would like to do business with his own people despite the landfill being closed and counts on ways around it: "There's closed, and there's closed" (141). Differing legal understandings are linked to this border crossing performance of Elvin and Tecumseh: "The scene shows the border as an opportunity to make money through illegal activities, yet implicitly also raises the question of just what is legal or illegal in face of a colonial border" (Sarkowsky 217). Native and non-Native definitions represent contrasting interpretations of Western laws and the general notion of law as practiced by present-day nation-states.

Not only geopolitical boundaries can be part of border performances by crossing, blurring, or transgressing them, but also metaphorical and symbolic borders. Stereotypes are undermined repeatedly when Tecumseh's father points out that the "entertainment barn" in Blossom is owned by a Native, because the previous white owner went bankrupt. He comments on this unusual fact

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regarding the reversal of the economic roles: "Not many times you see that happen" (87). They go inside the electronics store and Tecumseh is reminded of a "map of North America" when looking at the stacked television sets using his "imagination" (87). Tecumseh automatically sees a map of North America as a whole, neither a map of Canada nor of the United States. The geopolitical boundary between the two nation-states is erased on this imaginary map consisting of stacked television sets in contrast to television weather maps stopping at the national (as in nation-state) borders (Fraser). However, TV signals transcend borders. In border regions TV and radio programs from the neighboring country are received. This is a common complaint on the part of nationalistic and patriotic Canadians, because they fear cultural domination by the United States visible in American media content in Canada.

The conversation between Elvin and Tecumseh in a café owned by a Native woman humorously reveals national differences between the United States and Canada regarding indigenous people: "'I went to school with her,' my father tells me. 'Probably the only town in America where two Indians own anything.' 'We're in Canada.' 'Hell,' he says. 'I guess that explains it, all right'" (87). Concomitantly, the nation-state boundary is not evident to Elvin, illustrating the arbitrary nature of the international border while also suggesting that Native people might be faring better economically in Canada. Additional examples of economic hardship and lack of opportunity for Natives form part of King's plot. When looking for day jobs, "Wally Preston over at the job gate" (17) "while [he] is nice enough, he always hires the white guys before he hires Indians" (40–41). Lingering racism becomes obvious in the employment sector.

In his fiction King shows the arbitrariness of the border dividing Native lands and separating Canada and the United States. Monroe, one of the main characters, voices the oddity of the border: "Monroe walks to the lip of the coulee and looks out across the river. 'There's Canada,' he says. Then he turns and spreads his arms. 'And this is the United States.' He spins around in a full circle, stumbles, and goes down in a heap. 'Ridiculous, isn't it'" (131). The nation-states of Canada and the U.S. literally resemble a stumbling block for Monroe Swimmer. The Native character cannot comprehend the artificial and baffling fact that an international boundary exists here.

Other geographical border settings are recalled by reminiscing about the family holiday at Waterton Lake. Tecumseh's family camps in the vicinity and the weather turns bad. Tecumseh observes the contrasts between the mountains and the prairies: "The mountains were different from Truth and Bright Water. In the mountains, everything was bowed in and close. On the prairies, you could see

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forever. In the mountains, the air felt heavy and dark. On the prairies, the air was light and gold" (77). The setting impacts on the mood of the characters as well as the atmosphere of the book. The prairies are open and free whereas in the mountains the characters feel enclosed, caged in, and bordered. Nonetheless, during one hike the United States is visible (78).

Tecumseh and his mother take a boat tour on Waterton Lake after his father has left. He finds out that the Canada-U.S. border bisects the lake: "The cruise around the lake was interesting, and if I hadn't gone, I would never have known that the Canadian/United States border ran right through the middle of the lake" (78). In his imagination Tecumseh envisions a marked and militaristic border: "I expected to see a floating fence or inner tubes with barbed wire and lights, something to keep people from straying from one country into the other" (78). The border is anticlimactic to his preconceived notion of how a boundary is supposed to look like, because the border only resembles "a cutline in the trees along with border posts on opposite sides of the shore, and a small border station to mark the line" (78). People wave after the boat has approached the border station and someone has rung a bell. Nature itself does not mark the presumed differences between the two nation-states of Canada and the United States. In this encounter the arbitrary and constructed nature of the border is obvious. Moreover, the boundary is presented as friendly and merely a tourist attraction. It is not a threatening deterrence to illegal aliens who want to cross. King uses this special setting to underline his novel's message of unity and border arbitrariness. The border is shown as a meeting place for inhabitants of or visitors from either of the two countries[23].

King's narrative technique is at times very similar to the quilt of Tecumseh's mother Helen in the novel. He weaves different storylines together and jumps back and forth between the various subplots. For instance, once Tecumseh's father leaves the family and moves from Bright Water to Truth, Tecumseh's mother requests information material on Canadian cities. Mother and son receive many tourist brochures and then pretend to decide to move elsewhere. This geographic dream merges with Helen's dream of acting and the wish to live in a big city with a lively theater scene. In a playful way Helen and Tecumseh spell out their dreams and discuss their hopes for the future: "My mother would smile when I said this, and no matter what city we settled on, you could see that moving out of

23 Waterton Lake is situated in Waterton Glacier International Peace Park, "the world's First International Peace Park" (Unesco World Heritage). <http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id_site=354>.

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Bright Water, away from the reserve, and becoming a real actress was one of her dreams" (138). They transcend the borders of lived experience and fiction with the help of their imaginations, and some props (the tourist brochures) and eventually turn these scenes into part of a theater play. Later on, Helen will indeed star in the community's theater production.

3.2 Diorama: Bordered Native-White Relations

Native-White relations often resemble a dioramic museum display ossifying and reifying colonial positions. The Native presence is undermined by historical accounts and dominant perceptions of how being and living as a Native person must look like. Bordering and thinking in neat categories contribute to the maintenance of such an illusory and misleading representation and conceptualization of indigenous ways of life. Thinking outside the box requires transcending and at times transgressing bordered categories. In geopolitics, borders have fulfilled the role of mirroring and replicating the official power paradigm. Socially constructed, officially sanctioned and commissioned geographical boundaries, deliberately perceived as static when suiting the dominant goals, were used as colonial instruments of power throughout history and represented in maps and reified in discourse.

Strategies subverting and deconstructing borders are at the heart of King's storytelling technique. He employs a number of different narrative devices, such as symbolism, tropes, naming, irony and humor. In so doing he continues a Native tradition based on oral storytelling and the high value Native cultures place on humor (Gruber, *Humor* 8–12). Renaming is one strategy. As Lane puts it: "Renaming was clearly a powerful colonial tool designed to challenge the cultural and political autonomy of Canada's First Peoples" (6). However, in writing back, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis are renaming and reclaiming in their own right. A culturally sensitive way to belong and root oneself is to reclaim one's name and with it one's own culture, ethnicity, and identity. Examples become increasingly numerous ranging from the creation of Nunavut to replacing the name of the Princess Charlotte Islands with the indigenous designation "Haida Gwaii" or the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca with "Salish Sea." This official act of renaming is equivalent to reclaiming Native identity, sovereignty, and autonomy.

Tecumseh's father characterizes the key differences between Natives and Whites and sees the world's problems linked to Whites (86–87). The father asks the question: "'You know what's wrong with the world?' " (86). At the same time he gets a bottle of iced tea with the label "Wiser's" from under the car seat. That is a humorous and ironic hint of King, in particular pertinent in this father-son

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dialogue that culminates with an emphasis on the importance of humor. To make it in the world humor is needed. The answer to the father's question regarding the malaise of the world is "Whites" (86). Tecumseh in an attempted reply to his father's rhetorical question "What's wrong in the world?" anticipates the usual lingering colonial repercussions. King thus overtly addresses the ongoing debate on colonialism versus postcolonialism, on whether indigenous peoples have achieved a postcolonial status yet. Another passage underscores Canada's position as a settler colony or dominion and at the same time colonizing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. He implies continuing colonial effects and doubts that Canada is postcolonial in the truest sense of the term. King does not approve of the recourse to the phase of colonialism to label a literature that is genuinely Native.

Tecumseh tries to guess the answer by recurring to stereotypes and common grievances held against Whites and going back to colonialism: "'That's because they took our land, right?' 'Nope.' 'Because they broke the treaties?' 'Double nope.' 'Because they're prejudiced … ?' 'That what they teach you in school?' My father takes the bottle and has another drink. 'Listen up. It's because they got no sense of humour'" (86–87). Tecumseh objects, citing Skee Gardipeau, who runs the pub Railman's (33), as an example of the opposite, but Tecumseh's father corrects him and insists on the difference between "telling a joke and having a sense of humour" (87).

Certain set phrases are mentioned as a recurrent theme, a leitmotif. The contrasts in perception, but even more so the connections between the different characters are underscored. King shows how the characters influence each other and how every single one of them has regrets concerning the past and longs for either a new life or to have the old life back. Times change as do the characters' outlook on life. Often the evasive and pensive answer "'Another life […]'. 'Another time'" (245) is given. The first time this phrase comes up in the book is when grandmother mentions Mia (54). Auntie Cassie resembles Tecumseh's mother, though auntie Cassie has a tattoo on her hand (55). This tattoo says AIM (King 56) or MIA read in reverse. There are three possible readings for the three letters, namely AIM as in American Indian Movement, MIA as in missing in action, and MIA as the probable name of Cassie's mysterious daughter. When Tecumseh sees a baby picture he erroneously assumes it must be him, "only the hair doesn't look quite right" (120), and he can only see three signs at the back of the photo: "All I can make out is a 'J' and an 'L' and the number one" (120). Based on that, Ridington assumes: "[…] July 1, Canada Day. That would be the birthday of Cassie's daughter, the one she was thinking of when she sent her nephew girl's toys in July" (Ridington 97).

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Symbolically speaking, Canada's national holiday, referring to the settler state, has a variety of diverging connotations depending on the background of a person. Ridington also reports that the date of "Indian Days" in Bright Water is July 1 (98), another ironic twist King uses to rewrite the colonial past. The girl most likely born on Canada Day is not present and seems to be linked to a traumatic past event. The mystery revolving around the tattoo and the regretful pondering alludes to a form of loss and grief on Cassie's part. Elvin, Tecumseh's father, uses the same phrases, yet in the opposite order: "'Another time […]'. 'Another life'" (188). This is echoed by Helen, the mother, who uses exactly the same words in Elvin's order: "'Another time […]'. 'Another life'" (207). Helen, Elvin and Helen's sister Cassie share that past and different life of those days as evident in their similar choice of words. There are connections the reader and the critic is left to puzzle over.

"You know what's wrong with this world?" (226) is a question frequently asked by different characters in King's novel. This thread gives the reader interesting insights into the mindset of the people asking this rhetorical question because of the different answers given. Lum answers his rhetorical question by saying: "There aren't enough bullets" (226). Elvin asks the exact same question: "You know what's wrong with this world" (169)? "Just needs a little love" (169). Love is the answer, though later on Elvin elaborates and states: "'The trouble with the world,' he says […] 'is women'" (170). This is the third time Elvin reflects on the problems of the world blaming first Whites, then Natives, and eventually women. Whites are the root for what is not going well in the world because of their lack of humor (86–87). Elvin offers the same answer with regard to Natives: "What's wrong with this world is Indians" (105). Monroe asks the same rhetorical question but replies slightly differently: "Nobody has a sense of humour" (199). Lucy Rabbit echoes the question and shares some words of wisdom: "'Everybody's related,' Lucy told us. 'The trouble with this world is that you wouldn't know it from the way we behave'" (202). For her the issue is human behavior and community.

3.2.1 Pan-Tribalism: Haunting Past and "Happy Trails"

In his novel, King employs the history of the Cherokees as a pan-tribal illustration of the continuing repercussions of colonialism for all Native peoples and tribal nations. While the tribal affiliations of Tecumseh, Lum, Monroe and the other Native characters are not disclosed, the setting in the Alberta-Montana borderlands as well as King's biography and works suggest the Blackfoot tribe. The colonial past haunts Native characters in *Truth & Bright Water* and evokes

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the Trail of Tears in particular. By overcoming the past, a brighter future and a happier trail beckon.

Striking pan-tribal links in *Truth & Bright Water* include the giveaway (243), a traditional custom echoing the Pacific Northwest potlatch tradition. A Northwest Coast mask (243) is part of Monroe's interior, indicative of the notion of masking. The bentwood box is usually associated with the Northwestern tribes and plays a crucial part on account of its role as the place where the bones of the Indian children are stored. Other pan-tribal links comprise allusions to Blackfoot scholar Adolf Hungry Wolf and to the Cherokees' camping at Happy Trails, in fact a reversal of and direct allusion to the forced removal of Cherokees to Oklahoma on the "Trail of Tears". For King, pan-tribal issues form the core of Native identity:

> King himself asserts that he is most interested in a pan-Indian, urban or rural (as opposed to reservation) view of contemporary Native identity, and he creates characters and communities that are either not tribally ascribed or are associated with the Blackfoot people of Alberta and Montana with whom King became familiar during his years at the University of Lethbridge. (Hulan and Warley 125)

Hulan and Warley also discuss the flipside of this pan-tribalism: "For a new generation of Native literary critics, the pan-Indian view can be troubling" (125). They refer to Jesse Rae Archibald-Barber and point out that there is a disconnect between aesthetics and ethics regarding pan-tribalism in *Truth & Bright Water*: "[…] the lack of tribal specificity in King's novel […], as well as his recourse to magic realism, might work aesthetically but not necessarily *ethically*, as these aspects of his writing obscure, rather than reinforce, particular tribal contexts and traditions" (Hulan and Warley 125). Hulan and Warley contend that for Indigenous authors tribal specificity is crucial, yet "for non-Native readers, on the other hand, King's sometimes rather generic Indian characters and stories can be very appealing" as this literary work is more accessible and requires less specific contextual knowledge (126). The historical allusions in the text abound and once disclosed open a deeper and essential understanding of King's metafictional aim. Without contextual knowledge the full potential of King's fiction as a subversive text is stymied.

Intertextuality is a decisive part of King's fiction: "A considerable number of King's texts are thus marked by the overt and/or covert presence of various intertexts – written as well as oral, Native as well as Western" (Ulm and Kuester 149). Ulm and Kuester contend that "[o]ne of the most important literary techniques that King employs in this deconstruction of Eurocentric and/or colonial positions is the use of intertextual references that can be traced back to a spectrum

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of semiotic systems ranging from religion, literature, and the arts to popular culture" (149). Historical allusions interspersed in the novel are manifold, for instance a Native person watches a western movie glorifying the good cowboys of the frontier and westward expansion, at the time when Natives were pushed back and felt the full blow of colonialism. Native livelihoods were destroyed by the killing and radical decimation of the buffaloes. The narrative strand or leitmotif of Native resistance to forced removal and colonial repercussions is supported by telling examples, such as the main protagonist's name. Tecumseh's name is connected to the historical Shawnee chief (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 144), reminding readers of Tecumseh's War, the car Cherokee, and the Cherokees at the camping ground Happy Trails, a poignant reminder and ironic reversal in name of the historic event known as the "Trail of Tears."

Lum is sarcastic and self-derogatory and tells Tecumseh that there are "skins" at Happy Trails (72), Cherokees from Georgia. He discloses that they are on their way to Oklahoma. Tecumseh mentions that they are not headed in the right direction, but Lum mockingly replies: "Maybe they're taking the scenic route" (14). He also suggests that there is this unusual girl. For this reason Tecumseh should meet her, since he is equally strange (14) according to Lum. Rebecca Neuguin (102) assumes a unique role. In a magical realist vein, she has ghost-like qualities. The Cherokee girl wears a red ribbon in her hair (101), probably similar to the ones Monroe uses for the skulls (252). Rebecca resembles a bird (101), wears a long dress, and looks for her duck (101). She relates a creation story with regard to her missing duck and likes to be in the shade, which seems to be her natural surrounding: "In the shade she looks fine, but in the light, she looks strange, pale and transparent" (102). Going back into the shadow is like crossing the border between light and darkness, the shadows being the in-between stage: "The girl steps back into the shadows as if there is a line drawn in the ground past which she is not willing to go" (102). This indeterminate position within the realm of the visible and less visible, between the light and the shade makes her a ghost-like figure and a twilight presence. Marlene Goldman investigates the ghostly presence in *Truth & Bright Water*. She claims that "[i]n this novel, King continues to instigate profound shifts in perspective as he invokes the spirit of Coyote and ghosts to trace the impact of the dispossession of North American Native peoples" (Goldman 283). She postulates that King "infuses his tale of cultural haunting with a tragicomic trickster sensibility" (Goldman 283). Goldman likens the vanishing of Natives to "an optical illusion" not conforming to the stereotypical notion of the "doomed Indian": "Instead, *Truth & Bright Water* suggests that they have actually vanished – a process less akin to a death and more

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like an optical illusion that has been perpetrated by the settler society, which continually needs to displace and erase Native people's presence in order to feel at home in the new world" (283).

Early on, Rebecca scares Soldier by her presence. Though she does not find the duck, she keeps looking for it. She gives her hair band, a red ribbon, to Tecumseh and King uses the floating metaphor: "The ribbon floats in the breeze" (197). Rebecca is linked to a floating stage: "In her long dress, in the long prairie grass, she looks as if she is floating" (198). King hints at the colonial legacy in North America and the Trail of Tears (Davidson, Walton and Andrews): "She looks tired, as if she's walked a long ways [sic] today and still has a long ways [sic] to go" (197). Rebecca bonds with Tecumseh's dog Soldier "as if the two of them have a secret that they're not going to share with anyone else" (197), despite Soldier first being afraid of her. Rebecca has a tendency to show up out of nowhere and then suddenly disappear again (148). When Rebecca and Tecumseh meet she asks about Soldier and says that dogs in general dislike her, which later on is proved. Again she is the link between light and darkness: "Rebecca stands up and walks to the edge of the tent where the shadows end and the sun begins" (147). In conversation between them Rebecca reveals that she wears a dress made by her mother done without scissors because her mother is not allowed to have any. This will change once they live in Oklahoma. There are allusions to the killing of the buffaloes and the tourist attraction of a buffalo hunt in corrals (148). Rebecca leaves without giving Tecumseh a chance to say goodbye (265). She becomes a ghost-like vanishing Indian.

3.2.2 Charades: Screening Stereotypes at the "Frontier" and Indian Days

The notion of authenticity is blurred in *Truth & Bright Water*. King deliberately reverses preconceived notions and turns stereotypes upside down. Western and Native clichés echo each other and the characters wear masks or costumes concealing their identity while pretending to reveal typical Native or Western practices and perspectives. The reader along with the novel's Native protagonists can screen the screened stereotypes shown at the movie theater "Frontier". The Hollywood movies in the Western genre create illusions and perpetuate stock characters, particularly revealing once the living equivalents to these stock characters direct their gaze at the dream factory's production.

King's use of comedy and the central significance of comedy in Native communities and stories is widely recognized (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 3, 15; Gruber *Humor*). King's humor and subversive irony is directed against Whites

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and Natives alike, though Whites are shown as putting on a superior air marked by pity in disguise. The image of Natives might still be tainted by romanticized and essentialist notions of Native identity and culture. An advertisement for Washington State apples uses the image of a Native to promote the apples grown there: "There's a large picture of an Indian eating an apple and a caption reads 'Red and Delicious'" (187). There are more instances of puns and derisive humor on account of Natives. Miles Deardorf, who sold the church to Monroe, makes a joke about Natives being "reserved" or having some "reservations" (28) due to Monroe's failure of socially interacting with the community upon his move to the abandoned church. Skee admonishes him and describes his joke as stupid.

King ironically comments on white conceptions of or the white gaze on Native cultures and identities and hence Native expressions in crafts and art. Elvin carves coyotes, trickster figures out of wood because there is a high demand for traditional Native art. Economic necessity is pitted against artistic expression (32). Elvin is about business and does not want to be compared to an artist like Monroe (34). Trickster-like, Monroe pretends to be a tourist at Indian Days. He shows up wearing a Hawaiian shirt, cowboy hat, and sunglasses. He has a camera with him and takes pictures. His outfit and the activity of taking pictures is what a stereotypical tourist looks like and how he behaves in Monroe's imagination and experience. Additionally, he is aware of commercialization and marketing opportunities. Before he leaves the festival he tells Tecumseh to take a picture of him to sell posthumously. This underlines that Elvin and Monroe seem to be not that different in terms of seizing economic opportunities, though Monroe's behavior is infused with irony and comedy. He suggests a caption alluding to his art and Native identity (218). The realistic approach is to make a living and use the current trends and tastes in the market. King makes fun of tourists and uses stereotypes to depict them, whether his pet German tourists or his Canadian compatriots. Authenticity becomes a masquerade as Elvin and Lucy Rabbit demonstrate.

Self-identification as a Native is not a given. Lucy Rabbit dyes her hair blonde in order to resemble more closely her idol Marilyn Monroe, whereas Elvin, Tecumseh's father wants to be like Elvis Presley. Passing as someone else, renouncing Native ethnicity and only claiming Native authenticity to sell products as does Elvin during Indian Days becomes an intriguing backdrop for the ironic depiction of such Westerners as the Germans. Lucy Rabbit helps Tecumseh's father Elvin at Indian Days. Elvin, dressed up as Elvis Presley, just for fun sings a duet with Lucy. In line with King's focus on illusions Tecumseh mistakes his father for a tourist. Mistaken identities are another strategy in subverting and reversing the status quo. King uses the character of Lucy Rabbit to blur the

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boundaries between reality and fiction. Lucy is convinced that Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley are of Native descent and that they could even be siblings (200–01). The early death of Marilyn of drugs is indicative of her Native connections, as Lucy puts it sarcastically: "She died young, of drugs. Sounds like an Indian to me" (200). Pretending to be someone else is a way of obscuring the boundary between the real and the imagined. The desire for blonde hair speaks of not embracing Native identity, of longing to belong elsewhere. The same holds true for mind traveling or wishing to live elsewhere. Tecumseh and his mother Helen both daydream and let the mind wander. The local imagined community (Benedict Anderson) does not suffice. Looking at the tourist brochures, he has ordered, takes Tecumseh and Helen to other sites and sightseeing, symbolizing a mental border crossing.

The movie theater is called the Frontier (30) and one can "catch an old John Wayne western at the Frontier" (41). This intermedial reference to the Western genre is compelling as a Native perspective on this non-Native genre is revealed. Movie theaters tap into the imagination by creating illusions and telling audiovisual stories. The movie theater's name "Frontier" echoing Turner's Frontier Thesis is used in ironic juxtaposition with the movie shown there. The comic and ironic subversion lies in the crossing of multiple borders between fact and fiction, between Native and non-Native, and between the differing perspectives on the frontier experience and the myth of the West perpetuated through westerns. An illusion is ironically produced by screening a John Wayne western in the movie theater "Frontier" with a Native audience. Natives are westernized in such a western movie. In contrast, when Tecumseh's mother Helen plays a role in Grimm's fairy tale, the Western European ideas are indigenized in a Native setting. The borders between the Native and Non-Native worlds as well as between tradition and modernity are blurred and actively challenged and subverted.

As a frame of reference the reader's imagination visualizes these westerns with the stereotypical depiction of the Native experience, of Native characters being either noble, villain, or vanishing. The stereotypical "Indian" in the imagination of people alludes to these preconceived notions. The western genre is featured again when Tecumseh and Soldier watch TV. The reader experiences a reversed perspective, a Native watching a western, where a white man wants to be an Indian (111). Tecumseh does not like the western much. The Native gaze on a non-Native and stereotypical movie is an important episode in the adolescent world of Tecumseh, who needs to reconcile his Native experience with Western and White constructions of identity and culture. He needs to negotiate between the Native and White worlds.

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Stereotypes and their subversion are a predominant theme in King's novel. Both Natives and Whites are prone to stereotypes or want to pass as the other for select reasons, whether related to business strategies, identity formation or to mock the Other's stereotypes of one's own group. The latter is a strategy Monroe engages in subverting trickster-like the tourist clichés and stereotypical behavior. The bordered thinking in form of stereotypes is required to market the Native products to wealthier non-Native tourists. Gruber describes the mixed blessing of tourists in their interaction with Natives and Native communities: "Tourism, on the one hand, is a welcome and indispensable source of income to many Native nations. On the other hand, it frequently reifies Native people and Native cultures as the exotic Other to be consumed" (*Humor* 152). Native writers employ fictional characters who use these preconceived notions to their advantage and subvert them through humor. Gruber posits that "[t]he most pointed and at the same time most comical subversions of tourist stereotypes are provided by Thomas King in his novels *Green Grass, Running Water* and *Truth and Bright Water*" (*Humor* 152).

There are several instances of stereotypes that are subverted, mocked and used to Native advantage during the Indian Days festival at the Bright Water reserve. Native woman Edna caters to German tourists' "desire for authenticity" and subsequently turns into "a sly business woman" (Gruber, *Humor* 154) selling her food at a much higher price. Gruber points out that frybread is not a traditional foodstuff for Natives (*Humor* 155). She uses terms such as "illusion," (Gruber, *Humor* 154) and "fabrication" (Gruber, *Humor* 155) to show the constructedness and superficial nature of these Western tourists' notions of Natives. She claims that "[t]he text blurs cultural boundaries and levels hierarchies when these Natives-dressed-as-Western-cultural-icons encounter the Germans who bought Edna's recipe" (Gruber, *Humor* 155). This blurring of cultural and hierarchical borders is central to my analysis of King's novel. King uses a number of strategies and methods in the guise of humor, irony, naming, comic reversal, and historical allusion.

The notions of truth, of what is real and authentic, are blurred in people's minds. Non-Native perspectives on Native peoples thrive on stereotypes, consequently perpetuating false assumptions and preconceived notions. King "writes back" by ironically and humorously reversing stereotypes. His Native characters play with tourists' notions of Nativeness and use their expectations to economic advantage. A very ingenious example is paradigmatic of King's sense of humor. Native character Monroe Swimmer is said to have dressed up as a Native German with the full regalia of lederhosen and tuba during Indian Days. This surprises

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the Western reader as there seem to be different rules of behavior for Natives and Westerners. As Gruber maintains when Westerners pretend to be Natives that is not considered ridiculous, but can pass as "perfectly normal" (*Humor* 156). For Gruber, through this ploy-acting in his plot, King achieves the dual purpose of shifting perspectives on cultural stereotypes of Natives and the misappropriation of Native symbols (*Humor* 156). Very succinctly put, Gruber posits that "[s]tereotyping discounts Native presence today" and links this phenomenon to Baudrillard's "simulacra" (Gruber, *Humor* 156). Native fiction exhibiting blurred boundaries can be read as border texts showing agency in the realm of debordering practices. This leads to new conceptualizations of Native presence.

Monroe in a German-inspired costume with the tuba as a prop is an ironic and comic comment on German tourists dressed up as Natives and playing Indian during the Native festival in the novel. King seems to single out German tourists and pay particular attention to their behavior as he is aware of German writer Karl May's lingering popularity in Germany. King mocks Germans' infatuation, "German indianthusiasm" (Lutz) with everything Native as is underscored even more with the German couple's last name of May (155), clearly alluding to Karl May. Helmut May and his wife Eva rent a car in Missoula, cross the border at Prairie View and head for Banff. He is a fashion photographer while his wife is a schoolteacher. Both professions are involved in passing on a perspective, either by capturing the artificial glamour world of fashion or in the process of teaching, when several philosophies aside from the subject matter are espoused and shared. Helmut May's profession forms a link to the ideational concept of representation. Photography is a medium that seemingly captures a so-called reality, while it depicts only a particular perspective or frame. The photograph is a shot taken by an individual person. Illusions are created and only subjective realities are represented. Mocking the stereotypes, King depicts the older German couple staying in their car according to the rules with the seatbelt fastened despite dying from exposure: "When the RCMP finally found the jeep, the Mays were sitting in the front seat with their seat belts fastened. The windows were rolled up, the doors were locked, and there were no signs that they had ever gotten out" (155). This caricatures the notion that Germans follow rules relentlessly until death. In the Prairies sharing in the fate of Natives, they die of exposure in their "Cherokee" car. The blurred photographs on film rolls found in the dead Mays' car can be linked to the criticism of master narratives and concomitant stereotypes perpetuated "by non-Natives such as Karl May, for these depictions eventually say more about the myopic vision of the person who produces them […] than about the depicted object, which inadvertently becomes distorted" (Ulm and Kuester

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161). "Exposure" as in photography and exposure as in being exposed to extreme heat and extreme climatic conditions is the key word here: "[…] having [Karl May] die of exposure in Native country (155) becomes an apt metaphor for the deconstruction of the ideological underpinning found in the narratives King includes as intertexts in his fiction" (Ulm and Kuester 161).

King uses another example regarding German tourists' predilection for pretending to be Native. Laura Peters highlights the indigenous myth in Canada by referring to Margaret Atwood's essay "Grey Owl Syndrome" (197)[24]. This concept is enlightening also with regard to what is called "Karl May syndrome" (Georgi-Findlay 98) in Germany. King picks up on both phenomena in *Truth & Bright Water*. In a conversation between Lucy and Helen, Lucy declares "that now everyone want[s] to be an Indian" and brings up Adolf Hungry Wolf[25], a German, now Canadian, who speaks Blackfoot and lives the Native way (202). King continues his German stereotyping in portraying Germans in Native clothes as tourists during Indian Days. This cultural festival has a strong tourist dimension: "The tourists who show up for Indian Days can get almost anything they want" (209). The vendors label the souvenirs and crafts as "authentic" and "traditional" (209). This ties in with the overall concern with truth in this novel. There are even vendors from the other side of the border such as from Browning, Missoula, and Flathead Lake (209). Indian Days offer economic opportunity and also interaction between people from various backgrounds. The locals hope for German tourists to make some money: "'Lucille and Teresa are praying for Germans'" (72). Germans and Japanese are much desired visitors during Indian Days for economic reasons (22). Tecumseh enjoys the presence of outsiders, though tourists behave embarrassingly, they add respect for the locals and support ethnic pride: "People from Germany and France and Japan would wander around, smiling, asking the kinds of questions that made you feel embarrassed and important all at the same time" (101).

Three German tourists sporting Native garb visit during Indian Days. King describes them wearing "buckskin shirts and fringed leather pants" and one displaying a "bone breastplate" (210). They have painted faces and Elvin assumes

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24 Grey Owl was "the English impostor Archie Belaney, who in the 1930s became Grey Owl, an Apache half-breed […]" (Browder 133).

25 "Adolf Hungry Wolf is a prolific author of numerous books on railroading, history, nature and native cultures. With his family he has written over fifty books while homesteading in the Canadian Rockies. For thirty years he has studied the traditional ways of his wife's tribe, the Blackfoot Confederacy, while home schooling four children." <http://www.bcbooks.com/hungrywolf.html > 3 Jan. 2011.

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these Germans must be members of an "Indian club" in Germany (210). For Elvin those tourists are a "[b]unch of wannabes" (210). The German with the bone breastplate negotiates with Edna in order to learn "the secret of authentic frybread" (211). Edna wants to get fifty instead of twenty-five dollars and is determined to get the price she asks for. She "has her Indian face on now" (211), gestures a lot and sings a round dance. Afterwards the German tourist is eager to pay the money. Later on the three Germans also visit Elvin's booth and Elvin, who wants to sell his wooden coyotes, tells them a lot about coyotes, tricksters and the necessity of having them for a medicine bag (231). Even to the narrator and Native Tecumseh some of the information Elvin tells the tourists is new. King's sense of humor is obvious once again in a short dialogue between father and son when Elvin ironically and wryly comments on the Native outfit of the three Germans (231). In the novel King reverses these stereotypes. Monroe Swimmer, described as "Big-time Indian artist" (24), has a strong sense of humor and turns cultural stereotypes upside down. One community member remembers how Monroe dressed up as a German, technically as a traditional Bavarian, or rather the "Bright Water German Club" for Indian Days complete with lederhosen and tuba. He does so as Germans eagerly dress up as Indians (25).

There are also tourists from Kingston, Ontario in addition to the Germans and some others. These Canadian tourists have decided to forego their usual summer vacation destination Prince Edward Island and to go west in search of "real Indians" (King 234). The mother of that Canadian family confirms the stereotype about jailed Natives: "All the ones we hear about […] are in the penitentiary" (234). Earlier on in the novel another essentialist incident is related when a woman from Sweden visiting Tecumseh's grandmother with auntie Cassie "wanted to see the Red Indians" (54). Tecumseh wryly replies: "Here we are" (54). He pretends to fulfill the visitor's essentialist desire and presents himself in an ironic fashion as a prototypical Native person.

3.2.3 Cousins: Transcending the Liminal Abyss

Lum and Tecumseh are cousins, their fathers being brothers, though they differ in appearance as Tecumseh relates: "Lum's father and my father are brothers, but you would never know it to look at them. My father is tall with small hands and long hair. Prairie clay and willow. Franklin is shorter, all chest and shoulders, with a crewcut. River rock and fast water" (5). Comparisons to the natural world underline the importance of nature and the land in Tecumseh's imagination and in his daily life in the Prairies and Plains. Lum dreams of winning the Indian Days long-distance running event and claims that he could win a running

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scholarship at a university if he wants to (4–5). Through Tecumseh, the violent nature of Lum's father is revealed in the novel: "Franklin doesn't drink, and he doesn't joke around like my father, so it's hard to tell if he's angry or in a good mood. Lum tells me that you have to watch his eyes, that you're okay until they stop moving" (6). Tecumseh contrasts his father who drinks occasionally and then either gets sad or violent with Lum's father who does not drink, but is even more violent. King's comic irony becomes evident in Tecumseh's off-the-cuff remarks regarding his father: "Sometimes he gets angry and swings at things. But he doesn't really mean it, and he always gives us plenty of time to get out of the way" (6).

In a casual tone the reader learns about domestic violence in Lum's life: "His eye isn't black anymore. It's purple now, and yellow, and doesn't look as if it hurts too much" (3). Next, the reader finds out that Lum smokes despite his ambitions as a runner and carries a gun he found at a landfill. The two adolescent boys, Lum and Tecumseh, use the gun to play games. King foreshadows the tragic ending by foreboding details. The gun is first described as being "lots of fun" (4), but then a gloomier sense is evoked by the following description: "The gun is heavy and cold" (4). The ambivalence of the gun is captured by juxtaposing the fun and the danger in using the gun. King ties the gun back to the bridge: "But the best game of all was climbing up into the girders of the bridge and skipping bullets off the concrete and steel" (5).

The Cousins, wild dogs and tricksters (128), are anthropomorphous as is Tecumseh's dog Soldier, which suggests "limitrophy" (Derrida 397–99). The dogs' names indicate their human qualities and in the case of the Cousins their ambiguous human-trickster-animal existences. There is a further connection between the names, place names as well as characters' names, and the tropes and symbols King uses in his novel. The animal character of Soldier is indicative. Soldier's name is linked to possible violence and weapons, but as Ridington posits: "Even Tecumseh's dog, Soldier, carries a cultural and historical message. A reader familiar with Plains Indian culture knows that the Dog Soldiers are people willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of the camp" (99). The dog Soldier, in contrast to the wild dogs Cousins, also fulfils the valiant duties of a soldier as he is loyal, alert, and defends his master. His allegiance lies with Lum who in one instance returns to the reserve by way of the bridge despite the dangers and the barred entrance of the bridge. Soldier reacts with fear (15) for Lum's and his own safety, but later Soldier loyally runs along with him. Lum shows special talent in crossing the dangerous bridge: "But Lum moves gracefully, effortlessly along the girders, like a dancer, until the curve of the bridge begins its descent into Bright

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Water, and he vanishes over the edge" (15). In this excerpt Lum is described as a border-transcending "line dancer" (Mayer, "Line Dancing"), performing a border "choreography" (van Houtum, "Remapping" 414). Quite literally Lum becomes the embodiment of the stereotypical "vanishing Indian". Edges are the limits between entities, hence this word indicates that Lum crosses a boundary when he "vanishes over the edge," the river being the border between Canada and the United States.

Tecumseh and Lum are in the straw car where they try to find some leftover fruit and Lum pretends to wash a boxcar: "In the cool dark of the car, I watch Lum play the hose into the corners and along the floor, and I imagine the water exploding under the straw and breaking against the metal walls like waves trying to come ashore" (71). The water imagery that King employs is indeed striking. The ocean signifies both freedom and menace but it is the freedom the two adolescents long for. They want to explore the world, live their lives and pursue opportunities beyond the confines of a boxcar. The boxcar is a bordered cage-like compartment; a symbol for their lives as Natives whether on or off the reserve. Putting a yearning for freedom into practice is also evident in Lum's desire to run. Already the first chapter starts off with the sentence "Soldier and I relax on the side of the coulee and watch Lum lengthen his stride as he comes to high ground" (3). The action of running or striding towards a goal, real or imagined, is of importance in the novel from beginning to end. Lum dies running towards simultaneous death and freedom and away from the violence committed against him by his father. Throughout the novel, running is interspersed. Lum races the train and "leads the train across the bridge" (73). Soldier tries to keep up with Lum who is in danger, but does not seem to care: "One thing is for sure. If he slips on the gravel or stumbles on a tie, he's dead" (74). Lum continues running resembling a bird: "Against the arch of a cloudless sky, he looks like a dark bird gliding low across the land" (74). Lum is a captured bird yearning to be free and fly away from all hardship, domestic violence, and loneliness towards a true home.

3.2.4 Quilt: Palimpsest and Map

Helen's quilt serves both as an illustration of a palimpsest and a map, a Native tool of storytelling and empowerment resisting some and sheltering others. King dedicates a complete chapter, albeit a short one, to Helen's quilting. Tecumseh contends that this particular quilt done by his mother "is not the easy kind of quilt you can get at the Mennonite colony near Blossom or one of the fancy machine-stitched quilts you could get in Prairie View" (61). This quilt is an ongoing project and Helen includes different, often unusual, objects apart from fabric:

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> Along with the squares and triangles and circles of cloth that have been sewn together, patterns with names like Harvest Star, and Sunshine and Shadow, and Sunburst, my mother has also fastened unexpected things to the quilt, such as the heavy metal washers that run along the outside edges and the clusters of needles that she has worked into the stitching just below the fish hooks and the chickens' feathers. (61)

The quilt has turned into an obsession or a "problem" as Tecumseh's father puts it. Helen has begun work on the quilt shortly after Tecumseh's birth. Over time the patterns changed from geometric to freehand reminiscent of the natural world, the flora and fauna as well as people and quickly "you could see Truth in one corner of the quilt and Bright Water in the other with the Shield flowing through the fabrics in tiny diamonds and fancy stitching" (61). The quilt thus becomes a palimpsestical map, a geographic as well as personal map of Helen's imagination always adapted and altered to her current lived experience. There is a strong autobiographical link to her life: instead of 'life writing,' however, the quilt is a record of her life, her 'life quilting.' Quilting is similar to a graphic novel in this way. Like a palimpsest, the quilt changes over time, grows, gets more detailed, more nuanced, and inscribed with meaning, though not immediately obvious for the beholder. Hence, like the rings of a tree, a personal diary, a blog or the wrinkles in a human's face, every added detail, piece of fabric and object is infused with a special meaning. It breathes life and exudes an aura of experience and wisdom with regard to life's mysteries.

Dvořák's contrastive analysis of Elvin's car and Helen's quilt is very insightful as she highlights King's focus on undermining reader's expectations by showcasing the car as an immobile vehicle and the quilt accordingly as a symbol of empowerment and not domesticity (Dvořák 27). In this regard quilting history is illuminating. Quilting used to be a powerful tool of self-expression and a voice for the voiceless within the bounds of society in former times, whether women or non-White people. Helen is likened to mythical Penelope, yet "[i]n a reversal of Odysseus's Penelope, the young woman has been creating and decreating for years" (Dvořák 27). According to Dvořák the quilt symbolizes Helen's "resistance to victimization" (27). The question arises why Helen should feel victimized. Depite being a single mother after the separation from her husband, she owns a business and has close family ties. The reader can only speculate that she might not have been as strong as she is presented in the unfolding narration.

The quilt is a map of the past, present, and even the future, a mosaic forming a holistic whole. It establishes a link to traditional ways and a means of trying to bridge past and present. Soothing and relaxing best characterize the process and effect of quilting for Helen. Tecumseh's father confirms the obsessive nature and therapeutic value of the quilt (61–62). Helen continues to use further less likely

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objects for her quilt such as chicken feet, hair, porcupine quills, earrings, needles, fish hooks, and razor blades (61–62). Tecumseh mentions that the dangerous objects are on the outside of the quilt. His father Elvin is particularly concerned about the razor blades that Helen did not remove. The first-person narrator likes the needles the most, because "they would tinkle like little bells and flash in the light like knives" (62). Tecumseh relates that when his father moved from Bright Water to Truth, his mother turned to quilting: "She stayed in the house and worked on the quilt" (65). The quilt is like a good companion, always there and at hand in times of need and longing for comfort.

The quilt's unusual nature is focused upon as it includes "unexpected, potentially problematic objects, some of which could cause danger, such as razor blades, fish hooks and porcupine quills" (Bates 147). Bates proposes that the quilt is a special trope and functions in "[r]efusing the [s]mooth [b]order [c]rossing, [r]e-[f]using the [s]tory" (Bates 153). The analysis of the quilt is more diverse than at first sight: "However, tempting as it might be to read the quilt as a fixed symbol – as a physical manifestation of the way Tecumseh's mother deals with her problems and as a potential metaphor for the difficulties of border crossing – this reading does not account for the way Tecumseh and his family interact with the quilt" (Bates 154). As the dangerous objects are on the outside of the quilt it is safe underneath the quilt. Bates posits that "King suggests that those who get underneath the quilt already occupy a place within Tecumseh's mother's affections" (Bates 154).

However, the quilt is not a passive shelter for those seeking refuge in the folds of its inside, but a protective layer ready to also physically defend the sheltered person by the sharp objects on the outside. The quilt, as the border river Shield, is at once a border, but also a soothing presence for someone to rest embraced in the folds of the fabric or submerged in the water of the river. Danger and comfort are represented by both the quilt and the river depending on the perspective. Monroe's work on the museum landscape paintings from the 19th century is likened to Helen's quilt. When Monroe describes these landscape paintings Tecumseh relates that his mother's quilt looks similar (129). The difference between both forms of art is that the indigenous presence is obfuscated in the Western idealized landscape paintings until the Natives "bleed through" (130) most likely thanks to Monroe's "restoration" (129), whereas the quilt was done by a Native woman, Helen, and also features Native settings and unusual, Native infused objects. Helen's quilt, the same quilt throughout the novel, resists the ordinary and newly connects surprising items with more traditional patterns and patches, she "refuses" expected ways of behavior and "the quilt re-fuses the objects by placing them somewhere new" (Bates 155).

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Patterns are not only obvious in the streets, but also partially on Helen's quilt. such as a "Sunburst" pattern (61). The quilt also prominently features Truth and Bright Water. It is a patchwork map, soothing to Helen, and representing her version of her world including binaries, grids, and patterns. Additionally she includes borders that have arisen for instance between her husband and herself. This is represented by the needles and razor blades (61–62). The quilt is an important symbol standing for protection and connection with the past, although in a creative and transforming way. The past and traditional crafts are not merely copied, but are appropriated to fit the needs of the present. The quilt and quilting acquire therapeutic value for Helen (112) reminding her of belonging, and of overcoming obstacles as well as fear. Auntie Cassie takes refuge in the quilt in the night of the sisters' reminiscing about old times. Then again, at the giveaway, Helen first uses the quilt herself and then later on "opens the quilt and wraps it around her sister's shoulders" exposing a sisterly and affectionate bond between the two women (246).

Another person finds comfort thanks to the quilt. Lum wears the quilt briefly in a domestic scene while having breakfast at Tecumseh's home (65). Tecumseh reminds him to put his mother's quilt away. Lum eventually does so, but not until dancing in the quilt: "Lum stands up and spins around in a tight circle so that the feathers lift away from the quilt like tiny wings and the ribbons tremble like tongues" (65). In this scene the adolescent boy subconsciously taps into the traditional reservoir of Native culture by engaging in his own ceremonial dance. Lum feels at home, comforted, and like a child again though his mother passed away and his father is violent. After all, Tecumseh's mother is his aunt. In his imagination Lum equates the woman who jumped off the Horns with his late mother. Tecumseh discloses that "[s]ometimes Lum remembers that his mother is dead, and sometimes he forgets" (14). He further mentions that his own mother, Lum's aunt, is convinced that "it's probably the best to leave it alone, that in the end, Lum will work it out for himself" (14). So he does, as the reader learns at the end of the novel, though in a different way than was hoped for.

3.3 Turning the Tide: Monroe Swimmer's "Survivance"

Monroe Swimmer, a trickster figure in the novel, is a catalyst for the plot. He is the mysterious person, mistaken for a presumably suicidal woman, who empties a suitcase and jumps off the cliffs into the river dividing the American town of Truth from the Canadian reserve of Bright Water. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews argue that King's "[…] creative work reflects his desire to explore the complexities of the 'in-between space, within and without borders" (9). They explain

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that in King's novel Monroe Swimmer personifies mobility and thus shatters the image of the seemingly "static" Native either stuck on the reserve or once they leave unable to return to their home (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 9–10). The scholars claim that Monroe Swimmer hailing from a "tribal community" after moving to Europe, the U.S. and then Toronto exhibits "cross-border flexibility and his ability to adapt to and survive within a variety of social and political contexts" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 10). Vizenor's promulgation of the practice of "survivance" comes to mind as it is not about merely subsisting or passively surviving, but rather of acting and thriving.

When the woman at the Horns jumps, King links her to the sea or the ocean, a borderless and all-encompassing equalizer where there is only unity:

> The woman begins walking back across the rocks, slowly at first, but as she goes, she gathers speed, the music and the lights pushing her forward, sweeping her along like foam on a current. She doesn't slow down and she doesn't look back, […] she is picked up as if on the crest of a wave and washed over the edge of the cliff. (9–10)

The maritime terminology such as "foam on a current" or "as if on the crest of a wave and washed over the edge" once again highlights the fluidity of binaries, perceptions and ultimately even of identities. The woman turns out to be Monroe wearing a wig while repatriating Native bones. While continuing the water imagery, the idea of a bird or floating in the air is introduced: "[T]he woman appears to float on the air, her body stretched out and arched, as if she's decided to ride the warm currents that rise off the river and sail all the way to Bright Water" (10). The woman at the Horns is likened to a bird: "The woman seems to float in the lights. She turns and weaves her way across the hard ground, her hair streaming, her arms spread wide as if she were a bird trying to catch the wind" (7). This is another example of a comparison with the natural world and, more importantly, the term "floating" signaling a liminal stance, "betwixt and between" (Turner).

Monroe jumps and swims in the border river separating Canada and the United States, thus subverting the geopolitical division. The Native perspective is neither Canadian nor American, but genuinely Native. Monroe Swimmer, as his name indicates, is closely connected to the fluidity of water and the active mobility of swimming. By subversively swimming in the Shield, literally and metaphorically the border between Truth and Bright Water is blurred. The prairie setting has also maritime qualities as the prairies can be deceptive and resemble the ocean: "The prairies can fool you. They look flat, when in fact they really roll along like an ocean" (237). In trickster fashion Monroe also swims in the prairie grass. This echoes Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of the rhizome. Niall

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Lucy likens the “rhizomatic” approach to grass instead of trees as “Trees settle; grass roams” (Lucy 14). This becomes obvious in Monroe Swimmer’s approach to teach grass about green. Moreover, grass is depicted as a sea with roaming fake buffaloes in its midst.

Swimming indicates that Monroe can adjust to circumstances and moves with the flow, but not as a helpless victim. This character has the ability to use the existing conditions for his own ends and achieves what he has set out to do. He controls his moves, also in metaphorical terms. King presents the different perspectives of community members on Monroe, who functions as a trickster in the novel and is a genuine shape shifter. He is described as very daring, assertive, and a skilled painter. However, people come to different conclusions regarding the reasons for his stay in Toronto (26) before returning to Truth and Bright Water. Monroe and the community do not meet immediately after his move. There is a division and invisible boundary between the community and Monroe.

Monroe is interested in “restoration,” particularly nineteenth century landscape paintings, and helps to reintroduce the Native presence in these paintings. The “images that weren’t in the original painting were beginning to bleed through” (130). These images are Natives in this particular painting. The word “bleed” signals the wound inflicted upon Natives in history by colonialism, forced removal, and the destruction of Native livelihoods. The painting bears the name “Sunrise on Little Turtle Lake” (133). The use of turtle in Little Turtle Lake reminds the reader of the Native concept of “Turtle Island,” which indicates a new morning, a renaissance of Native traditions. Monroe helps to usher in this new era by resurrecting the Native presence in that painting. The act of painting is a way of resisting the victimization, to end the bleeding and suffering of the Natives seemingly unable to change their circumstances.

The notion of presence and absence is at the heart of Gerald Vizenor’s position regarding indigeneity. He coins the term “survivance” as follows: “Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent” (Vizenor 1). Vizenor also proclaims: “The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry” (1) or as “[s]urvivance is an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry” (11). He further postulates that “[t]he practices of survivance create an active presence, more than the instincts of survival, function, or subsistence” (11). For Vizenor Native storytelling is inextricably linked to the practice of survivance (11). Survivance is seen in contrast to monotheism. He pits the two against each other: “Survivance stories create a sense of

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presence and situational sentiments of chance. Monotheism takes the risk out of nature and natural reason and promotes absence, dominance, sacrifice, and victimry" (Vizenor 11). Survivance is connected to the notions of survival and resistance and stresses the resurfacing of the French designation for survival which is "survivance" (Vizenor 19). Native presence and by extension the active embracing of Native agency and identity is shown as a negotiation process and in Native novels is highlighted by acts of defiance, subversion, and resistance. Socio-cultural borders and the segregation of Natives on reserves or poor urban areas are transcended. The Native presence is reaffirmed and becomes visible. In the novel, Monroe turns the tide and is an active practioner of "survivance." Gruber posits: "Contemporary Native writers' deconstruction of stereotypes and representation of a more complex Nativeness thus exceeds purely aesthetic or entertaining intentions. It humanizes contemporary nonvanishing Indians and makes readers reimagine Nativeness in terms that allow for growth and development" (*Humor* 156). Natives are present and resist marginalization and stereotyping by creating alternative imaginaries.

3.3.1 Subversion: Monroe as Trickster

Within the Native realm King uses a couple of characters that exhibit trickster characteristics, though the main trickster is Monroe Swimmer. Subversion and particularly comic subversion are typical of King's novel. He plays with stereotypes and prejudice and reverses them. Monroe best exemplifies this type of narrative and subversive strategy. In order to fully comprehend Monroe's tricksterism, theoretical background in trickster criticism and the trickster trope is necessary. Deanna Reder in her preface to *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations* maintains: "Trickster criticism emerged as one of the first critical approaches for Indigenous literature in Canada, an approach that at one point became so popular that in recent years it has become somewhat of a cliché" (vii-viii). There has been a shift to a new kind of indigenous criticism: "Twenty-first-century trickster criticism is influenced by the recent work of nationalist critics who have called for ethical literary studies that are responsible to Indigenous people and communities" (viii). Kristina Fagan points out that the following changes since the more generalizing trickster criticism: "In an effort to describe the cultural, historical, and political grounding of Indigenous peoples as well as the complex interrelations between them, a number of Indigenous scholars have adopted an approach to literature that is sometimes known as Indigenous (or American Indian) literary nationalism" (9). Niigonwedom James Sinclair postulates: "Indigenous literatures have specific spatial and historical

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relations, based in individual and collective Indigenous subjectivities, and these should not be separated in any criticism that purports to interpret, explore, and/or describe them" (27–28).

Gail Jones sees a trickster beyond the notion of a "cultural hero" as "a shape-shifting character of contradictions: a figure both profane and sacred, foolish and clever, absurd and profound, marginal and, yet, central" (Jones 110). She further posits that "[t]he transforming, transcending trickster operates along boundaries, borders in flux" (Jones 110). Tricksters are consequently central to any discussion of borders and border literatures. In line with that Jones evokes interpreters, marginal yet central and transcending linguistic boundaries: "Because trickster challenges our boundaries, he has been and remains a popular figure for those negotiating ethnocentric barriers, including linguistic ones" (Jones 110). Aloys Fleischmann refers to Gerald Vizenor and Thomas King as "self-declared trickster-authors" (167). The trickster is established as "a post-structuralist, pan-Indian species of this culture hero as a dominant literary and critical trope" (Fleischmann 167). Reingard M. Nischik distinguishes "between 'classical' tricksters from Native mythology and human characters derived from the classical trickster figure, who perform similar (narrative) functions […]" ("Wide-Angle" 41). This distinction is a helpful analytical lens.

Applied to King's novel *Truth & Bright Water*, Monroe Swimmer is one of the "human characters derived from the classical trickster figure" (Nischik, "Wide-Angle" 41) as defined above and analogous to the Native narrator. Gruber distinguishes "classical" and "contemporary" tricksters and trickster tales (*Humor* 96). She postulates: "In summary, contemporary trickster tales disrupt pretensions of White superiority and stereotypical representations of Nativeness, directly strengthen Native cultural identity, and mediate the (re-)negotiation of cultural values and representations" (Gruber, *Humor* 96–97). For Gruber, contemporary tricksters despite showing less explicit transgressive behavior "[…] may open up an imaginative liminal space where the monolithic 'Indian' chiseled by Hollywood and nineteenth-century literature can be shattered and where one-dimensional readings of Native-White history can be transgressed" (*Humor* 96). Gruber also relates to Gerald Vizenor's notion of "trickster discourse" (Gruber, *Humor* 103).

Ridington argues: "For King, Cherokee history is an extension of family history. Story and history come together in the person of Monroe Swimmer, a central character in the book" (92). She claims that Monroe Swimmer falls into the trickster category: "Swimmer is a coyote/trickster, a master of reversals, and an actor in the archetypal earth diver creation story. He is also a link between the

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narrator's family story and Indian history" (92). The first and last name of Monroe Swimmer is allusive, particularly regarding King's Cherokee background and thus Cherokee history. On the one hand the last name Swimmer is positively connotated, i.e. "Swimmer was a Cherokee healer" (Ridington 92), but on the other hand the first name Monroe reminds the reader that "President James Monroe is a key figure in the shared American/Indian history of Cherokee removals" (Ridington 93). Consequently, the pairing of the two names creates a "tension" (93). Monroe Swimmer embodies and negotiates the positive and the negative, the Native and the colonial heritage. He paints back and reclaims colonial space through acts of Native survivance.

Monroe and Tecumseh hold an improvised honor ceremony partially singing an honor song and then the title song of the musical "Oklahoma" (132). Monroe ironically shows more respect, by taking his wig off, to the musical than to the honor song. Afterwards, they proceed to install the artificial iron buffaloes. The spikes to install the cut buffaloes are explicitly associated to laying track for the railroads, "[…] a long spike, the kind they use for laying track" (132). Goldman describes the artificial buffaloes "to be hammered into the prairies – a comic rejoinder to the settler invader's 'Last Spike'" (286). In King's text it is worded as: "We make three trips back to the church, and it's early evening before we've hammered in the last spike" (134). Using the very same terms the reappropriation of the Canadian settler society myth of the Last Spike is subversive. The railroad that linked Eastern and Western Canada was a decisive national project in uniting the country. The iconic image of the Last Spike obscures the Chinese immigrant labor force used for this national project[26].

By installing the buffaloes in the prairies Monroe, the Native artist, links the indigenous present with the past and thus creates renewal for the future of Native communities. With the buffalo installation the colonial project of uniting the future nation-state of Canada by the railroad is reappropriated here by the Natives. Instead of laying track, the last spike is hammered in, hence installing and making reappear the vanishing Native hunting ground. The buffalo is not only symbolically reappearing, but also the Native presence – or using Vizenor's concept "survivance" – is enacted. Monroe Swimmer resists the erasure of Native peoples through colonial impositions such as artificial borders and reverses the vanishing of the humans and beasts. The church with its steeple is associated

26 The Last Spike was a symbolic act on Nov. 7, 1885. There is also the "Other" Last Spike, an image in which the workers and not the dignitaries pose after their long and hard labor. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-other-last-spike-feature/>.

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with the underlying narrative of the Last Spike, since it looks like an oversized spike: "[…] this steeple is squat and flat with a set and angle that make it look as if a thick spike has been driven through the church itself and hammered into the prairies" (1). The church as a symbol of the colonial settler society eventually disappears thanks to Monroe's efforts of repainting. The Natives, by paintings and buffalo project, reappear: "Rather than accept the stereotype of the vanishing Indian, Swimmer uses his art to efface traces of the settler invaders' presence and thereby creates the illusion of 'the old days' prior to first contact" (Goldman 287). Here Goldman talks about "illusion." However, King associates authenticity with a "cant" thereof in his article "'How I spent My Summer Vacation': History, Story, and the Cant of Authenticity." Futile claims to authenticity are linked to transcending the blurred boundary between fiction and the authentic, as the circular nature and a holistic worldview are more appropriate to represent human experience.

3.3.2 Western Anthropology: Native Remains

It is also important to reflect the scholars' roles. King, impersonated in his character Monroe Swimmer, is critical of the roles that museums and scholars such as anthropologists, archaeologists, and graduate students play (251). This critical stance is succinctly encapsulated in Theodor Adorno's words: "Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like family sepulchres of works of art" (175). Literally, Western anthropological museums are not only sepulchers of works of art, but of human, often Natives', remains. Monroe engages in repatriating these remains and burying them according to indigenous customs honoring the ancestors. He uses the border river as the natural grave for the Native remains he took from the museums, so that the museum no longer serves as the Natives' unwanted sepulcher. Bones and the crucial trope of the skull connect King's plot:

> In the distance, clouds are on the move, thick and white. But as they clear the bridge, they begin to separate and change, and by the time they reach the church, they look like long, slender bones. They settle for a moment in the afternoon sky before the current catches them, and they float over the horizon as if they were being carried along the river. (49)

King's words foreshadow the importance of bones, while at the same time mentioning the bridge and continuing the water and river metaphors. The bone-like clouds create the impression in the eye of the beholder "as if they were being carried along the river" (49). This clearly alludes to the Shield, as the Stygian

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and liminal abyss, a new more honorable and respectful sepulcher for Native remains.

The most haunting and important incident in the adolescent world of the first-person narrator Tecumseh is to find the woman who seemingly jumped off the Horns (42). The story comes up again at the beginning of chapter nine, when Tecumseh takes a shower and thinks about his own explanation of the mysterious woman jumping off the Horns (63). He states that "[t]he skull is the problem" (69) in all of his three major theories explaining the woman's behavior. Tecumseh is avoiding the obvious: "Maybe it's not a child's skull after all" (71). He thinks it could be a prehistoric skull or one from a burial place, but then he decides against it since the skull is clean: "Inside and out, it was clean. Almost spotless. As if someone had taken the time to wash and polish it before setting it in the grass for us to find" (74). This foreshadows the conclusion that the skull has been taken from a museum for repatriation, hence the cleanliness. For Westerners or the curators at the museum it is an exhibition piece in their mausoleum.

The revelation of the presumably female identity of the woman who jumped off the Horns as well as the disclosure of the skull's mystery comes at the end of the novel. Tecumseh and Monroe go inside the church again, before they forget how to get there and carry the bentwood box outside to the truck. The box falls down and opens and out of the box falls Monroe's wig and still another skull. Then Tecumseh knows: "I see what I should have seen before" (249). Monroe has taken the bones from western museums without permission, but the question remains how they got there in the first place. Monroe worked for restoration projects at museums, who invited him as the "[f]amous Indian artist" (251). He has stored the bones from Indian children (250) in the bentwood box to repatriate them. Finally, Monroe puts on a ceremony for repatriating the bones in the river (251).

The skull Tecumseh and Lum find has Shakespearean connotations. Lum puts the skull on "the barrel of the gun and holds it up like a wand or a flag" (14). This scene is reminiscent of Hamlet holding up the skull of his father[27]. Lum can be regarded as an indigenous Hamlet, since both Hamlet and Lum are haunted by the death of a parent and are conflicted individuals experiencing ghosts or ghost-like presences. However, in *Truth & Bright Water* the skull is also used to

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27 Hamlet, Act 5, Scene 1, gravedigger scene, RSC mise-en-scène / director's interpretation, actual skull like in King's *Truth & Bright Water*. David Tennant used real human skull bequeathed to the Royal Shakespeare Company by a pianist in 1980, who died of cancer and whose greatest wish was to be featured in a Hamlet performance. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7749962.stm> "Bequeathed skull stars in Hamlet" 26 May 2012.

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highlight Native themes and to honor the ancestors. The skull is a symbol of the past haunting the present, in so doing criticizing anthropology and the depositing of Native remains in museums.

3.3.3 Colonial Legacy: Churches, Canvasses, and Carcasses

Geopolitical boundaries represent a colonial legacy for Native peoples in North America, thus complicit with actions by the powerful elites, whether in the realms of organized religion, societal institutions, or the economy. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews underline the social and cultural construction of borders (15). They stress the differences between Native and non-Native viewpoints regarding the characteristics of borders:

> From a European cultural perspective, borders mark differences; from a Native view, borders are and always were in flux, signifying territorial space that was mutable and open to change. The borders that presently exist ignore the Native peoples, who are often cut off from one another as a result of a line that has been drawn through their lands. (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 16)

Monroe Swimmer is the central character of *Truth & Bright Water* in terms of bordering and postcolonial impact. As a postcolonial practitioner he crosses the border from the urban and non-Native space of Toronto back to the cross-border community of Truth and Bright Water reclaiming a Native identity by bordering acts. He subversively draws the line between the Native and White worlds by undoing the legacy of the White, Western, and colonial past. His bordering practices comprise painting the abandoned church to let it vanish, installing artificial buffaloes, repatriating stolen Native remains from Western museums, and painting back the Native presence in 19th-century landscapes. All his artistic endeavors "are concerned with trying to re-place and re-story – the Indians back into the picture, the buffalo back into the landscape, the skull back into the burial ground" (Bates 155). Newly positioning and simultaneously substituting, i.e. "re-placing" and restoring while adding a hidden story to these objects and works of art is his way of "re-storying." Monroe Swimmer thus combines bordering and postcolonial stances. Burying the Native remains in the very border river that was colonially imposed on Natives is a powerful symbolic and political act in a postcolonial way. The river, itself fluid, represents simultaneously a colonial order, yet also naturally floods and is therefore more akin to Native conceptualizations of the world. The fluidity of the river border underscores the transient nature of imposed, arbitrary, and artificial borders. By flooding and presumably meandering the fluidity of the river border transgresses the rigidity of lines on a map and political acts.

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The water imagery and the notion of fluidity are essential tropes in King's construction of the novel. This becomes evident in the setting, in metaphors and with regard to names such as "Monroe Swimmer". The abandoned church, bought and repainted by Monroe, is compared to a ship and the prairie to the ocean: "But on days when the sky surges out of the mountains, […] and the wind turns the grass into a tide, […] you might imagine that what you see is not a church gone to hell but a ship leaned at the keel, sparkling light, pitching over the horizon in search of a new world" (2). Seagulls are near the river hence completing the maritime feel of the setting. The tone is playful, describing a panoptic of different animals whose habitat is found in the river valley and the surrounding area.

The Horns on the American side are mentioned as they serve as the site of crucial developments in the plot. This geological formation is depicted as "twin stone pillars that rise up from the water and meet to form a shaggy rock crescent that hangs over the river like the hooked head of a buffalo" (2). The allusion to the buffaloes hints at both the buffaloes in the plot and as a metaphor. The character Monroe Swimmer is an artist who creates buffaloes as art installations in the prairie grass. Thus the ocean image comes full circle: Water, sky, the land and connection to the earth are paramount for indigenous ways of life and Native identity. There is a division reminiscent of Turner's frontier thesis between the peopled areas and the prairie wilderness: "Behind the firehouse, the prairies begin in earnest, as if a line has been drawn between the town and the land" (42). It is a marked separation between these two worlds, the natural as opposed to the town.

The notion of postcolonialism is controversial and King explicitly addresses this issue. Postcolonial practices intended to subvert and blur colonial bordering and simultaneously drawing borders around Native identity are prevalent in *Truth & Bright Water*. Spatial notions of borders and borderlands and theoretical constructs of bordering and liminality need to be analyzed to fully comprehend King's novel. As a Native artist, who returns home, Monroe is in the position to know and bridge the differences or borders between the Native and White worlds. He decides to reclaim his Native heritage and becomes an activist in the Western sense of the term to reposition Natives in their rightful place. However, his Western activism is implemented in a Native trickster fashion. He seemingly shifts shapes, genders, and roles, from woman on the Horns jumping off the cliffs and swimming fish-like in the border river to Native artist. He is humorous and exudes an air of magical realism.

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Monroe Swimmer is an intriguing character as he is elusive, embodying the dimension of the beyond. Despite Native identity formation by employing the technique of blurring the border between the real and the imagined as in the case of the church or the buffaloes, invisible borders persist. The imaginary borders exist in people's minds. In the community, Monroe Swimmer is not truly accepted initially. He is looked upon as an outsider. People are suspicious and want to maintain the social order, thus he is othered as not fully belonging to this community and place because of his long absence and aloof reputation as a famous artist from Toronto. The border is maintained between the returned Native "son" and the locals. However, in the end he organizes a giveaway, reminding of a potlatch. The whole community gathers and he seems integrated. The invisible yet maintained border between Monroe and the community fades.

Organized religion, faith, and churches are not depicted in a flattering light in King's novel. The church people come and go and the denominations change all the time. The Sacred World Gospel people leave the church behind after the failed completion of the bridge and also the three dogs called "the Cousins." In the community stories are told about the origins of the dogs. One story told by Charlie Ron, an elder of the community, explains how the Cousins turned from small and brown dogs to big and black ones, which he attributes to the dogs "hanging around the church and having to listen to all the lies that white people told every Sunday" (38). Lum favors the version that missionaries used those dogs to control the Indians since this is what happened to Natives in Mexico (38). Religion is associated with the church which is construed as a White colonial space; hence religion has negative connotations for the Natives as do Whites in certain cases. Native-White relations are still negotiated and controversial.

Monroe asks Tecumseh for help in finding the church he has finished painting. Tecumseh tries to find the church by scanning the horizon with his eyes: "I know where the church used to be. Across the river and on the bluff above Truth. But even from this distance, I can see that it isn't there anymore. No roof, no steeple, no door. No church" (217). Tecumseh agrees to help Monroe find the church and to bring his dog Soldier along the following morning. Monroe regrets that he has not left the door to the church alone until the full completion of his project. The prior existence of the church is effaced: "It's as if the church has never existed, and I can see now why Monroe is so famous" (237). Tecumseh admires Monroe's art though it is inconvenient now that the church has seemingly gone. Eventually they discover the church. It is Monroe who has the intuition in contrast to Tecumseh who does not see anything (239).

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The abandoned church that Monroe Swimmer paints to blend in with the surrounding prairie grass is an important example of blurring the boundaries between lived experience and fiction because it stands for the non-Native influence on Native traditions and cultures. Tecumseh does not comprehend the "trompe l'oeil" painting technique which Monroe uses: "I don't know how Monroe has done it, but he's painted this side so that it blends in with the prairies and the sky, and he's done such a good job that it looks as if part of the church has been chewed off" (43). The church is pulled back into nature. Monroe undoes the legacy of colonial domination and cultural imperialism one brush stroke at a time. The Native person in the narrative uses his mastery of a Western technique to reverse a symbol of religious dominance and turn it back into the natural setting of the traditional land. Tecumseh tries to find the door of the church and finally he sees it, appearing as if out of nowhere:

> I go around the church a couple of times before I notice it doesn't have a door. The windows are there and the steeple is there, but the part of the church where you would expect to find a door has been painted away. […] I walk around the church one more time, […] and when I come around the east end of the church, I find an open door hanging in space. (44)

The steps leading to the church cannot be seen either, highlighting once more the blurred boundaries between lived experience and fiction.

When restoring paintings Monroe has "painted back" in a postcolonial manner and inserted Native figures in those paintings. They "bleed" through. In that way the myth of the "vanishing Indian" is reversed. Jeanette C. Armstrong states: "Whatever the complexities of tensions between Indigenous Peoples and colonizing governments in different countries, there is no doubt that Indigenous peoples will continue to resist 'fading' into the picture" (113). This is quite literally the case in King's character Monroe Swimmer painting back the Natives into the idyllic landscape paintings. This is an act of resistance and of survivance, namely of active presence in a proactive non-victimized manner. Stuart Christie comments on King's "delight in co-temporaneity as a tool used to radically resituate the presentations of the present" (78). The "contingency of history" (78) is the outcome of that technique according to Christie, who contends that in *Truth & Bright Water* "a founding instance of the practice of representational co-temporaneity" (78) is found. This pioneering moment is encapsulated in the act of Monroe and the landscape paintings, "where every time Monroe Swimmer tried to paint over the Indigenous past (when 'restoring' Anglo-European canvasses) Indigenous figures found their way back in" (Christie 78). Christie thus postulates that "[t]he present, then, is not actually the present —but, rather,

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a momentary portal, trap door, conduit, or worm-hole through which all times (past, present, and future) must converge or transit" (78). This notion of conduit echoes the notion of borders and the simultaneous presence of the seemingly paradoxical function of barrier and transition zone.

The artistic iron buffaloes serve that same purpose: partially rewriting history, correcting the wrongs of the past and reimagining the past in the present through optical illusions. The colonial buffalo carcasses come to life in the form of the iron sculptures. Monroe's wish to resurrect the past becomes apparent in a conversation with Tecumseh: "You can't see the church, and you can't see the bridge, and you can't see Truth or Bright Water. 'Look at that,' says Monroe. 'Just like the old days'" (134). Tecumseh cannot see much apart from the land, the sky and the river. He reminds himself of his mother's advice to use his imaginative powers (135). Imagination is needed to comprehend Monroe's plans and actions to revive the past by installing buffalo iron frames. Monroe's idea is to have the buffaloes return: "'Each day, the herd will grow larger and larger. […] Before we're done, the buffalo will return'" (15). In the same conversation between Monroe and Tecumseh, the question of the real presence of the buffalo arises: "'These buffalo aren't really real, you know'" (135). Tecumseh retorts: "'They sort of look real'" (135). Monroe concurs with a strong emotional reaction: "Monroe's face explodes in smiles and tears. 'Yes,' he says. 'Yes, that's exactly right'" (135). The buffalo art project is a way of reclaiming the past for a better present and hope for the future. By reconnecting with the past and remembering Native traditions and the roots of Native cultures, Native identity resurfaces and empowers Native peoples. It turns out that Monroe hopes to use his artistic iron buffalo as a way to lure real buffaloes back to the area. He asks Tecumseh what he sees:

> I don't want to say that I see buffalo just in case I'm not supposed to see them. But I've run out of options. "Buffalo?"
> Monroe smiles and shakes his head. "It would fool me, too," he says.
> "But you can't tell anyone."
> "About what?"
> "If they hear about it, it won't work." Monroe dips his head and puts his mouth to my ear.
> "Real buffalo," he whispers, "can spot a decoy a mile away."
> (136)

Monroe tries to right the wrongs of the past. Towards the end of the novel, after moving away from the church following the successful completion of the project, he considers buying and painting an old residential school (248).

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3.4 Summary

In this chapter, Native de/bordering unfolds in a number of ways. Native peoples are presented as powerful characters. They refuse victimization and instead, by means of "survivance," do not merely subsist or exist, but embrace life with the opportunities provided to the full. History is recalled and traditions are renewed, such as the giveaway. In so doing, Western expectations and stereotypes are subverted. Empowerment is a theme that underlies King's novel. Helen's quilt is a tool to voice her perspectives, one piece of cloth and one object stitched on the quilt at a time. Trickster character Monroe undoes the colonial legacy by his art. The power of imagination and artistic expression can overcome bordered thinking and right the wrongs of the past for a brighter future to come. Nonetheless, the two adolescents Tecumseh and Lum resolve their wish for belonging in different ways. Since Lum has lost his mother and is beaten by his father, he is emotionally more unstable and seeks refuge in the Stygian border river Shield, thus shielding himself from possibly further hardship. "Line dancer" Lum sees his ultimate freedom only in death. Narrator Tecumseh, on the other hand, remains behind and grieves over Lum and his dog Soldier. Like the unfinished bridge, the ending of this "associational" novel remains ambiguous.

Borders, borderlands and bordering are key themes in the novel. Truth and Bright Water are divided and united by the river and the broken promise of the bridge. Like the broken treaties, the building project of the bridge does not come to fruition in the end. The people on both sides of the border make the most of their economic situation and capitalize on Western stereotypes during the Indian Days festival. King addresses geographic location and stereotypical dislocation of Native culture as well as the haunting past by his allusions to Cherokee history and colonialism. At the same time, he shows how to overcome hardship by means of humor, irony, and creativity. Survivance and trickster qualities turn the tide of Native disillusionment, which however is a long process for Native people to find their place in North America. The Native author of mixed heritage crosses various borders in his writing and life. King is able to expose stereotypes as charades and opens up new ways of perceiving bordering and othering in fiction as well as in lived experience. His writing allows White and Native readers alike to reconsider and overcome stereotypes. Though covering a range of serious and tragic topics of Native and White relations on Turtle Island including colonialism, coming-of-age, and suicide, King retains an optimistic tone in his novel.

Helen's quilt is both a map and a palimpsest. By adding new features and patterns and objects to the quilt, the map is constantly rewritten and redrawn, one artistic expression and ensuing interpretation transposed on the other. As Bates

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puts it, the quilt symbolizes "*re*-storying" (160). A form of restoration takes place in Monroe's refurbishing museum landscape paintings. The Native presence is inscribed and becomes visible. The canvas, too, serves as a palimpsest. Different layers of paint represent different periods in time and varying angles on historiography. The Native viewpoint is the non-mainstream perspective and one of parallax. Palimpsests and parallax pertaining to masks and mirrors comprise the metaphor-related level of analysis. A mirror often reveals, whereas masks conceal. Mirroring and masking along with bordering and othering play a crucial role. The seeming truth is often concealed by confusing masks and distorting mirrors thereby creating illusions. Monroe exhibits trickster traits and is masked with his wig. On the one hand he appears to be the mysterious woman on the Horns, on the other hand he is the famous artist and lost son of the Native community. He creates illusions, mirages instead of revealing mirrors and in so doing studies the community and Native-White relations through his parallaxic stance of insider turned outsider and then returned insider. Part of the illusions are the church he paints to blend in indistinguishably with the surroundings, the seemingly real buffaloes made of iron forms, and the Natives bleeding through the paint in the restored museum paintings. Monroe Swimmer turns the tide and contributes to a living community by his acts of resistance and imagination culminating in the traditional community event of a giveaway. Indian Days is therefore complemented by traditional culture and genuine Native ceremony. Indigenous community replaces museum dioramas and Hollywood clichés of Natives with Native projections of indigenous life on Turtle Island.

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4 Howard Frank Mosher's *On Kingdom Mountain* (2007): Borderlands as Utopia

Quebec-Vermont Borderlands. (Focus and emphasis added).

Kingdom Mountain as a postnational, post-racial, and postcolonial place is most important for the novel's protagonist Jane Hubbell Kinneson, the so-called Duchess of Kingdom Mountain, and as the setting of the novel. Kingdom Mountain is a utopian space, a mountain kingdom marked by unique nature, hybridity, and its own rules despite the geopolitical boundary cutting through Kingdom Mountain and Jane's home. The partly indigenous protagonist not only resists the commodification of nature and the development of her Native land in the name of dubious progress, but also disrupts societal expectations by welcoming partly African American Henry Satterfield, the aviator from the South, to Kingdom Mountain. In so doing, the Duchess draws on her family's legacy of inclusiveness and social justice having been actively involved with the Underground Railroad. Linking with the indigenous experience and critique of the imposition

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of artificial and colonial borders on Native lands, Howard Frank Mosher highlights the arbitrary nature of the international line in a humorous fashion. Jane eats in her kitchen with one foot in Canada and one in the United States, because the international boundary represented by a yellow line on the floor runs directly through her house on Kingdom Mountain. Precisely due to that position of the line the border is nothing more than a "family joke" (10). It is an insignificant line on the ground in the everyday life of Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons. The line is blurred in more than one way. Kingdom Mountain is both a social and a geographical in-between space. These dual liminal spaces of opportunity are closely intertwined, since the borderland position as a place of refuge for "mankind" is inscribed with new meanings. In-between mainstream society and remnants of self-contained life, visionary and utopian reconceptualizations of community emerge literally beyond any border binaries, whether national, social, or racial.

The eponymous title of the novel may allude to a number of references such as Scripture, civil rights leader Martin Luther King's speech referring to the "mountaintop," the black gospel song "Go Tell it on the Mountain" and also African American writer James Baldwin's novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. In so doing the underlying historical context and a discourse focused on race and ethnic relations becomes apparent. Literature is a barometer of overarching societal themes emerging in the public discourse. As such literary expressions are linked to locality or nation and share insights into constructions of national identities and conversations: "A nation's literature documents its self-imaginings, its self-definitions" (Goldstein xix). As concepts, race and ethnicity, though often contested and ambiguous terms, play a crucial role in the understanding, self-perception, and representation of the diverse society in the United States. Literature reflects that importance: "We assert, in short, that we need to understand race and ethnicity to understand America, and we therefore need to understand how race and ethnicity are constructed in, reiterated by, and critiqued through America's literature" (Goldstein xx). The social construction of race and ethnicity is a bordering process and a practice featured strongly in Mosher's novel. Werner Sollors reminds the reader of the "antithetical nature of ethnicity" (26) and stresses that "American culture is full of examples of the fusion of ethnicity and otherness" (26). He finds historical examples for this phenomenon across the board, using neutral or positive terms for one's own group and less flattering ones for the other groups of people. In this context Sollors refers to Fredrik Barth's work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) and the notion of boundary constructions, reminiscent of what might be called othering by bordering in present-day language usage. According to Sollors, "[…] Barth sees the essence of

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ethnicity in such (mental, cultural, social, moral, aesthetic, and not necessarily territorial) boundary-constructing processes which function as cultural markers between groups" (Sollors 27). Sollors argues in favor of the pervasiveness of "rhetorical boundary construction" (28), building on Barth's observations that it is not the cultural content that necessarily counts (Sollors 27–28). Bordering and othering are seen as key practices in group identification and identity construction.

Symbolic bordering, borderlands, and geopolitical boundaries are prevalent features in the works of white U.S. author Howard Frank Mosher. His novel *On Kingdom Mountain* is set in 1930 on the Vermont-Quebec border, the yellow line representing the geopolitical boundary, even bisecting the protagonist's house and kitchen in the utopian in-between space of Kingdom Mountain. Bordering and debordering practices are at play in the plot through the interaction of the main characters, Jane Hubbell Kinneson and Henry Satterfield, both being of mixed, yet different ethnic and racial heritage. Mosher describes the life in rural northern Vermont showing the independence and strong character of the locals, who are "terrifically independent-minded people" (Mosher, *Northern Borders* 2). In the novel a palpable frontier atmosphere is conveyed. Jane is the last of the Memphremagog Abenakis. She claims her Native as well as her White Scottish Kinneson mountain heritage in her fight against the construction of the "Connector," a planned highway between Kingdom County, Vermont and Quebec (Mosher, *Kingdom* 6). In addition to the conflict surrounding the Connector, the main focus is on the blossoming relationship between Jane and the stranded southern aviator Henry of mixed African American ancestry. An underlying motif is the hunt for the treasure of Kingdom Mountain, gold hidden from a Civil War heist.

Mosher's writing is influenced by memories and experience of his own life in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. It highlights his sense of belonging and his sense of place. He celebrates the rugged nature and the individualism of rural northern Vermonters. Deploring the vanishing way of life, he creates a historical novel which alerts the reader to the need for environmental conservation and overall humanity in a multicultural and multiethnic society. His goal is to strike a balance between tradition and progress, the local and the global, particularly in times of economic integration. In a timely manner, Mosher's 2007 novel *On Kingdom Mountain* precedes the onset of the financial crisis of the fall of 2008. This novel set in 1930 during the Great Depression speaks even more pertinently to present-day readers. Mosher uses an impressive number of historical events as a backdrop, ranging from the Great Depression, Prohibition, and the Vermont

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1927 flood to the dust bowl years, prominently featuring allusions to the Civil War and the Underground Railroad. Ultimately the book deals with love, life, and loss. The question of a life on the line, literally on the border between two countries, states, and worldviews, is explored. There is a thin, yet important, line of differentiation between the Duchess of Kingdom Mountain and the village of Kingdom Common. Lines, borders, and spaces in-between permeate the novel. The characters have to negotiate their identities and adjust their actions accordingly. It is difficult to remain neutral and continue sitting on the fence in terms of tradition versus progress or overall racial and ethnic relations.

Mosher's novel explores borders on multiple levels and tests the reader's own subject position with regard to the very human struggle for identity and belonging. The question arises whether belonging can work without the bordering by othering strangers "from Away." The ongoing need for geographical and cultural identity, and symbolic borders in the novel (and by extension observable in a similar fashion in the world of the 21st century) testifies to the prevalence of "bordering, ordering and othering" (van Houtum and van Naerssen) in times of globalization and simultaneous reterritorialization. The more everything is in flux, transient, and multiple, the more a longing for belonging, for knowing oneself, and one's place in life becomes apparent. In Mosher's novel Jane, the protagonist, stays on Kingdom Mountain and practices a utopian countercultural lifestyle. However, in a lack of professional opportunities she pays for her decision to abide by her father's wishes. Due to her strong will, the Duchess is at peace with herself and her life close to, yet not fully part of the village.

Throughout the novel the time of year is indicated. The spring and the autumn equinoxes frame the plot bookend-like. Jane's "season of foolishness" (264) lasts for the entire spring and summer, i.e. from Jane's 50th birthday to the harvest festival, the novel ending with Thanksgiving in November. An epilogue discloses further developments in Jane's life, the community, and Kingdom Mountain. There are numerous subplots, but also some leitmotifs holding the plot and the storyline together. The notion of strife is one such theme, as are Jane's words of wisdom, a list that grows over a lifetime and is Jane's self-inscribed epitaph on her tombstone (276):

> Jane Hubbell Kinneson
> The Duchess of Kingdom Mountain
> That which I have learned I leave as my legacy.
> Close all gates behind yourself.
> Every generation should have its own Bible.
> The walls we erect to protect ourselves from early pain
> often shut us off from later joy.

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> To immerse oneself in the natural world is to share a
> universal thread with every living being.
> Always declare yourself to the person you love.
> Live each day not as though it is your last, but as though
> it is the last day of the lives of the people you meet.
> All the best stories are about love.

Hence, the novel explores the overcoming of erected walls and borders of all sorts and that "universal thread" related to every living creature. Inclusivity and humanity profusely inform *On Kingdom Mountain*.

4.1 Kingdom Rules: The Duchess and Subversion Strategies

Mosher draws heavily on Vermont and U.S. history up until and around 1930 with a focus on African American, Native American, and overall social history of rural and primarily white Vermont. In addition, the Bible, literary history, and Roman, Egyptian, and Greek mythology are sources of inspiration for Mosher. He questions and counters dominant paradigms and his protagonist, Jane, true to her mixed heritage employs Native-like subversion strategies. Furthermore, characters' names, place names, and certain objects' names allude in ironic or humorous fashion to the Bible or history. Jane proves to be an iconoclast instituting her own Kingdom rules and editing the King James Bible to her liking. Mosher also refers to the natural world and geological terms, while additionally including numerous literary references. Through the courtroom scenes in the Kingdom County courthouse and the Vermont Supreme Court the judicial system is prominently featured in the novel. Illusions and legends are invoked and a bygone era is resurrected with evidence from the past, whether tombstones, letters, or old family photographs. Jane bestows the "stereopticon" (121) with the family photos to Henry as a "legacy" (124) of the past. The transient nature of time and space and the generational transmission of duties play a major role in the novel.

The "Gray Ghosts" (1) of the "Riddle of Kingdom Mountain" (27), the voice of Henry's grandfather Captain Cantrell Satterfield (27), or the dog-cart man embody the "magical realist" vein. The term first coined in 1925 by Franz Roh referring to art (Slemon 9) is considered to want for "theoretical specificity" (Slemon 10) and "is an oxymoron" (Slemon 10). Therefore, magical realism, as posited by Stephen Slemon, "suggests a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy" (10). In his fictitious historical novel *On Kingdom Mountain* Mosher goes beyond binaries and combines magical realist elements with an overall realistic rendering. Ghosts, mysteries, and myths add to the reader's subject position as in-between. Furthermore, intertextual references,

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for instance referring to Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, abound and hence bridge time and place in literary history.

4.1.1 "Lady Justice": Humor, Naming, Historical and Literary Allusions

In Mosher's novel the strategies of ironically linking ideas, questioning and reclaiming by renaming are striking. Almost every name exudes meaning and is carefully chosen by the author. Some memorable names include Jane's rifle called "Lady Justice" (33), a short club called "St. Peter" (15), or her applejack "Who Shot Sam" (10). The naming humorously makes the reader ponder the question of justice. The Duchess often behaves like her own Lady Justice. She does not wait for authorities to help, but as a strong-willed and independent-minded woman Jane embodies Lady Justice and resorts to her own way of justice. This resourcefulness often involves the Duchess resorting to Lady Justice such as in the incident with the loggers clear-cutting near her char pond (37) and her 'performance' in the movie theater (173).

Mosher's irony is also evident in naming the short club "St. Peter." It juxtaposes violence and the church, thereby reinforcing the stereotype of religious self-righteousness and hypocrisy. Along the same lines, a non-functioning thresher is named "King James's Jehovah" ironically commenting on Jane's view of the biblical God. Her father calls the thresher "Samuel L. Clemens, in honor of Mark Twain's typesetting invention that wouldn't set type" (154). However, Jane prefers to call the machine "King James's Jehovah because all it ever caused was trouble" (154). In Jane's version of God in her Kingdom Mountain Bible "old Jehovah" is depicted as "a jolly, good-natured fellow" (153). She relates to Henry her problems with theodicy and, turning 18, her "most unfortunate experience with King James the First and his Bible" (152). The thresher, dubbed King James's Jehovah, acts according to Jane's perception of the biblical deity in the King James version as a "wrathful Jehovah" (161), uncontrollable once on the loose with the electrical current. Mosher once more has his protagonist on the "avenging" thresher subvert the church's reputation, when the machine interrupts the Congregational minister's adjustment of the weekly message on the bulletin board: "He got as far as THE LORD GOD IS AN ANGRY G before, as if to prove his point, the berserk combine gobbled up the bulletin board" (162). Time and again Jane is involved in demounting the dominant discourse and accepted religious foundations. She replaces official doctrine with her own doctrine. Mosher thus crosses the border between personal freedom of expression and sanctioned, or according to Jane's views sanctimonious, discourse.

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The names of the apple varieties are existing varieties of apples including the "Northern Spy"[28] (12), but Mosher chooses the ones that fit best in the context of his novel. These varieties sound more unusual such as "Duchess of Oldenburg, Westfield Seek No Further, […]" (12). The Duchess hence owns an apple variety called in short "Duchess" and having its roots in Russia.[29] This is fitting as Jane is likened to "a Russian empress" as she ruled Kingdom Mountain for decades (7). Jane's parlor off the kitchen is dubbed On Kingdom Mountain (10). She has her "dear people" there and talks to her ancestors, who are represented in an artistic manner. Historical allusions and references to historical events are frequently used in the novel either in an explicit or, as is the case in Mosher's naming practices, a more humorous and slightly more implicit fashion. Her "matched pair of red oxen" is named "Ethan and General Ira Allen" (13). A sense of place, of northern Vermont, is always present through these narrative strategies.

Other references are of literary or intermedial nature. These references comprise the names of her blockheads Memphre Magog and the Loup-Garou (8), encompassing also the mythic and the realm of legends and fairy-tales. Mosher evokes the Brothers Grimm (8) and repeatedly Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (20, 26) and above all the King James Bible and King James himself (7). Jane's "scribblers and scrawlers" (46) include Jane Austen, Robert Frost, Mark Twain, Samuel Johnson, Henry David Thoreau, Shakespeare, and King James (46–48). These sculpture-like representations are "[…] life-size, with oblong craniums and painted features" (46). Additionally, Jane draws parallels to Rip Van Winkle (37). Mosher uses a wide variety of allusions and contexts for his intertextual and cultural references. Regarding the natural world, John James Audubon (9), glaciologist Louis Agassiz (17) and the North American Bird Carving Contest (19) are referred to in the novel. This is befitting as regards Jane, as she used to be a schoolteacher, is a "bookwoman extraordinaire" (45) and prides herself on her learnedness and inquisitive mind. Jane "'edit[s] down the classics,' in accordance with Rule Three of her 'Precepts for the Serious Bookperson'" (47). This rule states that "Nearly every book should be shorter" (47). Yet again Mosher's humor shines through and the Duchess is characterized as a woman sure of herself. Mosher uses these narrative devices to contextualize the Duchess as part of the White middle class despite her mixed ancestry and her simple and rural lifestyle in the remote, seeming wilderness of northern Vermont.

28 <http://www.orangepippin.com/apples> 2 Nov. 2012.

29 Duchess of Oldenburg Apple: "An attractive early-season apple, originating from Russia in the 18th century, and now quite widely grown in northern Europe and the USA". <http://www.orangepippin.com/apples/duchess-of-oldenburg> 8 July 2014.

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4.1.2 Religious Rewriting: Reclaiming by Renaming and Reappropriating

Jane, God-like, names her Eden, Kingdom Mountain. She thereby names, subdues, and values her natural surroundings and some of the animals, such as her beloved "blue-backed char of Kingdom Mountain" (35). It is a biblical act reminiscent of Genesis and the Garden Eden in its prelapsarian stance. A list of place names in the utopian borderland and in-between space of Kingdom Mountain include the following: table rock, balancing boulder, devil's visage, Chain of Ponds, Upper East Branch of the Kingdom River (17), Great Northern Slang (18), the peace cairn (18), and the Gate to Canada (35), and East Round Hill and West Round Hill. The aviator Henry is intrigued by the naming tradition: Sheep Meadow Pool, Short Sheep Meadow Pool, Somebody's Home, and Nobody's Home (34).

In Mosher's naming process ostensible divisions are overcome and distinctions blurred. A Native woman becomes "Pharao's Daughter" and in an ironic twist is found, like Moses in his basket, in a manger on Christmas Morning (10). Against the backdrop of the church's complicity in the colonization of indigenous peoples this reappropriation of a Biblical story and Native rewriting highlight what Gerald Vizenor has called "survivance" and healing humor. The whole notion of Christianity, whether regarding Jesus Christ or the Bible, is undermined through ironic and comical references in characters' names and actions. The Duchess is very outspoken in this regard, even though she does not completely dismiss Christianity or the stories of the Bible. Instead, in an iconoclast manner she adjusts the Scriptures to her liking to almost literally underline the key roles of women, animals, and nature.

Jane is "[…] vexed by King James the First, whom she held personally responsible for the King James Bible" (5–6). Mosher, in the vein of feminist theology, has his heroine Jane reflect on the lack of female insights in the Bible. Jane contends: "The Bible needs a woman's touch here and there" (142). She has her own "Kingdom Mountain Bible." Furthermore, she claims that "[e]very generation should have its own Bible" (143). From a religious point of view it is blasphemous to rewrite Scripture, God's word, but in *On Kingdom Mountain* it serves the purpose of unsettling and subverting what is regarded by Jane as Western male-centric hegemony. Jane is a powerful female character and of Native-White heritage. Her mother "was the last of the full-blooded Memphremagog Abenakis" as Jane tells Henry. She herself has a unique outlook on the world shaped by her upbringing in relative remoteness and seclusion from the world, despite the village close by. Her thinking is infused by Native spiritual belief systems and

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a sense of animism. She criticizes Jesus for "curs[ing] the poor barren fig tree" (143). Her allegiance is first and foremost with nature as she feels akin to it. Jane thoroughly enjoys fishing and for her that experience is a practice to imbue her with her natural surroundings and create a sense of belonging: "Through the quivering leader she felt connected to the river and to her beloved mountain, past and present" (35).

Jane's traditions and her ancestors are dear to her. She immortalizes her ancestors as her so-called dear people (10) espousing an "otherworldly aspect" (10). These ancestors have descriptive and meaningful names such as Jane's great-great-grandfather Venturing Seth Kinneson (10), Venturing Seth and his son Freethinker, her grandfather Quaker Meeting, Uncle Pilgrim, her father Morgan and Jane's mother Pharao's Daughter; their Maker, King James's Jehovah (12). Jane's ancestors are Quakers and hence pacifists, but, as a result of (self-inflicted) tragedy, they renounce the Presbyterian Church and subsequently religion altogether. Pilgrim's disappearance is blamed by Jane's grandparents on religion, because due to the religious rift between Protestants and Catholics they do not allow Pilgrim to marry Manon, a Catholic. Jane's father is a freethinker and she herself harbors negative feelings towards the Bible after her father makes her "vow away" her future on the Bible. He blackmails her in order to make her stay on Kingdom Mountain instead of going to college. She must choose either shooting her beloved oxen and going to college or staying on the mountain and looking after the oxen herself. Her father, Morgan, is the patriarch of the family and since her mother had already died, she obeys her father out of respect, love, and admiration. For this reason she presents an artificial figure of Morgan (269), when she discloses her will to her friend Judge Ira Allen and her cousin Eben Kinneson Esquire, the opponent in the dispute pertaining to the high road.

In the narration there are numerous allusions to hell. Characters explicitly invoke the devil. Devils, hell and adjectives such as "infernal" (149) are used. Henry is occasionally referred to as a devil, sometimes as a daredevil, and Henry's grandfather is also referred to as a devil or the old devil, and finally the town fathers are alluded to as devils. The leitmotif of the riddle hinting at the Treasure of Kingdom Mountain includes religious allusions, albeit in a non-orthodox way. The riddle is reminiscent of a hymn; it reverses a key line of the hymn all the while echoing the biblical language such as host, Father, Son and Holy Ghost: "Behold! On high with the blessed sweet host, Nor Father, nor Son, but Holy Ghost" (80). Moreover, the riddle is called "The Trinity" (80). Instead of following a spiritual quest, the treasure hunt for the hidden gold is a very earthly quest giving in to dreams of wealth and riches, and eventually greed. Henry is not hindered by

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religious reverence from searching for the gold in the ruins of an old church, but it turns out that looking for material gain in a religious setting proves futile. The collection plate Henry finds instead of the long-sought-after gold turns out to be a chamber pot, which Jane repurposes as the "golden helmet of Mambrino, after the headpiece of the good gentleman from la Mancha" and makes her carved Loup-Garou wear "as a crown" (89). Using ironic comedy, Mosher questions religion and materialism, while intertextually referring to Cervantes and trickster mythology. Mosher's narrative strategies are interwoven to serve his purpose of unsettling preconceived notions. In a revealing narrative layer, the burned down and presumably "cursed" (86) church is the pilgrimage site "Our Lady of Memphremagog" (85) in Canada, situated very close to the border. This illustrates how the borderland is integrated historically in this remote Vermont-Quebec region. Yet again heaven and hell, terminologically meet, when the aviator "[…] had had the devil's own time just locating the site of the cursed church […]" (87). Henry behaves in a rather irreverent manner at the burned church, where people sought healing (85), but were allegedly fooled by profit-seeking priests, hence the curse (86). Mosher criticizes organized religion and links the desire for profit in former times with Henry's material aspirations. Henry's behavior is juxtaposed with the pilgrims, both kneeling, however for different goals. The aviator seeks gold, the "hopeful petitioner who long ago crawled up the great stone steps of the church to be made whole" sought healing.

Jane's language frequently refers to biblical terms or biblical stories. At a town hall meeting to discuss the proposed Connector, Jane seemingly gives in to her opponents personified by her cousin, powerful Eben Kinneson Esquire with these words: "I plainly see that in this instance we shall have to render unto Caesar what's his. In Vermont, at least, this high road will go where it has a mind to go" (7). Her opponents deem this statement a concession, however when the Duchess specifies the meaning of her words, it becomes clear that she is far from conceding. Jane, "[a]s the sole proprietor and last resident of Kingdom Mountain" (5), states unmistakably that her mountain "is an entity unto itself" (8) and that she owns the mountain. In this instance, Jane uses proverbial biblical sayings to her advantage in contrast to her usual scathing critique of the King James Bible. This example underscores that she does not lack respect for the Bible completely, but uses it according to her liking and her convictions. She creates her own religion, practicing it in her life, the epitaph on her tombstone being her personal commandments printed in ten lines.

The very designation "Kingdom Mountain" alludes to the heavenly kingdom and transcends the geographic dimension of the term. When Henry crashes with

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his biplane and Jane meets him for the first time, he is almost unharmed and Jane remembers the Dickensian words "'Recalled to life'" (26). This reference is also reminiscent of biblical miracles. Kingdom Mountain, in the former tiny village of Kinnesonville, boasts its own "miracle well" (119), as Henry dubs the well near the Kinnesonville cemetery. Also linked to the phrase "recalled to life," which means rising from the dead and the resurrection, the well water is aptly called "Easter water" (119). It evokes the longstanding local Easter tradition of using the water, renowned as "the coldest and purest in all Kingdom County" for spiritual healing. The beginning of this tradition is unknown, "[b]ut for many years Presbyterians, French Canadians, and even a few Kingdom Mountain freethinkers had made their pilgrimage here on Easter Sunday, often in a spring snowstorm, to draw the healing water from deep in the heart of the mountain" (119). The heart of the unique space, the heavenly kingdom on earth, Eden, is pure and has healing powers. Divisions are overcome and people from different religious persuasions unite to experience the healing powers of the Easter water that "washed away sins, assuaged guilty consciences, and reconciled grudges between family members and neighbors" (119). As in the Christian tradition believers are reconciled with God and reconnected through Jesus's death and resurrection at Easter, the Easter water symbolizes unity, reconciliation, and fresh beginnings.

Crossing cultural and religious borders, in Jesus-like fashion Jane practices an inclusive lifestyle on Kingdom Mountain granting refuge to diverse people as is her family tradition. Unlike Jesus, her neighborly love does not include tax collectors. In fact, Jane in iconoclast manner behaves more like her own goddess, a duchess implementing her own religion-infused duchy or heavenly kingdom. In an armed confrontation on her property between Jane and the Connector clearcutters Jane retorts to Henry's reminder to follow Jesus's example: "The question is not what the outspoken young Nazarene would do but what I must do" (141). She also dismisses Henry's objection that "Jesus believed in turning the other cheek" (141) and asks him the question in return: "What would the horned red devil do in my situation? How would *he* advise me, practical-minded old fellow that he is?" (141). She completely crosses the line to the other side, turning the biblical binary of good versus evil upside down. This is enshrined in her "Kingdom Mountain Bible," where she edits and rewrites "a good deal of the New Testament as well as the Old" (141). According to her own disclosure to Henry, she "[f]irst eliminated from the conversation of the young schoolteacher […] all references to Hell, of which there are many in King James's corrupt version" (141). This emphasizes once more the complete iconoclast topsy-turvy biblical view Jane holds. She dismisses Paul, whom she refers to as "Sneaking Saul" (142)

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and John the Baptist. Furthermore, Jane adds her own words and thoughts to the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore the Duchess preaches her own Sermon on Kingdom Mountain to Henry and states that she has focused on women, nature, and animals in her version as these topics are not sufficiently covered in the traditional Bible (142–43).

In trickster fashion with a strong feminist attitude, she renounces religious traditions, Scriptures and ostensible patriarchic and parochial discourse in the Bible. She puts marginal comments in her "revised family Bible" (146) such as "horsefeathers" (146), her strongest word of disapproval. When looking for hints in Jane's Bible related to rainmaking, Henry finds that term in connection with Genesis, in the margins of the prophets and Paul's letters and "again beside the entirely excised story of Noah" (147). Henry disagrees with Jane's heretical reading of the Bible (147). The Duchess also takes offense with Jesus's stance regarding his family. For the Duchess family is paramount, and she states, "If we deny our family, we deny ourselves" (147). While Henry is reading the Bible to find clues on how to make it rain, in order to earn money for buying a new airplane, Jane carves an archaeopteryx, which she calls the "Noah of Kingdom Mountain" (148). As a pun, the word archaeopteryx even contains the word 'arch.' Once more, despite dismissing much of the Bible, Jane here refers to the Bible, albeit by rewriting and reappropriating Biblical stories and figures in a Native trickster-like manner. Her naming aptly shows the comic irony and subversion of dominant discourse, particularly in 1930 rural northern Vermont. Jane does not completely abandon bordered order or "immanence" for her own version of religious transcendence, but goes beyond border binaries by living, practicing, and conceptualizing Kingdom Mountain as an alternative realm, as a Bhabha-like "third space," or her very own heavenly kingdom.

4.1.3 Dual Perspectives and "Second Sight": Ghosts, Mysteries, and Myths

A key figure in the novel's important, yet hidden underlying narrative realm, almost angel-like, is the so-called "dog-cart man" (135), who is accompanied by eight or nine dogs, "mongrels," (135) and has a "small red wagon" (135). Henry first meets the dog-cart man in the defunct house at night, where the mysterious man, surrounded by his dogs, paints a panorama, "a replica of Kingdom County on the floor of the cupola" (133). The dog-cart man materializes out of nowhere, is mute and deaf (135), and communicates by painting the walls of buildings. His "arresting scenes" blend "past, present, and even perhaps the future" (135). He paints "prophesiz[ing] the past" (136), yet he is particularly prophetic in

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terms of the future. This becomes obvious when he paints the harvest festival and includes the yellow biplane, the aviator Henry, and Jane. Depending on the perspective, it looks like Jane is either waving hello or goodbye in that painting. The vision is blurred and two-fold interpretations are possible. In keeping with the overall novel's set-up, there are numerous small hints at Henry's either staying or leaving. It remains an enigma in the narration whether Henry's priority is the gold or the Duchess, whom he learns to love in the course of his stay on Kingdom Mountain. The dog-cart man, again prophet-like, paints a scene of Jane's childhood. She then realizes that she should look for her missing uncle in Montreal. This new direction of her search eventually leads her to her half-sister. The dog-cart man transforms people's thoughts into paintings, thus representing their subconscious yet unknown to themselves. This man is a key narrative device in Mosher's novel, similar to and exceeding the importance of the voice of Henry's grandfather.

Gradually Mosher's ghosts, mysteries, and myths tell the story of the treasure of Kingdom Mountain and Jane. His phantom plot catalysts are the so-called "Gray Ghosts" (1). These are two men on horseback, who steal the treasure from a bank. The voice of Henry's grandfather, who most likely was involved in the bank heist, is very real for Henry. Grandfather Cantrell Satterfield is a ghost-like presence, reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Instead of the murdered king telling his son Hamlet how to proceed, the voice of the grandfather tells his grandson. It is the ghost's influence and nagging voice that makes Henry eventually renounce the Duchess and instead go for the gold and his independence. The legend of Henry and Jane's color-blind love story survives and people see apparitions of Henry and Jane after Jane's death.

Some stories told in the community relate to "Courteous Clyde of the Clouds" (103), Clyde being strikingly alike Henry Satterfield. Local lore includes allusions to a lake monster, dubbed "Lady of the Lake"[30] (131) and to historical "Rogers' Rangers" (131). Other stories revolve around Pilgrim's Ghost and the tragic love between Jane's uncle Pilgrim and Manon, Vanishing Pilgrim and Manon. The denominational border between Presbyterians and Catholics, between Anglophone and Francophone, and between American and Canadian cannot be

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30 Title of Sir Walter Scott's poem "The Lady of the Lake" <http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/poetry/lady.html> 8 July 2014.
Mosher alludes to Scotland emphasizing the Duchess's sense of tradition and roots. Furthermore, a border linkage presents itself: Sir Walter Scott's „Abbotsford House" in the Borders, Scotland <http://places.discovertheborders.co.uk/search/type/Historical-Buildings.html> 8 July 2014.

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overcome. This chasm, deemed irreparable, has led to Pilgrim's and Manon's disappearances. Another important phenomenon is Jane's "second sight" (21), which is a foresight or premonition. In addition, Jane's dear people, blockheads Memphre Magog and Loup Garou, scribblers and scrawlers exhibit this "other-worldly" and in the case of the blockheads also the mythic aspect.

4.2 "The Flying Lovebirds": The Clash and the Reversal of Stereotypes

Mosher focuses on a multiethnic and multiracial setting, not only alluding to fugitive slaves and the Underground Railroad, but also including the almost extinct tribe of the Memphremagog Abenakis. The Abenakis as a New England tribe illustrate the importance of the indigenous presence in that region from a historical, postcolonial, and social justice point of view: "As a region with a long history of contact, conflict, and accommodation between Indians and non-Indians, the Northeast is important both historically and theoretically. Indian events in New England and elsewhere were central to colonial history" (Bragdon xiv). Furthermore, Mosher plays both on ethnic divisions and on the North-South divide regarding the issue of slavery and the insider-outsider paradigm that accompanies these notions of ethnic, regional, or ideological belonging. Mosher presents Jane and her ancestors in the novel as role models for inclusiveness. Though keeping themselves apart from the village of Kingdom Common as such by living on Kingdom Mountain, the Kinneson family is nevertheless involved in village life through Jane's commitment to teaching, to the library, or the film screenings. The humanitarian and open-minded ethos of the Kinnesons is practiced by a long-standing tradition: "No one in need had ever been turned away from the home place on Kingdom Mountain" (Mosher 30). Jane is quite sociable despite living by herself on Kingdom Mountain and very hospitable as reflected in her treatment of people with various backgrounds of 1930s New England: "With the exception of whiskey runners and revenuers who violated her rule of fifteen miles per hour at all times, game wardens, whom she detested on principle, and border officials 'whose border didn't exist and never had,' Jane welcomed all visitors to her mountain" (Mosher 43). So Jane also takes in Henry Satterfield, the aviator and showman from the South who wrecked his plane near the home place on icy Lake Memphremagog.

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4.2.1 The Duchess: Heiress of Kingdom Mountain and Memphremagog Abenaki

Jane has a very strong and independent personality. She likes fishing for char, being self-reliant in a Thoreau-like manner, is very old-fashioned and closely identifies with Kingdom Mountain, her 'duchy,' entrusted to her by her ancestors. The Duchess values her family traditions and ancestors on both her Scottish and her aboriginal sides. She used to be a schoolteacher, but afterwards keeps busy with her rugged way of life on Kingdom Mountain, "her various jobs in the village" such as "overseer of the poor," or her beloved work in the "Atheneum, her small free library and bookshop" (45), movie screenings, carvings, and basket weaving (44). She is ambitious and follows her own unwritten and at times written rules such as for dealing with books, dubbed the "Precepts for the Serious Bookperson" (47). Jane, "the bookwoman extraordinaire" (45) does not only rewrite the King James Bible, but she also "edit[s] down the classics" (47) and is very critical and opinionated, particularly about Shakespeare, "the Pretender of Avon" and King James the First, "the most villainous impostor" (48). The multiethnic and multicultural Duchess displays her Scottish identity by still using Scottish terms such as "char" and "glen" while equally embracing her Native identity as an ecologist. Moreover, she has a feminist streak and embodies a strong sense of tradition with religious ties to the Quakers, reminiscent of the Amish. She does not use electricity and tries to resist the lures and convenience of so-called civilization. Creating life-like illusions out of lifeless carved objects is Jane's specialty as the birds of strife, the dear people, the block-heads, and the scribblers testify. These practices resemble ways of ancestor worship, of keeping the ancestral linkages and the traditions alive.

Jane has to negotiate her place, identity, and livelihood in a changing social and economic world of 1930 Vermont, in a very harsh climate and on the border of the United States. She does not cross the line between the past and the present but sits on the fence between tradition and modernity, whether Scottish, Quaker, or Native traditionalist. Other issues and contrasts Jane embodies are rural versus more urban, wilderness versus civilization or regressive versus progressive stances. She asserts a powerful role in the community as an independent, strong-willed, and self-reliant person, despite living on a "mountain," thanks to her contributions to community life in the village of Kingdom Common. In spite of being very traditional and opposed to certain forms of progress such as the Connector, the Duchess is very progressive in terms of race relations and interaction between men and women. With regard to race and ethnicity a distinction needs to be made: "Racial formation thus incorporates ethnicities but reaches beyond

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the cultural into the historical and – most of all – structural, material and institutional operations of categorization" (Lauret 5). Race is conceived as a broader category encompassing ethnicity to a certain extent as seen in ethnic literature. Though Mosher is a White author, his novel can be considered ethnic because the main characters are of mixed parentage. Moreover, the historical background of the 1930s and the theme of race relations in rural Vermont stress the ethnic features of Mosher's novel. One defining characteristic of ethnic literatures is "the historical 'burden of representation'" and "the writing against history" (Lauret 7). Mosher rewrites metanarratives, particularly religiously infused ones, and thus writes against history. Additionally, Mosher's color-blind and post-racial utopia on Kingdom Mountain is a powerful antidote to dominant viewpoints of Vermont in the 1930s and even bold at the beginning of the 21st century despite a U.S. president of mixed African and White American descent.

Mosher's narration unfolds from the vernal/spring equinox to the fall equinox. These solstices mark turning points for Jane, who turns fifty and meets the aviator on her birthday on the frozen lake. The metaphorical development from the spring through the fall is also mirrored in Jane's and Henry's relationship. The fall equinox marks the fall from grace for the villagers and simultaneously for Henry, who takes the gold and leaves without saying goodbye to Jane. The relationship between Henry and Jane develops in several stages: Henry's arrival and sojourn in the barn, Henry staying in the home place, Henry and Jane as a couple, Henry and Jane's engagement, and then Henry's sudden and secretive departure. With the arrival of the aviator, a barnstormer, Jane falls in love and learns to look for common ground in her relationship with him. She is very attached to Kingdom Mountain, but is willing to sacrifice a lot for Henry and change her life. Jane declines two marriage proposals by her old friend Judge Ira Allen, who is "the great-great-grandson of the Vermont hero-outlaw Ethan Allen" (69). The judge does not trust Henry and is jealous of him (69).

Though Jane does not fully comprehend why she declined those marriage proposals, she still shares her musings with Henry Satterfield with whom she starts her so-called "featherbed chats" (70). In such a talk chatting to each other through a vent hole in the ceiling of Jane's bedroom, situated below Henry's bedroom, she tells the story of a possible treasure map deposited at the bank (72). After that Henry first cannot fall asleep, but then he does and dreams of the gold and the treasure, whereas Jane dreams about flying away with Henry (72–73). These dreams foreshadow the action to come. For Henry the gold counts in contrast to Jane, who cares about company and the relationship. Their relationship blossoms, but in the end, due to racism and suffocating provincialism on the

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part of the villagers, withers again. Jane accepts the transient nature of love and despite her sadness about Henry's sudden departure, not to mention the loss of the newly recovered treasure of Kingdom Mountain, she is glad about being able to stay on Kingdom Mountain. She dislikes to be uprooted.

Jane's attitude in face of hardship, obstacles, and life's "strife" contrasts with Henry's outlook on life in spite of his showmanship. Jane, an optimistic and resourceful person, embraces the state of life that is "strife" (109). The statement "It's the way of the world" (108) comes up time and again. When Jane and Henry observe a hawk catching a hare, for Henry it is "[b]ad luck for the rabbit" but for Jane it is "[g]ood luck for the hawk" (109). This epitomizes their different viewpoints on life. Strife is a notion also apparent in W. E. B. Du Bois's writing. Donald B. Gibson in his introduction to *The Souls of Black Folk* posits that with regard to "double consciousness" Du Bois states: "The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife" (Gibson xv). This explains why for Henry it is more difficult to accept strife in contrast to Jane. He has had to live with and through race-related experiences of strife more often than Jane in her rather sheltered mountain life. Her strife is of a different nature, but not related to her biracial heritage. Jane has to live independently in rural and remote Vermont, as an unmarried woman in a men's world. Nonetheless, as her strife with hardship is mostly self-imposed and she enjoys being strong, independent and the master of her own destiny after abiding by her father's wishes, strife is a given for her, but in less existential and overt ways than for Henry. She can face the reality of her times in 1930s Vermont and creates the birds of strife display voluntarily. Strength and resilience come more easily to her as her life has been less bordered, or if partially so than voluntarily. Henry seems to be more extrovert and social, a true showman, who needs applause and affirmation. With such a disposition he is even more sensitive to acts of racism or xenophobia.

In addition, Jane has found her half-sister in Montreal. Despite her bordering effort in terms of the proposed high road, she lets her defenses down and engages in debordering by connecting with her newly found sister. Cross-border relations are taken up by the sisters, since they happen to live on different sides of the boundary between Canada and the United States. After the departure of Henry, the North-South relations between Jane and the aviator are replaced by cross-border or borderlands relations with her sister in Montreal. After the loss of her partner, she has found a sister and thus family relations. She no longer lives all by herself, but can choose her level of interaction and intimacy with her loved ones. Moreover, she also reconnects with Judge Ira and finds a new partner in him.

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The "foolish season" of Jane's 51st year in life and on the mountain marks a turning point. The fall is full of changes, and Jane's courage and optimism ultimately gain the upper hand, despite despair and moments marked by a broken spirit. Jane remembers that she usually regards fall as a season of new beginnings rather than a season of melancholy, and so she holds on to that positive view. Her ox dies and when she wants to scare the crows away near the dead ox, she encounters a great gray owl. The owl, which symbolizes wisdom in Greek mythology, leads to an epiphany for Jane. She suddenly knows what to do and attributes this to her imagination, a better term for her so-called "second sight". Most likely it is this moment when she has the idea of giving the mountain away to the Appalachian land trust in her will. In so doing, she rights the wrongs of the past and finally acts as she should and could have done before. In a life coming full circle and finally free of her father's binding compact, she goes to the Thanksgiving homecoming ball with Judge Ira Allen and makes good on the missed opportunity 32 years ago. The last years of Jane are marked by the harmony she enjoys in the close companionship with the judge and her newly found Montreal sister and her family. Mosher's novel concludes with a happy ending in a fairy-tale like fashion as "everything is possible on the Mountain". Jane and Henry are to be reunited as ghosts or at least are so as apparitions in the legends of northern Vermont. After a long and fulfilled life, Jane dies true to herself despite her father's stifling contract as her tombstone explains: "all the best stories are about love" (276). This powerful message sends a strong signal of hope that the world might truly become color-blind and integrated, still leaving room for individualism and a sense of home and belonging. Jane is not bitter, quite the opposite. She knows she belongs to and on Kingdom Mountain and has loved ones to share the ups and downs of life with. The Connector is built and ski hills come, times change, but best of all, Jane's dreams have come true. She spends time with her partner, Judge Ira Allen, her sister and her family, the mountain is protected, twice she wins first prize in the North American bird carving contest with the owl and part of the birds of strife display, and the home place becomes a museum. She does what she prefers to do, lives with those whom she loves and where she wants to be, belonging to Kingdom Mountain.

4.2.2 The Aviator: Southern Mixed-Race "Stranger" "from Away"

Flying in his biplane to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont aviator Henry Satterfield crosses the Mason-Dixon Line, the demarcation separating the slave states from the free states, probably asking himself with Du Bois: "Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house" (Du Bois 5)? His mother is a

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Creole (30), and Henry is referred to as the "stranger" (31). Henry has to try to find his place in the community, while living with Jane. The southerner is an avid aviator, showman, and a weather maker flying everywhere. As a barnstormer he performed with a wing walking lady, a role Jane will fill later on in the novel. Resilience and internal strength are obvious characteristics of the protagonists and their roles as barnstormers and wingwalkers: "If barnstormers were the most exciting daredevils of the late 1920s, then wing walkers were the most extreme and intrepid individuals among them" (Onkst n.p.). Henry fits the barnstormer[31] profile as a former pilot during World War I. Because he encounters racial barriers in the United States that prevent him from flying for the U.S., he has to fly for the Royal Canadian Air Force (251). Consequently, Henry not only literally crosses the Mason-Dixon Line, but also metaphorically through his relationship with the Duchess, who, though of mixed European and Native descent, is nonetheless perceived as a White woman by her northern Vermont community.

Mosher subtly, yet critically, comments on racial, ethnic, and social relations in the United States using the historical context of New England in 1930. U.S. and Canadian histories and the histories of African Americans and African Canadians are intertwined by the Underground Railroad, road to the abolition of slavery and freedom. *On Kingdom Mountain* often alludes to the Civil War, a war for freedom of the oppressed and commodified black people in the United States. Not least the U.S. Civil War is invoked through the "Great Kingdom Common Raid" in the same era and the riddle of Kingdom Mountain, both linked to the "Gray Ghosts" (1) resembling Confederate soldiers. Mosher explicitly uses the term "Mason-Dixon Line" in his prologue regarding the "Great Kingdom Common Raid" (2), a legend thriving because of the large stolen sum of money and the vanishing of all traces: "[…] neither of the rifle-toting raiders was ever heard from again, either north or south of the Mason-Dixon Line" (2). Mosher's character of Henry embodies the Mason-Dixon Line, but thanks to his mixed heritage, Black and White, he bridges and transcends this duality by his very existence. However, another "two-ness" (Du Bois 5) of being "[…] an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body […]" (Du Bois 5) persists in the eyes of others, despite his being both White and Black. His partial whiteness is disregarded by the villagers. Even if he were not of mixed ancestry, but only Black, the villagers have the choice and

31 In the 1920s the tradition of barnstorming and the associated practice of wing walking was widespread. People of black descent were also early aviators. Onkst, David H. "Wing Walkers." Web. 12 Sept. 2012. <www. Centennialofflight.gov/essay/…>.

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moral obligation in a free state such as Vermont to see the common humanity among people of all races.

In the village of Kingdom Common people choose to perceive Henry's otherness, which is threefold: "An exhibition man who is also a man of color and a stranger" (Mosher 250). He does not have a serious profession nor is he white or from the region. This triple handicap, when stated in a cowardly yet overt fashion in a racial slur on the water tower (Mosher 252–53), is the final tipping point towards Henry's resolution to leave Jane. He steals away secretly carrying the treasure of Kingdom Mountain and without giving Jane her portion as he had originally intended. Both Jane and Henry had had their doubts about getting married and had had acknowledged Jane's rootedness as opposed to Henry's adventurism and restlessness, symbolized by his biplane. For Henry the decisive factor in tipping the scales in favor of leaving is most likely the slur "MISS JANE TROUBLE + DARKY SATTERFIELD = THE FLYING LOVEBIRDS" (Mosher 253) in combination with playing "Dixie" and catcalls after Henry's and Jane's flight performance on the last day of the Harvest Festival. Jane is furious and ashamed: "She was mortified. Mortified for herself, for Henry, and for the village she had called civilized" (Mosher 253). This shock has repercussions for both Jane and Henry. Jane's worldview is shattered, and Henry sees his foreboding thoughts confirmed. Henry's mere longing has been in Du Bois's words: "He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face" (Du Bois 5). The racist message in capital letters, for all to see, is placed on the water tower, the backbone of the village as water is essential for any community to thrive. Water signifies life, and this decent life metaphorically speaking is denied to Henry. His basic human right to be a fellow American citizen is not granted to him.

Quoting Robert B. Toll, J. Stanley Lemons posits that "[t]he minstrel show was America's first national, popular entertainment form, and from it came two of the classic stereotyped characters of blacks" (Lemons 102). He states that these two stereotypes are "Zip Coon" and "Jim Crow": "Zip Coon was a preposterous, citified dandy. […] Jim Crow represented the slow-thinking, slow-moving country and plantation darkey" (Lemons 102). The very word "darkey," albeit in different spelling, is echoed in the racial slur in the unfair and openly racist fair scene. Based on insights by Russel B. Nye, Lemons holds that popular culture is a barometer of public opinion: "Popular culture is an exceptional means for gaining an insight into what masses of people are thinking, feeling, and dreaming. It is neither high or art culture, nor is it folk culture; but it is something in between

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[…]" (Lemons 103). This in-betweenness is accessible and comes to the fore in the openly racist harvest festival scene. This reenactment of a minstrel show is reversed afterwards when Henry turns the villagers' scheme back on them.

During their engagement Jane and Henry discuss ethnic relations and Henry as opposed to Jane is pessimistic about the color-blind side of the village. Jane wants to reassure Henry and tells him: "As for your Creole ancestry on your mother's side, no one here in Vermont, of all places, would think it any kind of handicap at all" (Mosher 251). It is important in that context that Vermont's constitution dating back to 1777 "was the first in America to provide for a State system of education, to give every man the right to vote and to forbid slavery" (Wilson 96). This abolitionist heritage is what makes Jane sure of the villagers' embracing Henry as one of their own. Henry is not convinced due to his own experiences: "Oh, Miss Jane, my ancestry is always a handicap. Always. It is why, in order to fly against the Kaiser, I had to leave this land for Canada and join the RCAF" (Mosher 251). Even when wanting to risk his life for the United States during the First World War Henry had to cross the border northward and join the Canadian forces because of racism in the United States.

Jane wants to emphasize that skin color is of no significance, neither in the Kingdom nor in their engagement, and points out her own mixed ethnic and racial heritage: "I assure you that your color is no factor here in the Kingdom. Nor is it at all a factor in our engagement. As you know, I'm half Indian myself" (251). However, Henry realizes the importance local family roots play in this regard. He comments on the disadvantage in being from far away and of mixed heritage: "That's different. The fact that you were born and bred here, and no stranger, counts heavily in your favor" (251). Jane pleads in support of her neighbors in the Kingdom: "For many decades, Henry, Kingdom Mountain was the last station on the Underground Railroad. For all its many faults, the Kingdom is still a community of civilized people" (251). This notion is utterly shattered by the racist events at the Harvest Festival. Henry's reaction is one of revenge before taking off for good. He displays "the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy" (256) on his biplane during his last flight at the festival and tars and feathers the Commoners: "The civilized people of Kingdom Common had become a minstrel show" (Mosher 256). Black-white relations are reversed. The Commoners are reduced to laughable protagonists in a show usually mocking African Americans.

Henry leaves with the gold and without a goodbye. The villagers attribute Henry's sudden departure to him alone as he was the outsider not belonging in their Vermont village: "All the blame fell on the outsider from Away" (Mosher 261). However, Jane gains a new insight and realizes that "[…] the stranger

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destined to come to Kingdom Mountain was, in the end, like all strangers, also destined to leave, probably with something that belonged to her. Her gold, her heart, whatever" (Mosher 258). Despite her disappointment Jane is glad about not having to leave her mountain and sees a connection between recently-found money and newly found love. Both seem to be elusive: "Yet a part of her, she could not deny, felt a certain relief, for she was already homesick for the mountain she would now never leave. The nature of found money was that you would surely lose it again. Maybe that was the nature of love as well" (Mosher 258). Nonetheless, she does not grow bitter, but continues her life proactively on Kingdom Mountain. She voluntarily performs the role of wing walker and as such belongs to the world of "the ultimate risk-takers of their day" (Onkst n.p.). She is and remains courageous and resilient.

4.2.3 Community Borders: Representing Racial Relations in 1930 White Vermont

In Mosher's novel the racial boundaries cannot be blurred beyond Kingdom Mountain. The local community only encourages the dominant discourse and mainstream participants in their village life. They reborder despite Henry's initially good relations with many people in the village. However, the town fathers and some others are his "detractors." Jane is also too individualistic for the village. Aside from her quirkiness, strong independence, and courage she alienates the village with her shooting at the screen while showing a movie to the locals in response to malign acts by rowdies. Nonetheless, the town fathers provoke and count on the gang to create hassle at the movie screening. As this plan is not successful in the end, the Duchess prevails and the town fathers try another scheme closing the Atheneum and evicting Jane's scribblers and scrawlers. This is a true shock to the Duchess aside from the continuing battle regarding the Connector. These tensions build momentum and culminate in the hypocrisies of the town fathers and Eben (253) at the harvest festival. The crowds "swell" and are happy with the performances put on by Henry as the aviator and Jane as his wing walker, but the town fathers want more for a payment. They dare to ask for an upside down flight despite the water tower racial slur, playing Dixie, and the catcalls. They hypocritically apologize and maintain their request for an upside down flight. For the promised sum of 100 dollars Henry seemingly gives in, which Jane cannot comprehend, and she announces that she does not want to continue wing walking.

This incident confirms Henry's fears and doubts about the prospects of a mixed-race couple as well as the ambiguous warning of his ghost-like grandfather.

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Jane is too naïve to see the impossibility for someone to be included in the community if a person is too different and From Away. A stranger remains a stranger as long as the person is not born and bred in this small place, particularly in those times. Henry and Jane have discussed racial relations early on. Jane remains convinced that the villagers are civilized, which Henry counters with his life-long experience of racism and xenophobia. He declares that he still has to find such a civilized community (251) and repeats that he was only part of the air force in Canada, not in the United States (251). Henry experiences in a more pronounced way what President Barack Obama describes in *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. Obama relates the reaction of people, whether "black or white," who learn about his biracial background: "They no longer know who I am. Privately, they guess at my troubled heart, I suppose – the mixed blood, the divided soul, the ghostly image of the tragic mulatto trapped between two worlds" (Obama xv). He does not feel "tragic" or at least not more "tragic" than his fellow citizens: "[…] the tragedy is not mine, or at least not mine alone, it is yours, sons and daughters of Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island, it is yours, children of Africa" (Obama xv). The common diversity of roots in the United States is emphasized and the foundation of the nation is alluded to. Obama posits that everyone was an immigrant at some point, whether the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock or "the huddled masses" of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in view of the Statue of Liberty. Native peoples are the only ones who have been in North America since times immemorial, but Obama does not mention them in this context as he tries to explain and come to terms with his own biracial black and white heritage. His hopes in writing about his journey is that this narrative "might speak in some way to the fissures of race that have characterized the American experience, as well as the fluid state of identity – the leaps through time, the collision of cultures – that mark our modern life" (Obama vii). In Mosher's novel the main characters, Jane and Henry, are ahead of their times in terms of open-mindedness and a holistic view of mutable identities. This progressive stance regarding racial relations and their very existence as biracial people almost inevitably lead to overt and covert clashes with the dominant discourse in Vermont of the 1930s.

In the earlier conversation between Judge Ira Allen and Jane, Jane bluntly asks her friend, if he is opposed to Henry because of Henry's color, which the judge denies. At that time Jane thinks the color line might be a problem, although she has known her friend Ira all her life. However, in terms of the village or even the state of Vermont she dismisses Henry's matter-of-fact statement that he is a triple outcast and thus will never be fully or even partially integrated. He states

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it is always a problem to live as a man of color and that there is no such thing as a civilized community. The color line is closely related to the seemingly similar, yet different concepts of race and ethnicity. Manning Marable explains the difference between the social construct of "race" and the more recent concept of "ethnicity," also in the historical development of these designations: "'Race' is therefore a dynamic social construct that has its roots in the transatlantic slave trade, the establishment of plantation economies based on slave labor, and in the ideological justification for the vast extermination of millions of indigenous Americans" (Marable 44). According to Marable ethnicity focuses on "cultural and social traditions" (44). He highlights the ambiguity and contested nature of the two terms race and ethnicity in academe: "Currently there are major academic disagreements over the meanings and materiality of race and ethnicity" (Marable 45). Marable posits that diverse responses to these discussions exist ranging from the "racial-ethnic theorists, or the multiculturalists" (45) to "cultural unversalists" (46), "'new school' universalists" (47) to "social theorists of race and ethnicity who frankly do put forward essentialist and identity-bound models of cultural difference" (47). Theory is one way to approach the color line, but every individual needs to negotiate his or her positioning with regard to race and ethnicity in practical ways, while trying to avoid falling prey to essentializing, racist, or xenophobic behavior. This is the bordered world in a historical context that the characters in Mosher's novel need to negotiate and come to terms with.

The aviator is sincere in his feelings for the Duchess, and she is sincere with him as Henry acknowledges, but Henry's doubts are linked to the practical side of their living together in the future. He sees the difficulties from a realistic angle. Henry wonders, if it is right or possible to uproot Jane even temporarily, as she is "wedded to a hill" (252) according to the knowing voice of his ancestor. The aviator is not strong enough to ignore the trickster-like, ambiguous, and at times mischievous voice of his grandfather painting the Eldorado picture for Henry. His ghostly voice entices and emotionally blackmails Henry to go after the gold and forget about the Duchess as such a relationship is doomed to fail. Both partners have made their choices long before, Henry being an aviator who is flying away and the Duchess being rooted in Kingdom Mountain and bound to stay there. Henry's direction is outbound, Jane's is inbound.

Henry, of Creole ancestry, is a showman and aviator from the South, a stranger from Away, and though the Duchess if of mixed ancestry with partial Native roots, she is the Duchess "born and bred" in northern Vermont. The invisible identity and social border of belonging to a place or being from Away cannot be overcome in the eyes of the villagers and eventually also in the eyes of Henry.

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This blow confirms Henry's fears and doubts and the devilish words of his grandfather. Henry leaves and since there is nothing to lose Henry has his revenge and takes the gold without leaving Jane the 10–20 percent originally planned and thus almost breaks her spirit. He seems to have pangs of conscience to leave Jane behind without saying goodbye. Henry is fighting with his inner demon in the form of his grandfather's voice. The aviator is haunted by that voice and the inherited and inherent compulsion for gold. Henry seems to want to talk to Jane, right after confronting the town fathers about the water tower and Dixie incident; however, she abruptly quits and thus leaves him to his own devices.

After the explicit bordering and marking him as an outsider, an outcast from Away who is only good to perform and entertain, but mocked, ridiculed and despised, Henry decides to play along and turn the game on the villagers. The people ostracize and other him as a southerner and thus part of the Confederates. He then turns the tables on them. He is in charge and visibly leaves his mark. Therefore, he embraces the redrawing of the Mason-Dixon Line and takes up arms in this restaged civil war between the northern and southern states in northern rural Vermont. He takes the clue and during the official ceremony with all dignitaries present shows them the Confederate flag painted on his biplane and tars and feathers them, a treatment for criminals. Moreover, by tarring them he gives the Caucasian northerners from Kingdom Common a black-face and creates a "minstrel show" (256) with the villagers as the protagonists. As Scott Herring argues, white people took at face value the stereotypes of Blacks at the beginning of the 20th century. These prejudices come to the fore and are perpetuated by "the century-old tradition of minstrelsy, in which white comics blackened their faces with burnt cork and performed an imitation of black life for a (usually delighted) white audience" (3). The tradition of minstrelsy and the continuation of stereotypes in racial relations is likened to acting and putting on a mask in order to live up to expectations by the racial other. This notion echoes Frantz Fanon's seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks*. Herring suggests that white people internalized stereotypes of black people. He refers to W.E.B. Du Bois[32] in his critique of such behavior: "Not all but a significant number of whites adopted the images of the minstrel fiction and applied them to the African American reality, seeing in the streets characters from the stage; blacks very quickly learned, in their dealings with whites, to put on the mask. For Du Bois,

32 "Du Bois imaginatively adapted two biblical images of the veil as a division within the temple {Exodus 26:33} and as the cover that the divinely inspired Moses wore when he came back from Mount Sinai and spoke to the people {Exodus 34:33–35}" (Sollors 49).

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the mask is a Veil to be rent" (Herring 3–4). In this quotation the nexus between mask and veil becomes apparent. The mask or the veil obscure, hide, and shield a truth. Du Bois regards the Veil as a discursive barrier between peoples from different races leading nowhere: "Du Bois's dominant metaphor for the communicative impasse which exists between the races is the Veil" (Herring 11). At the same time a mask or a veil is also a marker of difference, a separation, and a barrier. Both are outward accessories or even clothes that express identity and belonging and in so doing mark group identities. Nonetheless, as Herring outlines based on his reading of Du Bois, color lines need to be blurred and overcome: "Du Bois's fundamentental design – his political agenda – is to subvert the color line which minstrelsy has helped to construct" (Herring 11). Therefore, the color line is artificially and socially constructed and maintained by questionable social entertainment practices.

Johnella E. Butler posits that "W. E. B. Du Bois observed in *The Souls of Black Folk* that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line, and he proposed a 'merging' for the Negro" (Butler xi). The color line, though lingering, is less visible in the twenty-first century thanks to increasing blurred boundaries of color and otherwise. Butler links the color line to the borderlands in her edited volume aptly titled *Color-Line to Borderlands: The Matrix of American Ethnic Studies*. She suggests that "[…] Du Bois signals the borderlands" (Butler xi). According to Butler, "[Du Bois] knows that 'truth' is 'above the Veil,' above the racial line that seeks to maintain the ignorance perpetuated by a racialized existence, and that to be above the Veil one has to move across the color-line" (Butler xii). Veil and color line are equated and both need to be transcended and overcome. A torn Veil and a blurred or even erased color line add to more equality and unity. Ethnicity should not remain a marker of hierarchy, stereotyping or outright racism, but be a part of diversity in unity, reflecting the "e pluribus unum" of the United States.

Du Bois's notion of the Veil is characterized by Robert Stepto as "his [Du Bois's] famous trope of the Veil, which is variously that which shuts him (and others) out of 'their world,' that which he himself can put in place in seeking a self-protective isolation, and that which he will triumphantly live above, in time" (29). Binaries and the need to address and negotiate dichotomies are important. Stepto makes a point out of this so-called "two-ness" and links it to Du Bois's concept of "double-consciousness": "'Two-ness' obviously includes the sensation of seeing one's self through the eyes of others that Dr. Du Bois so famously termed the Negro's 'double-consciousness'" (52). Stepto further postulates that the notion of "two-ness" is a complex one: "But two-ness is so many things:

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the forging of a biracial identity and a racial identity" (52). Mosher's novel *On Kingdom Mountain*, a title replete with echoes of Negro spirituals and African American history, is a pertinent case to analyze whether or not Stepto's assertion that "African American fictions and other narratives often are set in carefully constructed geographies: freedom and oppression are mapped; each has a landscape and a climate; each has exterior and interior spaces to be negotiated" (126). Its importance highlighted by the eponymous title of Mosher's novel, Kingdom Mountain is such a "carefully constructed" space that needs to be defined, maintained, and negotiated by the Duchess and the aviator among themselves, but then also in the courtroom scenes and social interaction with the xenophobic White villagers in rural Vermont.

Vermont is a complex state with a history of migration leading to a quest for identity: "Between the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, Vermont experienced an ongoing crisis of identity – one that unfolded according to the historical-geographic context of out-migration from the state" (Harrison, "Tourism" 482). This identity crisis is exacerbated by newcomers from "non-Anglo ethnic groups," one large group being French Canadians (Harrison, "Tourism" 482). The negative image of French Canadians is portrayed in Mosher's novel. Racial, ethnic, and economic changes inform one another: "Indeed, once peered behind the mask of the typical Vermonter, reformers found a host of deeper social problems – many of which they traced back to the catalyst of farm abandonment" (Harrison, "Tourism" 482–83). Removing the "mask" means seeing clearly that in Mosher's novel farm abandonment, rural isolation, and economic woes are the underlying forces propelling the plot.

Eben and the townfathers use exactly these reasons in favor of their case of building the Connector. As their guiding principle in this business project they pretend to have the economic well-being and the future of the whole community in mind. Indeed "[b]y today's standards, the most important crop of the era was tourists. This became the critical cash crop for many people" (McReynolds 94). Tourism and economic opportunities are important principles but the end does not always justify the means. Development at that time in Vermont means huge changes transforming the landscape, social relations, and livelihoods. Moreover, even before the big developers became interested in Vermont, Vermonters could nonetheless generate modest incomes from tourism: "Prior to the 1930s Vermont's nascent ski business remained confined to the state's open pastures, logging roads, and hillside fields, and although largely noncommercial, it did generate limited amounts of revenue for services such as food, lodging, and transportation" (Harrison, "Technological Turn" 200). Thanks to the Connector

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tourism could be promoted and visitors would bring money, and in their wake, jobs to the Kingdom. However, the price tag for the ecology is not considered. It is Jane, who fights to maintain Kingdom Mountain in its pristine wilderness for future generations and continues to honor both her parents' legacies, her Scottish and the Memphremagog Abenaki roots.

Robert M. Vanderbeck states that "[…] Vermont is among the most racialized of the fifty U.S. states if we take that to mean the states with the clearest association in popular geographical imaginations between their territories and specific racialized identities" (641). According to Vanderbeck Vermont is understood "as an iconic space of Yankee whiteness" (642). When Henry joins Jane and wants to marry her (247), Jane's age of innocence in the village of Kingdom Commons is lost, because "[n]o place on earth is as fickle as a small town" (263) and rumors do not stop, when Henry disappears. Yankee whiteness is compromised by the presence of a man of color and from the South, the Civil War opponent. The Civil War is often alluded to in *On Kingdom Mountain*. It is a backdrop against which the events of the plot unfold, intrinsically linked to the treasure of Kingdom Mountain, the stolen gold by the Civil War "Gray Ghosts." The question of blood and race is an issue of several ethnicities: "Vis-à-vis 'white blood,' the power of a drop of 'Negro blood' is to contaminate. In contrast, the power of a drop of 'Indian blood' – if no more than a drop – is to enhance, ennoble, naturalize, and legitimate" (Strong and Van Winkle 551). This seems to be at work in the villagers' minds as Jane is perceived as white, sort of one of them in her quirky way, although she is of mixed heritage, being part Memphremagog Abenaki. In contrast to her, Henry is constructed as a man of color of African American, or to be precise, Creole ancestry.

In Mosher's novel the race card is played according to the interests of the white and covert racist village community. Whereas Jane with her biracial heritage is accepted as one of them, and her claims in court to her Native heritage, advantageous for her cause, are even disregarded, Henry is racially othered by the villagers. Initially they are fascinated by his exoticism, but then the mood changes and he is the stranger from away, the Southerner, the flying showman, who is not part of their community. He is a transient and presents comic relief for this remote rural village in Vermont, while simultaneously transgressing and expanding the notion of belonging for the villagers. The different treatment of the two biracial characters in the novel, Jane of European and Native descent, but a long-time resident and respected though somewhat marginal member of the community and the Southern aviator, Henry of White and Black mixed heritage,

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is revealing. Jane's partial Whiteness supersedes her Nativeness, whereas Henry's partial Blackness remains dominant and eclipses his partial Whiteness.

Paradoxically, Vermont as a synonym for Yankee Whiteness, is also a pioneer of the abolition of slavery. Vermont was one of the states that opposed slavery early on: "In the wake of the American War of Independence, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, the states with the lowest percentages of slaves, became pioneers in legislating the destruction of the institution either by constitutional articles or by judicial decisions based upon their new constitutions" (Drescher 127). Helping refugee slaves on the Underground Railroad to Canada is one thing as these refugees quickly cross the border. They are merely a temporary and almost invisible presence, and only Jane and her family are portrayed as practitioners of these convictions. However, after the initial exotic encounter with Henry, integrating a colored stranger from Away, is a different matter altogether. In the world of the 1930s it is difficult to adjust to full equality. Henry stands out. The voice of greed by the whisperings of his grandfather paired with the experience of the racial slur on the water tower determines Henry's departure. After his disappearance the world is seemingly back to normal; the racial border preserves a sort of order in the Vermont village.

When Jane is associated with Henry she descends into a morally ambiguous state, partly in analogy to the following statement: "People biologically black in any degree could not openly aspire to whiteness, but whites could easily descend into blackness if they failed in morality" (Williamson 108). This means that Henry could not dream of being accepted as white, not even in the North, nor can Jane hope not to provoke covert or even overt racism with her interracial liaison. Although Jane is not white, but of mixed heritage, she has been subsumed under the category "White" thanks to her local lineage and rather prominent position within the village community. The North and the South are not so different in their bordered racial and ethnic relations, only the Harlem Renaissance intellectuals being an exception to that phenomenon: "[…] whites in the North, as in the South, had already arrived at the one-drop rule and stopped all Negroes abruptly at the thresholds of their lives" (Williamson 134). White – black relations remain bordered and liminal. This threshold is not crossed. In Mosher's novel, however, the motto on the "lintel over the porch door" of Jane's home reads: "They lived in a house at the end of the road and were friends to mankind" (29). Jane's attitude clearly reflects the practices of her family to help whoever is in need of help, whether, African American, Asian, or Canadian. The threshold to her home can be crossed.

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Patrick Wolfe postulates "that race is a social construct" (387). He further argues that "[…] Indians and Black people in the US have been racialized in opposing ways that reflect their antithetical roles in the formation of US society" (Wolfe 387). These antithetical roles and diametrically opposed perceptions by whites are embodied in the novel by Jane and Henry. Both are of mixed heritage, but according to the preferred outcome of the white majority Jane's Native composite heritage is not taken into account in order to deny her land claims, whereas Henry remains African American after the initial exotic interest in him. For black people in the U.S. the so-called "'one-drop rule,' whereby any amount of African ancestry, no matter how remote, and regardless of phenotypical appearance, makes a person Black" (Wolfe 388), applied. The opposite is true for Native Americans / American Indians, whose Native identity and Native rights were at risk when being of mixed heritage: "For Indians, in stark contrast, non-Indian ancestry compromised their indigeneity, producing 'half-breeds,' a regime that persists in the form of blood quantum regulations" (Wolfe 388). Moreover, for Wolfe the notion of race is constructed in the othering process: "Black people were racialized as slaves; slavery constituted their blackness" (Wolfe 388). In analogy with that observation Natives are constructed as Natives and treated as such: "Correspondingly, Indigenous North Americans were not killed, driven away, romanticized, assimilated, fenced in, bred White, and otherwise eliminated as the original owners of the land but *as Indians*" (Wolfe 388). The othering of the people and categorizing them seems to dehumanize them and make settlers' actions seem less consequential for the affected Native peoples.

The question arises: "Who is ethnic in the Green Mountain State" (Senécal 63)? It becomes clear that "[t]here are no First Vermonters; only Abenakis who have left their mark upon the land for thousands of years" (Senécal 63). Vermont is equated with whiteness and the quintessential American, the stereotypical "Yankee": "Vermont's construct of ethnicity is synonymous with whiteness, a most peculiar brand of whiteness at that. Vermont's definition of ethnicity, the source of much racial, gender, and ethnic prejudice, inequality, and intolerance, is closely associated with the narrative that we have built around the Yankee […]" (Senécal 64). Furthermore, the climate contributes to the construction of Vermont identity: "Climate, geography, small-scale industries, and poverty have conspired to deny us our allotment of Blacks, Chinese, Eastern, or Southern Europeans. We are as white as a virgin page, as buffered as snow" (Senécal 66). In this regard racialization needs to be defined: "The term 'racialization,' in the context of an analysis of Canada-US border crossings, draws attention to how 'racial' categories and identities are both constructed and contested within

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relations of power (as was apparent in the post 9/11 context), and linked to very real and unequal im/mobilities" (Helleiner 110). The mobility of racialized people is hampered, which is why Henry only feels free and can be completely mobile in his airplane. The plane as an icon of freedom symbolizes his freedom as a man of color in a racialized world. As a free aviator he can defy stereotypes and fly away from practices and spaces of racism and racialization: "'Racialization' is therefore the process by which racialized groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions, often involving social/spatial segregation and always constituting racialized places" (Kobayashi and Peake 393). Native Americans are also a racialized group seen from a White hegemonic and racializing gaze.

Bonita Lawrence argues that there is a connection between classifications and conceptualizations, "how a classificatory system produces ways of thinking – a grammar – that embeds itself in every attempt to change it" (4). She maintains that Native peoples continue to be agents of their own destinies, albeit in a special context: "To speak of how pervasively the Indian Act (in Canada) or federal Indian legislation (in the United States) has permeated the ways in which Native peoples think of themselves is not to deny Native people the agency to move beyond its logic" (Lawrence 4). Jane practices her agency and she exhibits her strong relationship to her Native ancestors and community: "For Native people, individual identity is always being negotiated *in relation to* collective identity, and *in the face of* an external, colonizing society" (Lawrence 4). Lawrence postulates that a common notion of what "Native" or "Indian" means was "an external descriptor, meaningless to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas prior to colonization" (4). Settler societies subsumed everyone Native under one category and ascribed them with "a common raced identity as 'Indian' " (Lawrence 5). She further argues that there are tensions between individual identities and pan-tribal linkages: "Contemporary Native identity therefore exists in an uneasy balance between concepts of generic 'Indianness' as a racial identity and of specific 'tribal' identity as Indigenous *nationhood*" (Lawrence 5). Nations and settler states cannot be equated, quite the opposite manifests itself, as Lawrence puts it: "For Indigenous people, resisting colonial relations involves a refusal to accept the authority of Canada or the United States as settler states, and a focus on rebuilding the nations that the colonizer has sought to destroy" (5). Indigenous peoples highlight the Native presence on the North American continent and their tribal nations, predating the European settlers regarded as newcomers.

Jane, as the last heir of the Memphremagog Abenakis also identifies tribally in the courtroom scene. Native identity is by no means an abstract notion, but

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literally grounded in her Abenaki heritage and the land. Kingdom Mountain, symbolizing her home with the dual Scottish and Native heritage, is the ancestral connection for her. Her Native roots emphasize the connection to the land, whereas her Scottish roots alert her to the importance of tradition and respect for her forebears. The respect for her ancestors is a legacy that is present in both her cultural and ethnic or racial origins. Therefore, her biracial and bicultural heritage do not create an internal conflict for her. Jane literally embodies these two legacies and thrives with them in her own independent, strong, and self-confident way of life. Lawrence postulates that Native lived experience is questioned in the name of authenticity: "In such contestations of identity (which are always on white terms), Native people revealed as transgressing the boundaries of so-called authenticity – in their appearance (if mixed-blood), or in possessing any aspect of apparent modernity – are inevitably dismissed as fakes" (23). Jane is disregarded as a Native person in the courtroom scene. She is almost treated as a fake; her land claim of Kingdom Mountain and ancestral aboriginal rights is challenged outright. Native identities are often contested as is the case for Jane in the novel: "In both Canada and the United States, Native identity has for generations been legally defined by legislation based on colonialist assumptions about race, Nativeness, and civilization, which are deeply rooted in European modernity" (Lawrence 24). Native and non-Native worldviews and thus systems differ and need to be accommodated.

Mosher's Native presence is indeed a vanishing one. Jane, with no offspring of her own, is the last member of the Memphremagog Abenakis. The author adheres to the prevalent stereotypes of the environmentally conscious but at the same time vanishing Indian. Nonetheless, Jane's legacy lives on. Consequently, the Native land and the legacy remain preserved for future generations. Mosher finds a way to combine these stereotypical attributes in the persona of his protagonist, Jane. Reading Mosher's novel, written in 2007 by a contemporary U.S. author, but set in the 1930s Vermont, the reader has to keep in mind the historical disjuncture between time of writing, reading, and setting, plot, and characters. In 1930 the traditional Vermont has almost disappeared, or, at least, it has altered significantly as the rise of new economies, livelihoods, and ultimately a new order testifies. Historical context is thus helpful. The problematic legacy of land issues persists in the form of land claims. The novel is more about vanishing land for Native sovereign use than about the vanishing Natives: "A difficulty that Native communities across North America must wrestle with centers on the reality of ongoing colonial encroachment – the need for Native communities to assert some sort of boundary marker between their small remaining land base

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and the white communities around them" (Lawrence 24). Land is of paramount importance for the indigenous communities.

4.3 Blurred Color Lines: Kingdom Mountain as Utopian In-Between Space

On Kingdom Mountain, the eponymous title of Mosher's novel, represents a utopian in-between space of racial and ethnic integration in contrast to the village of Kingdom Common, standing for segregation. The border between segregation and integration is subverted on Kingdom Mountain. Despite their differences, Jane, the White-Native Northern duchess, and Henry Satterfield, the White-Black southern aviator fall in love and transcend societal norms and racial borders. This reminds the contemporary reader of Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech "I've been to the mountaintop[33]" in which he powerfully shares his firm belief in a color-blind future. The civil rights leader frequently uses the mountain metaphor in the biblical echoes in his speeches. Mosher, in spite of rewriting and critiquing the Bible in the person of his protagonist, Jane, still harks back to these images of the Bible.

Aside from religious allusions, history is the underlying principle of Mosher's novel. Historical events such as the Civil War, the abolition of slavery, the Underground Railroad, Prohibition, and the Great Depression and African American history up to 1930 permeate *On Kingdom Mountain*. Against the backdrop of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, the community in the novel holds on to mental borders and reinscribes the Mason-Dixon Line[34] with meaning. Community members' bordering and othering marginalizes and stigmatizes both Henry and Jane. Racist and xenophobic tensions simmer and surface during the harvest festival and explode with the racial slur on the water tower. Inscribing the racist message on the water tower for everyone to see is a public shaming act for Jane that resembles putting Hester Prynne with the scarlet letter on the pillory (Hawthorne 50). The local community does not approve of a certain behavior, whether in the case of Hester or Mosher's protagonist Jane, and the seeming culprit is

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33 <http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop> Martin Luther King, Jr. 3 April 1968. Memphis, Tennessee. 19 Feb. 2013.
Werner Sollors states: "[…] Martin Luther King consciously cast himself as a black Moses when he declaims, 'I've been to the mountain top…' […]" (50).

34 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/04/0410_020410_TVmasondixon.html>.

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publicly denunciated by the hypocritical elites, probably with the help of some easily enlisted youngsters.

In contrast to the village, Kingdom Mountain is a mountain kingdom not only with its unique and independent climatic, legal, and geopolitical characteristics and ruled by the duchess, but also as a miniature "city upon the hill" to borrow this Puritan and biblical image popularized by John Winthrop. Jane is critical of religion and particularly of the King James Bible, yet still uses the Bible or religious references frequently. In the United States of 1930, Kingdom Mountain is a secluded, almost isolated realm, an "entity unto itself" (8). It is a utopian space representing the Promised Land, a prelapsarian Garden of Eden, where Jane's forebears subdued and christened the wilderness. The mysterious figure of the dog-cart man paints a "[…] tree of life […] on Miss Jane's front door" (205), thus highlighting the reading of Kingdom Mountain as an Eden-like place and space. Naming plays a crucial role in White-Native relations, too. Natives have lived in North America since times immemorial, and White European newcomers named or rather renamed places according to their own concepts upon contact. In that way the Natives and the Native presence were erased. Jane, with her mixed heritage and despite her pride in her Native roots, continues the family tradition and also uses the non-Native Kinneson names for places on the Mountain, emphasizing once again the independent and unique status of Kingdom Mountain.

4.3.1 Contested Geopolitics: The Canada-U.S. Border and Kingdom Mountain

Jane is the only owner of Kingdom Mountain and its last remaining resident (5). She has a strong sense of belonging and responsibility towards this special place. The Mountain is a "third space" unto itself:

> What Jane knew for certain was that the mountain had sheltered and provided sustenance for several generations of Kinnesons and that it created its own weather and seasons, quite sharply different from the weather and seasons elsewhere in the county. It nurtured its own species of trout and, on its summit, several boreal plants and lichens found nowhere else within a thousand miles. (18)

Kingdom Mountain is a microcosm with its own flora, fauna, and history of habitation. During the lawsuit to settle the decision whether or not the Connector can be built, the question of citizenship and hence jurisdiction is addressed: "Are you yourself an American or Canadian citizen" (191)? Jane responds by presenting herself as a spokesperson and representative for the silenced voice of the Mountain itself: "Neither. I'm the last member of the Memphremagog tribe

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and the last of the Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons, speaking on behalf of the rights of Kingdom Mountain" (192). She contends that this geographical space is self-contained and neither constitutes a part of the United States nor of Canada: "Since the domain in question belongs to another nation, not Canada or the U.S., neither the U.S. nor Canada can exercise *eminent* domain. Kingdom Mountain *is* an eminent domain. It belongs to itself" (192). Kingdom Mountain is a kingdom just by itself with its own jurisdiction, history, and heritage. This unique space outdoes the administrative understandings of the nation-state. Nationalities as attributed by the court or others are not upheld in Jane's definition. She is first and foremost a Kingdom Mountain Kinneson and identifies with the Memphremagog Abenakis.

The fictional Kingdom Mountain is set in the real region called the Northeast Kingdom,[35] a geographical area that evokes a strong sense of place in the local residents. Mosher and his wife Phillis found refuge in the Northeast Kingdom from urbanization and globalization: "When we came to the Northeast Kingdom in 1964, both Phillis and I knew we wanted to live in the country, preferably near the border" (Mosher, *North Country* 99–100). This geographical rootedness in an area that is "still something of a true frontier" (Mosher, *Northern Borders* 1) translates into Mosher's fiction as Kingdom Mountain. Mosher's writing is strongly influenced by autobiographical events and his personal journey in life. There are striking parallels to be discovered and discussed in relation to his fiction: "I have spent the last three decades living here [Northeast Kingdom] and chronicling the lives and times of these individualists in my novels and short stories" (Mosher, *North Country* 2). It is a "last vestige of an earlier Vermont" (Mosher, *North Country* 2). He remembers the old times in his fiction "as the ever-encroaching development spreading northward from southern and central Vermont began to reach the Kingdom, and as the old horse loggers and hill farmers and moonshiners and whiskey runners vanished […]" (Mosher, *North Country* 2). Keeping the old times alive by telling their story in a time and place remote from the present is one of Mosher's central endeavors in his writing.

The Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons have a long tradition of helping others as expressed in the motto on the lintel over their porch door: "They lived in a house at the end of the road and were friends to mankind" (Mosher, *Kingdom* 30). They help a host of people from diverse backgrounds "not just fugitive slaves but French Canadian and Chinese immigrants slipping over the mountain into

35 "This is a beautiful part of Vermont. It should have a special name – the Northeast Kingdom" (Senator George Aiken, 1952 / qtd. in Mosher, *North Country* 99).

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the United States from Canada and all kinds of wayfarers overtaken by weather, sickness, and injury, even bindlestiffs and tramps off the Grand Trunk Railroad" (Mosher, *Kingdom* 30). The Grand Trunk Railroad transcended borders and operated in Canada and the U.S. in what would be Ontario and Quebec and New England today. It is interesting to note that the border has worked in two directions, namely fugitive slaves wanting to leave the U.S. and enjoy freedom and safety in Canada and then French Canadians and Chinese immigrants wanting to come to the United States. Kingdom Mountain is the crucial regional link in this migration movement between the United States and Canada. Hence, the current American fears that Canada is a gateway for illegal immigration to the U.S. is not unfounded, considering the history of the Canada-U.S. boundary.

Political scientist James Laxer compares the Canada-U.S. border to other international borders and highlights the influx of immigrants seeking refuge in either of the two countries. He describes how the existence of a border separating two countries with different policies provides ways or even incentives for people to find a safe haven across the line:

> Like other international frontiers, the Canada-U.S. border has often afforded opportunities for those who needed to escape from the government of the day and its policies. Having a border handy to allow for flight has always been valued by freedom seekers (and by criminals) the world over. Sometimes, over the course of the past two centuries and more, it has been residents of the United States fleeing north, other times Canadians fleeing south. (Laxer 110)

This binational border crossing pattern is depicted in Mosher's novel. However, it focuses mostly on the role Kingdom Mountain played in slavery times and during segregation. The Mountain is a place of refuge for fugitive slaves escaping to Canada by means of the Underground Railroad[36]. Another reason for this technological terminology is reflected in the analogy drawn by a slave owner trying to capture a run-away slave: "The slave owner declared it was as if the slave disappeared on some kind of 'underground railroad.' It was a timely metaphor. What was once the freedom movement eventually became known as the 'Underground Railroad' and the 'train' would occasionally be nicknamed the 'Gospel Train'" (Tobin and Dobard 62). Jane's grandfather, father and uncle

36 The term was most likely coined due to the latest technology at the time and the linguistic impact that exuded from that development: "Although many, sometimes contradictory, tales exist about how the term first came into general usage, it almost certainly arose in part as a response to the advent of the railroad train during the 1830s and 1840s. As the newest technology of the day, the railroad introduced words and gave new meaning to older terms" (Horton 175–76).

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"had conducted hundreds of fugitive slaves over the mountaintop to Canada" (Mosher, *Kingdom* 18). The usage of the term "mountaintop" powerfully recalls Martin Luther King's last speech, in which he presented himself as "a black Moses" (Sollors 50). Moses also guided the people towards the Promised Land, but was prohibited to enter it himself (Deut. 32:52, Bible http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/32-52.htm). Nonetheless, God granted him a glimpse of Canaan (Deut. 34:4, Bible). In an eerie sense of foreboding Martin Luther King seems to have known his fate somehow. Evoking Moses by referring to "the mountaintop" portrays Jane's forebears as Moses-like men, in keeping with the name of Jane's mother as "Pharaoh's daughter" (Exod. 2:10, Bible) that guided the chosen people, black fugitive slaves, to the Promised Land, in this case Canada. Sollors posits: "In some slave narratives that heavenly land of a better life after death was resecularized as 'North'; in other stories it could mean Canada or Africa" (47). Canada and also the international boundary between Canada and the United States is perceived as a haven, the border being a "sanctuary line". In the novel, according to Jane, Kingdom Mountain is considered to be "the site of Vermont's northernmost Underground Railroad station" (Mosher, *Kingdom* 197). So, it is not only a unique place for Jane's family history and sense of belonging, but also a significant place in the history of New England as well as in African American history. Laxer states that it is in fact Canada that serves as a refuge for others such as Americans and not only the U.S. that is a place of refuge for immigrants from all over the world: "While America has proclaimed itself a refuge for the peoples of the earth, it is Canada that Americans have often come to seek refuge – Loyalists, slaves and war resisters" (Laxer 44).

Mosher's novel bears witness to numerous historical events and developments. The Thirties "[b]ounded by the traumas of the Wall Street Crash and the attack on Pearl Harbor" (Conn 1) are a decade marked by one major event, the Great Depression, arguably almost as momentous in importance domestically as the Civil War: "With the exception only of the Civil War, Americans faced in the Depression the most wrenching and divisive domestic crisis in their history. An economic structure that had seemed unshakable simply collapsed, and neither experts nor ordinary citizens were ever sure why" (Conn 1). In the plot of his novel Mosher weaves together the Civil War, the Great Depression, and Prohibition. Allusions to these events are frequent. The motif of freedom together with the tropes of a quest for independence and refuge is eminent: "During the era of Prohibition in the United States, from 1920 to 1933, Canada provided a refuge for Americans that was very different, and rather less heroic, from the refuge during the time of the Underground Railroad" (Laxer 142). Especially

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during – but by no means limited to – the time of Prohibition, smuggling was rampant and became part of folklore and storytelling: "Over two centuries, border residents have amassed a considerable folklore around smuggling. Whiskey conveyed through a garden hose across a backyard, […]" (Farfan 75) and more tales along these lines.

The border links history, cultural practices, migration patterns and their narrative representation, influencing Mosher, a long-time local resident. Similar romanticized folklore arose with regard to the Underground Railroad: "From the mid-nineteenth century onward into the twentieth century, the folklore that grew up surrounding the Underground Railroad has become one of the most romanticized aspects of American history" (Horton 176). These are the stories Mosher includes in his fiction and this reservoir of local lore does not seem to run dry. They form part of the local cultural identity, particularly for the residents with a relation to the Underground Railroad: "In certain regions of the northern United States, especially Ohio, but also in many other areas of the Midwest and New England, Underground Railroad sites, or 'stations,' are hallowed ground, places crucial to local heritage tourism and identities" (Blight 233). These "stations" remind Americans of the redemptive nature of some aspects of their history and help to build a sense of identity whether national or regional.

The Canada-U.S. border features as a setting in the novel and takes the form of a yellow line in a matter-of-fact way stressing the arbitrary and de facto non-existing border. The defiant stance regarding the border, basically a non-issue for Jane and her ancestors, becomes evident in the ice fishing shanty, her kitchen bisected by the international boundary, and the casual border crossing when driving to Montreal. The border is referred to in its capacity as a historical sanctuary line for the Kingdom Mountain raiders and as an economic bounty for smugglers, mostly whiskey runners, during Prohibition. Smuggling seems to be pervasive in the novel, even including the low high Sheriff and the Doc. They make Henry fly over the border illicitly. Animals also freely cross the border. The border plays a role only in the construction of the Connector, because after the boundary line the Quebec government must continue the construction of the Connector.

Kingdom Mountain is a "gore", that is "an unincorporated township unto itself" and Jane's ancestors and herself never pay taxes to anyone (55). Jane strongly defends her mountain and reiterates that the mountain belongs to her and not Vermont, the U.S. or Canada (57) against claims to the contrary by her entrepreneurial cousin Eben. He states the "forty-fifth parallel" is the international

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border between Canada and the United States and in more narrow terms Quebec and Vermont (57).

4.3.2 Disconnected "Connector": Ecology vs. Economy, or Past vs. Present

The Connector is planned as a connecting highway or "high road" between Kingdom County, or more precisely, the village of Kingdom Common, and Quebec. Jane opposes the project as it will cross her land on Kingdom Mountain. The construction of the new "high road" (6) is also detrimental to the small hill farmers. They hope that Jane will speak for them. Her opponent is her very own cousin Eben Kinneson (6). Mosher uses Vermont's history and changing social and physical landscapes as a backdrop to his plot. The larger struggle of ecology versus economy comes to the fore in the fictive setting of Kingdom Common and Kingdom Mountain at a micro-level. Jane is a key figure and spokesperson for ecology and the interests of the small farmers. Despite the crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression, sustainable solutions accommodating livelihoods of the common people and the local flora and fauna need to be taken into account. With the Connector the threat of big business and fancy ski resorts becomes very real in the novel. Fact and fiction inform one another in Mosher's novel.

Due to the perceived threat, Jane engages in acts of bordering. At first glance the Connector looks as an improvement, because it connects the locals on both sides of the international boundary. However, the Connector is not planned to increase mutual understanding but to overcome primarily economic isolation. Consequently, Jane's bordering is necessary to maintain the local way of life. The power brokers and other stakeholders in the village community see it differently and are in favor of debordering, of connecting the borderlands. However, this is mainly an economic integration and reminds the 21st century reader of the FTA and NAFTA.

If ruthlessly exploited, Kingdom Mountain's ecology is threatened by the Connector's economic potential. Jane describes Kingdom Mountain as an edenic in-between space, completely independent legally, but also boasting its own climate, weather, and some unique endemic species. This biotope of flora and fauna is severely threatened by the proposed "high road." Jane's Scottish ancestry and her Native heritage enable her to stand firm and not give in to the economic and social pressures. She remains true to her ancestors as the last Memphremagog Abenaki and the sole survivor of the Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons. The unfolding battle encapsulated in ecology versus economy is reminiscent of land claims by Native peoples in North America. White people exploited Native lands

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after forcibly relocating the Natives to other areas, such as reserves and reservations. Economic greed, lust for power, and violence sealed the fate of Natives in North America in the era marked by colonialism and Native genocide. Cultural genocide and ecocide still have an impact today on Native nations. However, in Mosher's novel Kingdom Mountain becomes peace park-like. The conservation effort prevails and the edenic and endemic flora and fauna unique to this in-between space, this borderscape, remain intact and are enshrined in a contract. Thanks to this decision "all's well that ends well" describes best the outcome for Jane. Her life comes full circle, and she engages in a win-win situation with her contenders. She draws the borders, metaphorically speaking, in her interaction with and integration into the local community. She has learned whom to trust and where to maintain a clear line between herself and others.

The two court scenes highlight the battle between the supporters and the detractors of the Connector and showcase the unique space of Kingdom Mountain and Jane's self-confident and knowledgeable approach to stating her case. She first does so at "the district court of Kingdom County" (59) with her friend Judge Ira Allen as the judge. Jane's father was a long-time Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court; so Jane has always been familiar with the judiciary. Chief Justice Dewey used to be her father's clerk and allowed her to bring her dear people to court with her "in the case of Jane Kinneson versus Kingdom Common" (186). At the same time, a deep divide between different worldviews and different lifestyles becomes apparent. This rift is not easily bridged and remains a source of conflict throughout the novel. Jane uses precedents to prove that she is legally allowed to state her own case during the hearings, as is possible for all Memphremagog Abenakis. As in King's short story "Borders," she claims to be neither American nor Canadian, but the last heir of the Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons and the Memphremagog Abenakis. The Supreme Court justices ask pertinent questions, yet in the end rule in favor of Eben Kinneson Esquire. Seemingly a lost cause, Jane gives the mountain to the conservation trust her sister has told her about to save it from destruction. The Appalachian Trust will take the case to the United States Supreme Court.

4.3.3 Crossing the Mason-Dixon Line: En Route from Civil War to Civil Rights

The community and the Duchess engage in diametrically opposed bordering and debordering strategies. Jane, in a very progressive manner for her time, defiantly transcends racial and ethnic borders, the figurative Mason-Dixon Line, with her public display of love for Henry. However, in terms of the "Connector,"

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she opposes the infrastructure project for good reasons. When it comes to her mountain, nature, and the environment, the Duchess is very traditional. The village commoners are the opponents. They want to profit from the economic opportunities with the help of the new highway, the Connector, but ostracize the southerner Henry Satterfield regardless of their initial good relations. Henry causes ambivalent reactions in the village. He befriends some people, women in town admire his gentlemanly behavior, and he loves storytelling and hearing about the bank robbery from the older men. Despite his getting along well even with Eben Kinneson, some people such as the town fathers or a couple of gossips do not like him. When Judge Allen indirectly warns Jane about Henry, she inquires if this is due to the fact that Henry is a "man of color". The judge dismisses this notion, but the narrator reveals that he is distrustful and jealous of Henry. In the courtroom scene, Henry is regarded as the "exotic southerner" by the spectators (50).

A striking contrast in the oppositional set-up of the two main characters is the clothing they wear. Jane, passing as white and with light hair, always wears black, whereas Henry with his dark complexion and Creole ancestry always wears white. Consequently, color lines are blurred or rather subverted. By choosing this clothing and these colors, the persons wearing these outfits want to project an image and probably want to blend in. The only way for a southerner, a stranger from away with Creole ancestry, to outdo the villagers and be overly perfect is in manners and dress. Henry is impeccably dressed when accompanying Jane to the courtroom wearing a "gleaming white suit, newly white-washed shoes, and crimson vest" (53). To wear white and a crimson vest is a revealing combination reminiscent of Biblical language and symbolism: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (KJV 2000, Isa. 1:18; http://bible.cc/isaiah/1–18.htm). Both biracial characters represent a stark contrast in multiple ways: Jane – perceived as white and dressing generally in black – edits down the Bible and Henry – perceived as black and dressing in white – subconsciously lives up to Scripture much more than Jane in terms of words, less so with actions at times. By dressing almost exclusively in white Henry may want to pass as White and become part of the White village community and stop being considered from away. A turning point in the relationship between Jane and Henry is when Jane learns about Henry's mixed heritage. He "was of mixed blood, one-half Scotch-Irish and one-half Creole" (Mosher 30–31). Jane is herself of mixed heritage due to her mother: "'My mother, you know, though she had no Indian ways at all, was the last of the full-blooded Memphremagog Abenakis'" (Mosher 143). She then makes sure

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that Henry exchanges the barn and the company of his plane for her home and her company, initially putting him up in the best bedroom upstairs (30–31). Interestingly though, he stays in the very bedroom where Jane's ancestors, who were abolitionists, granted refuge to fugitive slaves. Thus, general and personal histories connect and come full circle. The room has become a symbolic place, a transient space of being in-between the past and the future, the familiar and the new home of freedom, imbued with future prospects.

By choosing to have two main characters of mixed heritage, Mosher alludes to the possibilities and challenges of relations among different ethnicities. Only Kingdom Mountain, however, is a color-blind, post-racial, and utopian world in which the love between Jane and Henry has the freedom to thrive. In the village of Kingdom Common "[t]ongues wagged" (Mosher 31) and gossip is widespread. Mosher seems to pit Jane, White and Native, northern and female, against the aviator Henry Satterfield, White and African American, southern and male. There are borderlines of racial, cultural and geographic identities as well as gender differences. Moreover, the differences in gender roles as perceived by the protagonists themselves and the society in which they need to function and by which they are surrounded, are perceivable and renegotiated. This oppositional duality is also symbolized in making Henry Satterfield an aviator flying in-between heaven and earth. The plane is a metaphor for possibilities and opportunities. In the sky different laws matter and gravitation is defied. Below reality interferes in the form of racial slurs. High in the sky in his biplane Henry is free to fly wherever and with whomever he chooses. Jane, while wing walking, is walking a thin line between integration and segregation, desire and fear, modernity and tradition. Indeed, she is wing walking the Mason-Dixon Line up in the sky in the eyes of the spectators at the Harvest Festival. Metaphorically reaching towards her and Henry is the water tower with the racial slur, thus threatening and limiting Jane's dreams and aspirations for the future. She is disillusioned regarding the larger community of Kingdom Common.

Mosher not only blurs color lines regarding the protagonists, Jane and Henry, but also with regard to Jane's sister in Montreal. Jane and Henry find out about and visit Jane's sister in Canada. After Henry abruptly leaves Kingdom Mountain Jane connects even more closely with her half-sister. In Mosher's post-racial utopian novel Jane is White and indigenous, whereas her sister is White and Black. Therefore, one character of mixed ancestry, Henry, is, on plot level, exchanged for another multiethnic and multiracial character, Jane's sister. The half-sisters have the same father, but different mothers. Morgan, Jane's father goes south to look for his brother Pilgrim and during that 'pilgrimage' fathers Jane's sister

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before returning home. After his return to Vermont he starts a family on Kingdom Mountain with his Native wife, Pharao's Daughter, who is Jane's mother. The reunion of the sisters of different mixed-race backgrounds signals blurred ethnic distinctions and at the same time also blurred family as well as national distinctions. In a North American reading the sisters belong to two different locations, since they reside on two different sides of the international boundary. However, there is more unity than disunity in spite of presumably different citizenships and nationalities. The sisters both reside in the borderland region of New England-Quebec. People in Montreal are mostly bilingual, so that the linguistic boundary does not represent any barrier in the sisterly communication. In a utopian stance, Mosher narrates a story of a world with less visible borders and focuses on the shared family relations of humankind. The nation-state as well as separating ethnic identity markers belong to a bygone era in *On Kingdom Mountain*.

4.4 Summary

In Mosher's novel border binaries whether geographical, racial, or cultural are complicated, subverted, and renegotiated. Borders are questioned by some, yet maintained by others, an example being color or, even more aptly, the figurative Mason-Dixon Line between the locals and the aviator. Jane and Henry transcend racial and cultural borders by their very existence, despite Jane's Memphremagog Abenaki mother's lack of conspicuous Native ways. During the courtroom scenes before the Supreme Court of Vermont, Jane's indigeneity is doubted. Eben challenges her claim to Native ancestry (196–97) and the legal implications. This is reminiscent of Thomas King's short story "You're not the Indian I had in mind" (*Stories*).

Mosher himself lives in the border region of New England-Quebec, in the so-called Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. His novel is linked to his own experience in northern Vermont and his sense of place. The love for this region and its people permeates the novel and makes for a valid backdrop. On the border peoples, cultures and identities meet. Kingdom Mountain is represented as a unique "third space" and a utopian space, too, reminiscent of an Edenic and paradisiacal place of harmony for nature, animals, and humans. This special space is enhanced by the geographical location and status, being "an entity unto itself" plus an "unincorporated township." Kingdom Mountain lies between the United States and Canada, between Vermont and Quebec and is marked by indigenous claims in addition to the homestead tradition of the Kingdom Mountain Kinnesons. Bordering unfolds along social, and, most importantly, racial borders.

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Henry is the triple outcast, a showman, "a man of color," and "From Away." Jane wants to be different and is othered by the locals. Bordering works both ways. The need for and danger inherent in bordering for identity maintenance and construction becomes apparent. Mosher shows the detrimental effects of societal and racial bordering along color lines and the hypocrisy of the town fathers. He warns about the "bordering, ordering and othering."

The utopian dimension is the color-blindness of Kingdom Mountain. All guests are welcome, even enemies like one of the raiders. This gesture of inclusion is offered in the time of Jane's father Morgan Kinneson, who is Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court. Kingdom Mountain has been a place of refuge for fugitive slaves as well as for "bindlestiffs" and everyone else in need of help. Only in this utopian in-between space, this mountain kingdom with its own liberal, progressive, and inclusive rules is the blossoming relationship between Jane and Henry possible against the lingering racism. Mosher wants to paint the picture of a post-racial society and contrasts the utopian hybrid and Bhabha-like "third space" of Kingdom Mountain with the racial mentality and small-town narrow-mindedness of the commoners. There is an invisible rift between the Duchess and the villagers, who admire but do not necessarily like Jane, with the one exception of Judge Ira Allen. The Duchess is a bone of contention in discussions surrounding the Connector. The hill farmers count on her, but the town fathers dislike her because of her opposition, strong will, and independence. There are also divisions between townspeople and rural residents. Jane, though not being a "hermit" but welcoming other people to her mountain (43) is part of the rift (44). In this borderland a unique culture emerges embodied in the Duchess. The question arises, if her way of life is vanishing and with it her utopia. Henry's sudden departure is in part due to and ultimately triggered by the opposition and racism he faces in the village, but also in part because of the lure of the gold and the freedom he experiences in the in-between space, the sky. In the end, both Jane and Henry inhabit a utopian space, the one on Kingdom Mountain, the other in the limitless sky.

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5 Jim Lynch's *Border Songs* (2009): Power, Permeability, and Mobility

British Columbia-Washington State Borderlands. (Focus and emphasis added).

Border Songs critically explores the struggle for power at and control of the United States border with Canada by featuring a most unusual Border Patrol agent. Protagonist Brandon Vanderkool's striking physique, "six-eight" and "232 pounds of meat and bone stacked vertically beneath a lopsided smile" (4) signals that he literally embodies U.S. author Jim Lynch's humorous and subversive approach to power relations and recent changes along the Line. Brandon personifies the complexity and paradox of the forty-ninth parallel as being invisible and simultaneously enforcing control: "The physical and social awkwardness of Vanderkool is an apt metaphor for the arbitrary and uneven application of American power: usually well-intentioned, often hapless, and always consequential" (Barta). The dyslexic agent recognizes things other people do not see,

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epitomized in his obsessive love for and extraordinary skill at birding. While birding on the job, the rookie agent Brandon makes numerous busts of "buds and bodies" (63) alike and thus quickly turns into a "shit magnet" (65) in the eyes of the other less successful and unmotivated senior agents, also known as "roadies," "*R*etired *O*n *A*ctive *D*uty (25). Lynch highlights and critiques the current transformations in the Canada-U.S. borderlands regarding power, ensuing im/permeability, and im/mobility. His novel corresponds to "[b]y turns a post 9–11 elegy […] and a lampooning of the popular will and political pressures that have made it otherwise" (Barta). Lynch fictionalizes the "rebordering" (Rodney 384) and the " 'thicken[ing]' with enhanced security" in close proximity "to the border in Whatcom County, WA, and the lower mainland of BC" (Konrad and Everitt 302). Correspondingly, cross-border relations are negatively impacted.

In an interview Lynch discloses that he conducted a lot of research for his novel as a journalist and then as a writer regarding the Border Patrol, the B.C. marijuana scene, and the local dairies along the border. Additionally, he read about the issues he addresses in his novel, ranging from birding, landscape art to dyslexia and autism (Interview Random House). Contributing to the author's inspiration for the novel are the reduction of the border to a drainage ditch in the Lynden, Blaine, and White Rock area, news reports and the visible increase in Border Patrol forces (Interview Random House). The border between Canada and the United States in its western portion is considered a "mindbender," and Lynch posits that "[t]he closer you look at the western half of the border, the sillier it gets. It's supposed to follow the invisible 49th parallel, but the thin and imprecise boundary overgrows too fast for crews wielding chainsaws and weed whackers to maintain it" (Interview Random House). This underscores the border's arbitrariness and the futility of protecting such a line by the U.S. Border Patrol, a situation already apparent in the history of the border creation along the 49th parallel.[37] Lynch's extrapolation of borders between the concrete and the abstract is encapsulated in the following statement: "My lasting impression of the [U.S.-] Canadian border is that it's there to create an illusion of security. It feels arbitrary and, in many ways, nonsensical, which is probably an apt description for most of the borders we erect between each other and between generations, eras and places" (Interview Random House). Borders and geographical boundaries hence share many characteristics: They seem superfluous or annoying.

37 "Few images better reveal the arbitrary nature of the border between western Canada and the western United States than those recorded by the survey crews who first marked the forty-ninth parallel" (Jameson and Mouat 183).

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However, at times borders and boundaries are needed to create a sense of order and to give orientation. The issue at stake is the disproportionate attention given to perceived security threats at the Canada-U.S. border.

Protagonist Brandon Vanderkool's temporary land forms are inspired by "Andy Goldsworthy's temporary landscape art" (Interview Random House). This artist is evoked in the words by the dean commenting on Brandon's art towards the end of the novel: "'His work with leaves,' the dean continued, 'shows he's obviously been influenced by the great Andy Goldsworthy, but Mr. Vanderkool's quilts look more like flags, susceptible to the slightest breeze'" (Lynch 290). Flags as markers of national identity and belonging are explicitly referenced in this statement. As Goldsworthy, Brandon Vanderkool sticks to the tenet: "Using nature as his canvas, the artist creates works of transcendent beauty" (Lubow). This beautiful transcendence is not fully appreciated by the community until the end of the novel when Brandon is finally accepted for who he is despite his peculiarities. His fleeting land art in addition to his paintings of illegal migrants testify to his talent and unique perspective.

Border Songs has elicited to date in addition to a number of mostly positive book reviews only limited scholarly research such as Albert Braz's article "Reconstructing the Border: Jim Lynch and the Return of the Canada-US Boundary," describing Lynch's "satirical novel" (191) as "a major achievement in terms of literary representations of Canada-US life" (196). The lack of secondary sources represents a research gap this analysis of the novel seeks to address. *Border Songs* is an indicator of the significance of border concepts in contemporary fiction on the U.S. side of the international boundary between Canada and the United States. In the *New York Times* review "Outlaws' Paradise" the selection of the northern border instead of the United States southern border as setting is stressed (Meyer 1) emphasizing the increasing importance of the Canada-U.S. border. Lynch sees himself as a "regional" writer as he is "driven by the setting" (Barber 2). Another review in the *New York Times* emphasizes the "strikingly eerie cover design by Chip Kidd, which features one of Walton Ford's beautifully rendered images of nature gone awry" and "is emblematic of this book's mixed message" (Maslin 1). This review is critical of the dual nature of Lynch's novel comprising two sides "one ominous and one blithe. Neither the towering figure of Brandon nor that of the Peace Arch uniting Blaine, Wash., with Surrey, British Columbia, is tall enough to bridge that particular border" (Maslin 2).

Yet another book review sheds light on the stricter passport regulations and concurrent thickening of the international boundary: "Terrorists and tourists beware: 'The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative' sounds like an official

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vacation plan, but in typical congressional doublespeak it's designed to slow you down" (Charles 1). The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative was fully implemented including land borders in June 2009. Fear is the underlying cause for the rebordering along the Line: "This thickening of the world's longest, once-undefended border is the latest sad, largely ineffectual annoyance spawned by our fear of drugs and foreigners" (Charles 1). In summary, the uniting effect of Lynch's novel is evident: "In a sense, Lynch has written an anti-thriller thriller, not just a liberal critique of the war on terror but also a moving, optimistic rebuttal of our paranoia that encourages us to imagine, with Brandon, the possibility of flying over everything that divides us" (Charles 2). In the Pacific Northwest the reception of *Border Songs* is an enthusiastic one. Floyd McKay states that "Olympia writer Jim Lynch […] just could be the best new novelist in the region since David Guterson rolled out *Snow Falling on Cedars* in 1995" (1). *Border Songs* is described as a "towering Northwest tale" (Gwinn 1) infused with a sense of place embodied by the protagonist: "Brandon is as Northwest as moss on a stump" (Gwinn 2). In the Canadian newsmagazine *Maclean's* the depth of Canadian insights is underscored: "A U.S. novelist well-versed in Canada reflects paranoia on both sides of the 49th parallel" (Bethune 1). Moreover, the author "is one of the rare Americans as interested as Canadians in the border […]" (Bethune 1). Geography and borders are at the heart of the novel: "*Border Songs* is primarily a novel of place. Lynch plays exquisitely with this theme of division and its consequences by exploring the boundaries within and between characters living in an actual border zone […]" (Bethune 2). The characters experience internal division in addition to the community borders in this transnational region.

The novel, set in the border towns of Blaine, Washington and White Rock, British Columbia in addition to the dairy farms in the Lynden area, centers on Brandon Vanderkool and his life, family, and work in the borderlands of Washington State and British Columbia. As a border guard, dairy farmer, son, community member, quirky and unique character he epitomizes the author's quest to unsettle preconceived notions of the border, the recent changes along the Line and larger questions of power, paranoia, and security. Significant people for Brandon are his parents Norm and Jeanette, his love interest Madeline, his trainer Dionne and colleagues from the Border Patrol, and the mysterious masseuse and new community member Sophie. The plot focuses on key encounters and key scenes setting in relief the unreasonable acts of rebordering in this integrated cross-border region. Usually, the United States is dominant in North America and overshadows Canada. Bilateral relations are asymmetric. However, in this borderlands region, this is reversed: "Near the border in the Pacific Northwest,

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the asymmetry of the Canada-US relationship is actually reversed because Vancouver is closer to the border than Seattle, and the Canadian communities along the lower Fraser Valley are larger and growing more rapidly than communities in Whatcom County, WA" (Konrad and Everitt 302).

Lynch's novel questions and reverses predetermined notions. The seemingly able Border Patrol agents trying to protect the border are either unwilling to do so or, conversely, are overzealous. However, the new atypical agent Brandon Vanderkool is unexpectedly highly successful as border agent. Where the senior agents look the other way or wait for reinforcements, Brandon makes arrests against his will. The rather shy and odd protagonist passionately and compulsively enjoys birding. While in fact looking for birds to boost his daily bird counts during his work as border agent, he accidentally discovers illegal immigrants, smugglers, and contraband. Lynch comically subverts the border securitization by means of irony, satire, and humor.

The Canada-U.S. border and de/bordering processes in the cross-border community are the catalysts for most of the action and interaction between the characters in the novel. The opening chapter sets the stage for the narration to unfold, encapsulated in the very first sentence: "Everyone remembered the night Brandon Vanderkool flew across the Crawfords' snowfield and tackled the Prince and Princess of Nowhere" (3). The reader learns that the protagonist must be Brandon who "flew," foreshadowing the birding metaphor, and Brandon personified as bird. Moreover, the mythical Prince and Princess of Nowhere must represent one driving force in the plot. The word "everyone" in this sentence signals the importance of community in the novel and the word "remembered" shows the significance of shared memories and experiences in a common region. Such a sense of borderland unity does not stop at borders. The story of Brandon and the regal couple of "Nowhere" "braided itself into memories along both sides of the border" (3). This myth underscores the significant role of the Canada-U.S. border setting. The community transcends the international boundary and is held together by the shared experience of the border.

The author uses the illegal couple, the Prince and Princess of Nowhere, as a trope. They stand out in the midst of all the other arrests and busts, because they are the first illegal migrants Brandon apprehends and they remain mysterious. The couple is also memorable because of the means of their apprehension: Brandon seizes them almost in flight during a blizzard. This legendary act becomes part of local folklore and storytelling and is intrinsically linked to Brandon. One of the other important characters, the mysterious masseuse Sophie, thinks about the Prince and Princess of Nowhere after the conversation has shifted to

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Brandon. She imagines how a person the migrants cannot understand lures the couple to cross the border: "*Is this America?* The air, soil and trees looked and smelled the same. *Are we really in America?* And then – YES! – to be in the land of liberty for all of three electrifying minutes before getting chased and crushed by the largest, most unusual agent in the history of the U.S. Border Patrol. Welcome to America, whoever you are" (42). Lynch, in one passage, addresses all the essential issues. He characterizes Brandon as a unique border agent, emphasizes yet again the arbitrary nature of geographical boundaries, criticizes human trafficking, and ultimately questions the notion that America is the "land of liberty"[38] where the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" (Lazarus, The New Colossus, Inscription Statue of Liberty in Ogletree Jr. 755) are welcomed with open arms. Peter I. Rose posits with regard to Emma Lazarus's poem: "We know the lines but we also know that, in 1921, that golden door was closed and, three years later, all but sealed" (Rose 12). Immigration had become a regulated and restricted issue.

5.1 Counterpoint: Natural Bird Songs, Constructed Border Songs

Edward Said's contrapuntal conceptualization, based on musical traditions, is beneficial in the understanding of the juxtaposition of "border" and "songs" in the novel's title. Instead of bird songs, as the reader might expect from the jacket painting "Falling Bough" (2008) by Walton Ford, Lynch's novel is more aptly called *Border Songs*. The title stresses the contrast between bird songs in nature and the socially constructed, arbitrary border: "border songs" as a counterpoint to bird songs. The duality of the natural versus the artificial and constructed is present in the novel. Such a binary is eventually transcended in *Border Songs*. The protagonist symbolizes this quality as so-called "Big Bird." In analogy, Said's contrapuntal criticism, according to Jonathan Arac, exhibits a "loving" quality that "joins" (57) in contrast to more aggressive oppositional criticism (57). "Geographical notations" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* in Mackenthun 331) matter to Said. This very concept is transposed to "border songs," border representing the spatial and geographical, whereas notations are directly related to sheet music and songs. Thus the concepts of "geographical notations" and "counterpoint" are indeed pertinent for an analysis of Lynch's novel. In fact, *Border Songs* refers

38 "Land of Liberty," Lyrics Samuel F. Smith from "America" <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh697.sht> Referenced in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech in 1963.

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to bird songs, as can be read in the following passage: "The robin sang first, even before the Moffats' rooster, followed by eight other species politely waiting for their sunrise solos while Brandon sorted mating songs from territorial songs […] until a song sparrow embarrassed them all with three different renditions of his manic ballad" (57). Lynch creates a sense of place not only by place descriptions, but by the birds Brandon hears.

There are numerous borders in the novel between the Border Patrol and the locals, between small dairies and "big boys," between the newly rich and the hard-working longtime residents, between Americans and Canadians, between humans and animals. In addition, more boundaries appear between the sick and the healthy, the outsiders and insiders, the conformists and the non-conformists, the young and the old, between men and women, between parents and children, between local Border Patrol officers and the FBI, the local and the federal levels. These borders are transcended. The geographical boundary, in this region often not more than a drainage ditch, is also transcended, whether by floods, by birds or cigarette smoke moving beyond the border. Moreover, people cross the border, some legally and others illegally like the smugglers and illegal migrants. Several scenes address these border crossings and bordering processes. In this respect, the subplot featuring Norm and Wayne is crucial. Additionally, Wayne lectures the D.C. politicians touring the border and in so doing stresses the problematic and complex history and nature of the Canada-U.S. boundary.

The bordered existence of Americans and Canadians is transformed by the notion of the border as meeting place illustrated by the girl scout festival, the international bunco game at Sophie's and the very cross-border community itself. Some characters are depicted as being above the border binaries, for instance Brandon and to a certain extent Sophie. They have ties to everyone, but will not belong to either camp. These two characters develop an unlikely bond. Sophie discovers in Brandon her main research project regarding her plan to write a local history. She initially accompanies him to his experiential art in nature, takes pictures, and films him, thus growing quite fond of him. Brandon is being domineered, sometimes overtly and at other times more subtly. Due to his peculiarities people underestimate him. When Brandon feels insecure, he calms himself with birding and phishing for birds. He feels at ease with animals and nature and the familiar surroundings soothe him.

Lynch uses the character of Sophie as the almost all-knowing yet mysterious presence, a wise voice hence the name Sophie. Her last name "Winslow" can be interpreted into "win slow(ly)," underscoring her ability to slowly but surely win the confidence of all the key players in that cross-border community. Sophie

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is well informed about all the events and the various residents. She is strategic in her networking and builds her position in the community with bunco[39] games, parties and most importantly her massages. Sophie is the one having the overview about what is going on in the cross-border community, in part due to her "international bunco game" (39). She wants to receive information people do not automatically share, so she manipulates them in an unassuming manner by giving them the opportunity to play, drink, and gossip: "Sophie's game plan was simple: Assemble the best-connected gossips she could find – bankers, nurses, pharmacists and others – and engage them in mindless gambling, then add liquor, and type it all up later" (39). Sophie is winning slowly but surely. The madness is like an epidemic and stirs people's desire to become rich quickly. Sophie shares the story of Cranberry Chas about the money he found on his property and that he gave to the sheriff. The community dreams of quick cash in a feverish state according to Sophie's observations: "[…] Sophie sensed a new fantasy emerging in which clumsy smugglers drop or even plant sacks of cash on your property. Every month she sensed more excitement, as if the ever-escalating smuggling made everybody feel younger" (40). Her neighbors want to tell her rumors, secrets, and share their experiences. She provides a link in the plot and integrates Brandon in the community. It is at her private art show that in the final chapter Madeline and Brandon are reunited.

Sophie's role in the local community is mysterious, yet important. She fills a void; people do not care whether she is merely scrap-booking or does an oral history as she creates records of her interviews and photos: "What was actually true didn't seem to matter. People lined up to gossip and gripe, to speculate and get rubbed, to confess their temptations and share their biggest worries" (93). Sophie talks to McAfferty while she massages him. He refers to Brandon as "[t]he shit magnet" (92) and shares that he thinks that Brandon is "as strange as he is large" (93). McAfferty underscores Brandon's unique talent despite his being "as gullible as a twelve-year-old" (92): "Brandon just *is*. And his eyes are really, really wide open" (93). Through this fellow agent's perspectives on Brandon the reader obtains new insights regarding Brandon, corroborating some of the characteristics mentioned by the other characters.

Jeanette adores her son. She supports him even though she realizes that he has a learning disability. She feeds his interest in birding and homeschools him. Her poor memory, which turns out to be an early form of Alzheimer's, starts when

39 Lynch uses the bunco game as it has a prohibition past and is regaining popularity (World Bunco Association).

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Brandon is at the Border Patrol academy in the Southwest. She used to be the quiz champion and now forgets the easiest things. Nonetheless, she possesses emotional intelligence, empathy, and intuition even after the outbreak of her disease. Madeline recounts how Jeanette found the right words after her mother passed on. One key passage is the reversal of roles between Sophie Winslow and her interviewee. Usually Sophie interviews and records everyone and does not reveal anything about herself, but with Jeanette this method does not function any longer. Jeanette insists on learning more about Sophie and interviews her. This is the moment when Sophie opens up and tells about her personal life and discloses that she wants to write a community history and that she is not interested in men. She reveals this information to an Alzheimer's patient, thus subverting the readers' expectations. Sophie is particularly interested in Brandon and tells Jeanette that he is her true project.

Brandon is very fond of his mother. He can face reality about the miserable conditions of the dairy and the cows, but he is in a state of denial concerning his mother's health. The contrary is true for Brandon's father. Norm is in a state of denial regarding his cows and the dairy, but not regarding his wife's health (129). On the very first page Lynch introduces Brandon's hobby of counting birds and his expert knowledge. As an agent Brandon has to find people and things that do not *"belong"* (Lynch 3). The italicization captures the reader's attention and underlines the significance of the notion of belonging. Belonging to and fitting in a community is thus an important motif in the novel amidst increasingly bordered neighborly relations. Brandon has an ingenious insight: "'Know something?' Brandon said. 'I think the most interesting people I'll meet these days will be criminals – or people about to become criminals'" (13). This last part clearly foreshadows Madeline's path on the slippery slope and vicious circle of becoming involved in the illegal bud business. First she just wants to briefly participate in the bud growing and then she is sucked into the circle of money, excitement, and guilt, wanting to find the right moment to quit and never finding it to do so. Madeline is rightly alarmed by Brandon's words on the cell phone when her battery has stopped. She realizes she turns more and more into an addict with unhealthy behavior: "This kept happening nowadays. She'd plan on *one* cocktail or *half* a joint, then fall into these time warps" (13). Madeline remembers her youth and how she used to be closer to Brandon at the age of fourteen or fifteen.

5.1.1 "Big Bird": Border Patrol Agent Brandon Vanderkool

Initially, Brandon is marginalized in the community due to his peculiarities. He has one or two friends who are on his side such as Danny Crawford. However,

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the nicknames he is given are not flattering. He undergoes a dramatic change in the course of the plot when he becomes attractive as a successful agent. The good "fairy" Sophie, who is well-connected, introduces him into the popular in-crowd. Eventually, as an up-and-coming artist, successful former agent, significant other of Madeline and local son, he is fully accepted. In the beginning, he is not a complete outsider, but alienated by societal divisions. Nonetheless, some people like basketball coaches, the doctor attesting his outstanding gift, and tall women find him intriguing. Exclusion thus gives way to inclusion.

Brandon personifies the tension between the local community and border securitization and border enforcement. The work as a Border Patrol agent is an ideal occupation for Brandon as it allows him to stay put at home and use his talent for observing and spotting things: "Brandon traversed the streets of his life now more than ever, getting paid, so it seemed, to do what he'd always loved doing, to look closely at everything over and over again. The repetition and familiarity suited him" (3–4). Brandon appreciates familiar surroundings and finds comfort in them in contrast to "the glassy canyons of Seattle or Vancouver" (4). As a Border Patrol agent he is in charge of guarding the border and enforcing the anti-smuggling and contraband legislation as well as immigration law. Customs, immigration, and rising paranoia are paramount concerns of federal policies, but do not include the right balance of local versus federal concerns and needs. Lynch characterizes Brandon directly and indirectly, implicitly and explicitly and is free to unsettle preconceived notions. In so doing, he comically subverts binaries related to the geographical boundary, questions societal norms, and the paradigm of inclusion and exclusion.

Brandon stands out in the local community because of his quirkiness: "People talked about Brandon the way they discussed earthquakes, eclipses and other phenomena. His size, his 'art' and the bizarre things he said and did had always generated chatter about Super Freak or Big Bird or whatever they were calling him at the time" (Lynch 11). Brandon being called "Big Bird" is partially condescending but almost in a positive way. He feels close to birds and he is a master in birding. On several occasions he feels like a bird and wants to fly away with a flock. Brandon, mildly autistic, is dyslexic yet very gifted in seeing things other people do not see. He spots differences, whether in the natural world or bird behavior or at his father's dairy when a cow is ill. The special gift Brandon has is epitomized in his obsessive love and extraordinary skill at birding: "Brandon could identify birds a mile away by their size and flight and many of their voices by a single note. […] Most birders keep life lists of the species they've seen, and the more intense keep annual counts. Brandon kept day lists in his head, whether

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he intended to or not" (Lynch 6). The protagonist is in the world, but seemingly not of this world. His disability turns out to be his strength despite the obstacles he runs into in everyday life and has to overcome eventually. The twenty-three year old Brandon looks like an "unfinished sculpture," as he is very tall and his physique and personality are marked by oddities. He loves birding to the point of obsession and also does bird paintings. The jacket of the hardcover edition of the novel features Walton Ford's outstanding painting showing birds hanging on a branch and forming a human-like sculpture reminiscent of Brandon.

Birds transcend borders. Brandon "Big Bird" Vanderkool as a Border Patrol agent has the power to seize illegal immigrants and smugglers and crosses borders and boundaries constantly. The central character functions partly as a trickster or jester in the novel. Brandon has the liberty to critique and subvert the system and status quo. He is almost shape shifting as tricksters would due to his mental and metaphorical bird transformation. However, Brandon more closely resembles a jester speaking the truth in a comic relief manner, since he is perceived as innocent and in a certain way naïve. Nonetheless, for the illegal aliens and for the smugglers he captures, he embodies power similar to that which is associated with tricksters.

Brandon has a bridging function and transcends border binaries in multiple ways, first and foremost by the close association with birds. He is depicted as a border-transcending, freedom-loving "Big Bird," and he defines himself by the same image. Lynch's portrayal of Brandon's kinship with animals, with cows and birds in particular, is an indirect criticism of human society and a community life in which everyone vies for the best and the brightest. However, what is deemed best and which qualities are deemed essential in the end is subject to change and lies in the eye of the beholder. By using an anti-hero such as Brandon the author succeeds in making the reader wonder what characteristics and qualities do matter in personal lives and professional careers. The questioning of commonly held beliefs does extend beyond the self and also encompasses the cross-border community and the drawing of borderlines. Binary thinking is made difficult by a fictional character like Brandon, because he does not neatly fit into established categories. Lynch characterizes him as someone who is part of the Border Patrol, yet simultaneously not really part of it. Paradoxically, he makes the highest number of arrests despite his being most reluctant to do so and caring much for the people he accidentally apprehends while birding. Through this fictional character, Lynch's border concept, an upside-down border message dealing with arbitrariness, power relations, trust and fear in the local community, comes alive.

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5.1.2 Budding Relationship: Agent Brandon vs. Smuggler Madeline

The novel's characters are engaged in bordered relations, contrast being the most obvious characterization. The memorable cast is comprised of several protagonists, but the main character is Brandon Vanderkool. The story and plot ultimately revolve around him. The other figures, his father Norm(an), his mother Jeanette, the Canadian neighbor Professor Wayne Rousseau and his daughter Madeline, and the masseuse Sophie Winslow, also partly contribute to the reader's understanding of the border. Wayne and Madeline Rousseau, in particular, feature prominently in this respect. Madeline actively undermines the Border Patrol's authority by helping with marihuana grow ops and by smuggling bud across the bay from Canada into the United States. She becomes part of the Canadian drug growing business. Her father Wayne Rousseau smokes medical marihuana for his disease and is very vocal on the arbitrariness of the Canada-U.S. border and overall bilateral relations between Canada and the United States.

Brandon's interaction and relationships with other characters help to reveal his personality and enhance the reader's understanding of Lynch's border-related message. The impact of the border is increasingly felt in community life as paranoia and ensuing security measures multiply. Life at the border is directly permeated by the line. Brandon develops from a rookie agent and inferior person in the community into the successful community member who has gained acceptance, respect, and admiration for his work as an agent and eventually even as an artist. Some characters only serve as background catalysts like Madeline's late mother and especially Danny Crawford, although he is never present in person. Nonetheless, he is the common denominator between Brandon and Madeline as he functions as an interpreter for Brandon's peculiarities in school and as Brandon's personal role model and protective force.

Brandon is his parents' long-awaited child. He is unique and is a "whopper C-section" (34), so that his parents initially think they are going to have twins. Norm is aware of the strong mother-child bond, but in Jeanette's and Brandon's case this special connection remains unchanged and proves detrimental for the parents' relationship: "He came to see his son as an intruder sent to drive his wife crazy" (35). Brandon is mildly autistic as one doctor suggests and dyslexic. Learning about birds becomes Brandon's deepest interest and his mother fosters that developing skill: "Jeanette fed his fascination as if both their lives depended on it" (35). Birding is an escape route and proves that Brandon is intelligent in different ways from other children. He knows *Birds of Puget Sound* by heart before he is ten years old. From Norm's perspective the reader learns that Brandon has a "bird-rescue phase" and then a "bird-art binge" (35). Birding and birds

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provide a way of freedom, self-assertion, and a source of self-confidence for Brandon. Brandon has a great talent for dealing with animals in general. This holds true as well for cows because "for the most part Brandon was great with cows, particularly at noticing things Norm and most dairymen missed – the beginnings of swollen joints, split hooves or eye infections, and the potentially agitating shifts in lighting, texture, colors or sounds" (36). Brandon's personality is awkward initially, but he undergoes a change throughout the story. He becomes more self-confident, rediscovers his life as a dairy farmer and eventually is able to start a relationship with Madeline.

Brandon's father Norm is embarrassed by his son. He does not like Jeanette doting too much on Brandon. For Norm, Brandon behaves in a weird manner, and he dislikes interpreting Brandon's words to outsiders. In order to make him grow up he sends Brandon away to join the Border Patrol. He is very surprised to see that Brandon excels in what he is doing, despite his peculiar interests in the arts and birding. It is Brandon, and not his father, who is the more mature and responsible dairy farmer and attends to the situation with the sick herd of cows. Norm has to admit that Brandon is outstanding with the cows, that he truly has a gift in dealing with animals and senses things others do not recognize. Still needing to recover from his stroke Norm is glad that Brandon takes over the dairy.

Brandon and his trainer Dionne are in a similar relationship to the one Madeline and Toby are engaged in, though not in a criminal milieu. Dionne manipulates Brandon and takes advantage of him. She might be truly attracted to him thanks to her admiration for the enormous success Brandon enjoys as a Border Patrol agent, but she uses him to fulfill her sexual desire. Gender relations are reversed. She as the single mom bosses her colleague around, though not in a mean way. Dionne is a good trainer seeing herself and Brandon in a different category from all the other roadies. Described as virile, she has to prove her mettle in the male-dominated world of the Border Patrol. Brandon tries to please Dionne and models her while doing his job, for instance during arrests.

Madeline's important relationships encompass those with her father, her lover Toby, and most importantly, Brandon. Madeline is Wayne's favorite daughter, but she is also the troublemaker. Due to his illness MS Wayne had to retire from the University of British Columbia. He uses marihuana as a medicine and indulges in alcohol. It is Madeline, though, who is the drug addict. Wayne helps her by giving her an alibi during the tunnel investigation and sends her to a rehab program. Madeline and her sister Nicole often disagree, because they are too different. Nicole is married, rich, and successful in her job and seems perfect but heartless. Madeline is the opposite, though not perfect, she has a big heart.

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Therefore Wayne prefers Madeline, since he feels unloved by his second daughter Nicole. Nevertheless, he tries to have a positive family gathering with his daughters and Nicole's anesthetist husband. Madeline lives in an unbalanced relationship with Toby. She initially likes rather than fears him and tries to quit the drug business a couple of times, but to no avail. Toby exerts power over her due to her own internal flaw of chasing an adrenaline rush and money.

The key opposition in the novel forms the pair of U.S. border agent Brandon Vanderkool and Canadian smuggler Madeline Rousseau, who are neighbors, antagonists, and finally lovers. Their bond is marked by multiple borders. One boundary is geographical: She is a Canadian, possibly of French origin, whereas he is an American of Dutch descent. Lynch juxtaposes and contrasts them. Another border is the societal one between good and evil. She is the Canadian smuggler engaged in illicit actions; he is the American Border Patrol agent whose job it is to stop illegal activities. The evolving relationship and eventual love between Brandon and Madeline is characterized by misunderstandings, misperceptions, and their opposing roles in the local community. She is a cultivator in the bud business, whereas he works for the Border Patrol, precisely catching drug and contraband smugglers as well as illegal migrants trying to cross the border. This moral contrast between the two protagonists drives the story. The opposition reaches a climax when Brandon, though no longer part of the Border Patrol, discovers the border tunnel and sees the connection to the Damant house, in which Madeline lives at the time. He is torn between his obligation to report his observations to the Border Patrol and his inclination to warn Madeline. The conflict of whom to call first is resolved by Brandon calling Madeline first. This act discloses his strong feelings of friendship, loyalty, and budding love he harbors for her.

Despite their differences the border between them is fluid and transcended at times. Both share a love of nature and the natural world albeit in different domains. She loves plants and gardening, while he loves birds and the outdoors. They share problematic family backgrounds, sickness of their parents and having in fact only one parent. Madeline's mother passed away and Brandon's mother suffers from a disabling disease. Dreams, hopes, sorrows, and escapism mingle in their lives and the lives of their family members. Brandon and Madeline know each other from their childhood and as neighbors despite the international boundary which separates their families' properties. They also have one friend in common, the often-quoted Danny Crawford, who, however, never personally appears in the novel.

Brandon is a year younger than Madeline and is attracted to her very early on. They lose touch, but Brandon, being part of the Border Patrol, tries to reconnect

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with her. Madeline, however, is in a manipulative relationship with Toby, who is heavily involved in the British Columbia (BC) bud business. He runs several huge grow-ops, expanding his empire steadily. Madeline is one of his growers, clippers, and later also smugglers. He is interested in her, but Madeline wonders what it is he sees in her, whether girlfriend or unequal business partner. During Madeline's ever-increasing entanglement with the illegal Canadian drug business and with Toby, Brandon's interest in her is intensified. He thinks Madeline is curious about what he does as a living, although she interrogates rather than converses with him. She is simply asking all the questions over lunch Toby told her to ask to obtain new information on how the Border Patrol operates. Toby does not ascribe the resurgence of drug busts to sheer luck or Brandon's skill as a Border Patrol agent, but instead is convinced that there is a mole in the midst of his inner circle and in his business operations.

The relationship between Brandon and Madeline progresses as Madeline grows weary and even afraid of Toby, and Brandon is there for her in times of crises. Even though Madeline initially uses Brandon and comments after sleeping with Brandon that she "hit a new shameful low" she comes to like him more and more. He inadvertently saves her from Monty, the foot fetishist, through his call. Brandon also rescues her from Toby by showing her the pictures the Border Patrol received. After the incident with the Damant House tunnel and Brandon warning her, she is sent to rehab by her father. Afterwards, she works as a gardener again, wants to take college classes and promises Brandon's father to show him how to sail his dream boat. Another emerging theme is madness. "Getting rich quick" becomes a widespread madness in addition to small personal instances of insanity or obsession. Wayne Rousseau calls Norm's boat project a "monument to [his] ego" (22). Norm later on thinks about this comment and comes to the following conclusion: "A monument to his *ego*? No. To his incompetence? Probably. To his insanity? Definitely" (34).[40]

At Sophie's casino grand opening art show featuring exclusively Brandon's paintings and his forms in nature, Madeline is finally reunited with Brandon. Despite all their differences Madeline and Brandon complement each other. She is more down-to-earth, whereas he lives in his art world, enjoying time outdoors for birding, taking care of the dairy cows, his dogs and just living in the moment. In their relationship societal, ethical, and geopolitical borders are transcended.

40 This echoes Werner Herzog's film *Fitzcarraldo* featuring the scene with the steamer in the jungle. The film is linked to madness: "'Fitzcarraldo' may well be a madman's dream […]" (*New York Times Movie Review*).

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Brandon as a border agent is diametrically opposed to Madeline as a bud grower and smuggler yet their love has overcome divisions and all obstacles.

5.1.3 In/Security and In/Sanity: American Norman vs. Canadian Wayne

The desire for security on a national level is prevalent, particularly from the federal political perspective. However, local farmers also feel insecure when they hear about bomb threats and car bombers. Geopolitically the United States has entered an era of insecurity and paranoia ever since September 11, 2001. The terrorist attacks have destroyed the general sense of peace, security, and serenity on American soil. This insecurity era has led to rebordering along the Canada-U.S. border and the border's thickening with measures such as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. Security understood metaphorically refers to a sense of security on a psychological level in terms of family relations, health, and personal wealth. Norm is one prime example of this lacking sense of security. The same holds true for Norm's wife, but also for Wayne, the Canadian former professor who is severely ill. Wayne is also worried about his daughter Madeline. The notion of love and loss and being content in every-day life is linked to the concepts of security versus insecurity.

Lynch plays with and frequently uses stereotypes. When Madeline goes to see her father, Lynch uses Canadiana to create a truly Canadian setting such as piano music by Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, the Canadian current affairs magazine *Maclean's*, and the hockey strike in Canada. Almost too explicit, the informed reader cannot miss these hints. Glenn Gould embodies the genius steeped in madness and insanity, something that Wayne Rousseau strives for with his series of reinventions. Occasionally, Lynch as a former journalist tries too hard to incorporate all the details that actually happened although he claims that everything is fictitious and similarities are only coincidental. Albert Braz points out: "Despite being works of fiction, they pay close attention to detail, both social and political, reflecting the author's previous career as an award-winning journalist" ("Reconstructing" 194). Furthermore, Braz argues that "the genesis of *Border Songs* [is traceable] to his newspaper articles" ("Reconstructing" 194). One such article is "'A Trip to 'Vansterdam'" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 194).

According to Braz, Lynch "reverses some of the central myths about the two countries" ("Reconstructing"194). The novelist transcends border binaries insofar as he does not portray "the deferent north and the nonconformist south" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 194). Braz suggests that "[q]uite the contrary, the Canada he portrays in his novel is a country whose main economy is illicit and whose citizens appear to consume and grow drugs like marijuana with impunity"

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("Reconstructing" 194). Furthermore, Lynch's characters do not seem to exhibit the same attitudes as one might expect in a unified cross-border region, but abide by "a cultural divide" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 194): "Depending on which side of the line people happen to live, they see the world differently, a phenomenon that is never more evident than when it comes to drugs and world politics, notably terrorism" (Braz, "Reconstructing"195). Canadian and Vancouver-based author and artist Douglas Coupland elaborates on Vancouver's drug business: "Vancouver's pot is world renowned for its potency. […] Much of this pot comes from grow-ops – indoor hydroponics plantations located in basements" (48). He further states that "[p]ot is among B.C.'s five largest industries" (Coupland 48). The alleged mindset in Vancouver regarding BC bud is casual in contrast to suspicions in terms of U.S. meddling: "Most Vancouverites basically don't think pot's the real issue and suspect – with whatever accurate level of paranoia – that pot crackdowns have something to do with the Kremlinological machinations of the White House rather than the plant itself" (Coupland 49).

Americans appear to be against pot growing and smuggling, whereas on the Canadian side it is a lucrative business. This leads Braz to conclude that "one of the unexpected ironies of Lynch's novel is that Canadians turn out to be more American – at least in the sense of being more capitalist – than the Americans" ("Reconstructing" 196). This is a surprising conclusion and one that Canadians usually contest, as Canadians, particularly if Anglophone, like to emphasize their sovereignty and distinct national identity as non-American. The border is much more than an economic or legal divide, it is indeed a marker of difference in terms of identity construction and, agreeing with Braz, cultures and attitudes. Braz positively comments on Lynch's novel regarding "its acute dissection of the growing resistance to the militarization of the international boundary," but he criticizes "the Americanness of the text" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 197). He links this observation to the U.S.-centric approach within hemispheric studies and perceives a similar "US-centrism" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 197) in Lynch's novel. The Canadian critic Braz states: "Notwithstanding Lynch's focus on international relations along the western end of the British Columbia-Washington border, there is never much doubt which country is considered the dominant one. That is, which country assumes it has the right to affect the other without being much touched by it" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 197). Already former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau observed the truth of "[l]iving next to [the United States] is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant" (qtd. in Andreas 462). The U.S. influence and impact is unavoidable. Canadian border guards are now armed (Nicol 273) leading for example to conflicts with indigenous nations at

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Akwesasne. Braz's observation reflects the reality in bilateral, highly asymmetric, relations between Canada and the United States. For Braz Lynch, a U.S. writer based in Washington State, consequently exhibits mostly "a US perspective, which normally would be fine," but "clashes with critical elements in the novel" (Braz, "Reconstructing" 198). Illegal activities are of Canadian origin, excessive business is on the Canadian side (Braz, "Reconstructing" 198) and Canadian characters are portrayed in a negative way (Braz, "Reconstructing" 199).

In *Border Songs* the neighborly arguments and encounters between Norm and Wayne showcase the contrasting worldviews of U.S. versus Canadian perspectives. They are in a stand-off and hold each other personally accountable for the ostensible shortcomings of their nation-states. Lynch juxtaposes the roles of politicians from elsewhere with the local Border Patrol chief and Wayne comes into the equation in a jester-like manner. Wayne is clown-like: "The most amusingly ugly of Lynch's many ugly Canadians is a magnificent clown, dead true to type, and ultimately sympathetic" (Barber 1). Wayne speaks his mind to Norm, neighbors and politicians alike.

Norm, as his telling name indicates, longs for normalcy. He is surrounded by illness, lack of money, his unique and special son and a difficult neighbor. Norm and Wayne confront one another with their deepest fears and insecurities. Both embody the stereotypical differences of what it means to be American and Canadian and personify the arbitrariness of the border. They are each other's closest neighbors despite the border, a drainage ditch, between them. It is very easy to engage in a heated debate across the ditch and that is Wayne's favorite activity except for reinventing things already invented. Wayne blames Norm for everything going wrong in the United States. Regarding the American drug czar criticizing Canadian drug policy he declares that "You act like *our* land is *your* land" (19). This reproach resonates with the common Canadian belief that the United States, if not physically, then through the back door of business and cultural products, imperialistically wants to claim Canada. From Norm's perspective Wayne could have moved elsewhere upon retirement. Wayne openly criticizes American foreign policy and flies the Cuban and Iranian flags on Sunday to make a statement (19). Moreover, he likes to add insult to injury and asks Norm about all his problems, such as his wife's health, his cows, his sailboat, and his son Brandon (20–23). Norm wants to escape from these conversations, but he stays put "standing there breathing illegal secondhand smoke wafting across a ditch he hadn't crossed since Customs spotted an old DUI on his record and sent him back" (20). He decided not to enter Canada again despite his memories of childhood and youth which he spent there playing and helping out in the fields.

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Regarding his wife he treasures the memory of trips to Abbotsford "to get Jeanette her chocolate éclair, which she'd hold up like a half-eaten passport to get them waved back through" (20). This shows the extent to which the border culture in the local community is engrained and how significant the changes along the border and in local ownership have been in the fictional as well as the real worlds. It is a very strong metaphor to have a foodstuff, symbolizing community and shared food culture, as a sign of identification and proof of citizenship instead of post 9/11 rebordering measures. Community and cultural ties have been superseded by law enforcement, negativity, and suspicion at the border. Now passports are paramount as proof of identity and citizenship representing the categories in which every prospective border traveler is confined. This classification leads to unwanted and desired border crossers depending on the perception of socio-economic status, class, race, and nationality.

In his novel, Lynch stereotypically yet ironically lets Canadian protagonist Wayne defend Cannabis and the medical use of it against the American protagonist Norm's objections. The Canadian displays an air of superiority in his Anti-Americanism. Wayne states that "Cannabis isn't some wicked invention by socialists or Muslims or gays […]" (21). The good Canadian is pitted against the bad American. This portrayal is believable, but at the same time very conventional. Lynch is slightly too much on the journalistic side trying to include every stereotype such as the Iranian and Cuban flags: "Lynch trots out stock American and Canadian figures that stand in relief to his idiosyncratic central character. Jingoistic, individualist Americans and self-righteous, pot-smoking Canadians frequently sling jibes at one another across a border represented by the ditch between their backyards" (Barta 1). However, comparative literature scholar Braz from the University of Alberta, Canada, criticizes Jim Lynch's "Americanness" (Braz 199) that ostensibly permeates *Border Songs*. Despite favorable criticism regarding Lynch's so-called "discovery of Canada" (Braz 196), negative aspects come to the fore in Braz's analysis of the novel. Considering Braz's Canadianness, the third-country reader of his article recognizes the classic Canadian stance with regard to the United States. Braz posits that Lynch seems to convey the sense that the Canadian characters in *Border Songs* always need the United States as a reference point in order to construct Canadian identity. Moreover, he also critiques the predominantly negative portrayal of Canadian figures as compared to the American figures. It becomes obvious that the very things Braz objects to in Lynch's subject position are his own blind spots as a Canadian. First of all, it remains to be seen whether Lynch is really stuck in what Braz labels Lynch's Americanness and secondly Braz himself is stuck in his Canadian stance. In an

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interview Lynch explains his underlying motives: "I don't mean to characterize Canadians as marijuana smugglers across the board" (Barber).

Discussions regarding the literary representation of Canadian identity reflect the overall stage of Canada as a former dominion of the United Kingdom and the sense of insecurity in terms of statehood and identity due to the proximity to the overwhelming presence of the United States. This historically founded sense of identity insecurity as opposed to the recent security paranoia in the United States is obvious in the Harper government's rebranding efforts along the lines of the monarchy, history, and the military. The Canada-U.S. border still serves as a valid marker of identification for Canadians as well as the commemorations of the War of 1812, the monarchy and the military. Canadians' sense of self and Canadian national identity constructions are based on the premise of being different from the United States and of not being American. 2017 will mark the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation. At first glance, affirmative identity constructions are proposed by the foci on history, the military and the monarchy, yet the foundation of not being American is still underlying. Canada might rather celebrate its identity as a Northern, aboriginal, diverse and bilingual if not multilingual country in its own right.

Norm realizes the numerous problems he has: "The big picture? How big do you really wanna go? His wife is losing her mind. His son was in danger. A third of his herd was too sick to milk. And his sailboat was a pipe dream" (22–23). He is almost in despair and would welcome losing his mind as a form of escapism. According to Michel Foucault, "[T]he ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*" (Foucault and Miskowiec 27). Foucault further postulates that "[i]n civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates" (Foucault and Miskowiec 27). For Norm the boat is his dream. In a sense the reasons for the espionage unfolding in the local community is linked to many community members who have abandoned their dreams and hopes along with their sense of adventure and wonder. Eventually, Norm's stubborn clinging to his dream world, the boat, preserves his sanity in the midst of all the difficulties he experiences. A boat is also described in Foucault's words as "a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea […]" (Foucault and Miskowiec 27). This special quality of the boat as a heterotopia is taletelling the reader about Norm's subconscious longing for this "other space," representing a "space of illusion" (Foucault and Miskowiec 27). Illusions make life bearable for Norm and transcend the confines of norm and normal.

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5.2 Borderlands Requiem: Security Paranoia in Cascadia

In the United States widespread concern with homeland security is prevalent. This theme is the "backdrop" of *Border Songs*. Lee Rodney succinctly captures the main conflict: "Borderlands Versus Homelands" (385). Borderlands entail a sense of cross-border unity and borderlands identity, whereas the notion of homeland is more an insular and isolationist view of the nation-state. The space of insecurity that the border has become is in opposition to a concept of "a borderlands region, an overlapping set of territories with complex cultural spaces" (Rodney 385). Rodney cites Kaplan regarding the "semantic shift" to "homeland" (386). Amy Kaplan examines "the relationship between language and space, how words map, blur, and reconstruct the conceptual, affective, and symbolic borders between spheres once thought of as distinctly separate – as either national or international, domestic or foreign, 'at home' or 'abroad'" (82). The creation of the Department of Homeland Security signifies the institutionalization of that fear of a possible terrorist threat. The threat seems real. The danger lies in a one-border approach for the very different borders of the United States, on the one hand between the United States and Mexico and on the other between the U.S. and Canada.

Border concepts are complicated by the various terms border, (border)line, boundary and frontier. These terms are not mutually exchangeable. They are distinct depending on context and use. They vary or evolve over time: "Frontiers, borderlands, regions, and the border itself have been defined differently over time and across national and international boundaries (Jameson and Mouat 188). "Frontier" is inextricably linked to Frederick Jackson Turner's definition and his famous "frontier thesis" (Jameson and Mouat 189–90) in the United States context and history. In terms of identity construction there are differences between Canada and the United States. Jameson and Mouat argue: "The forty-ninth parallel has had a considerable impact on the Canadian imagination, dividing what is and is not Canadian. The border in Canadian history functions much as the frontier did in Turner's, as the line that divides U.S. cultural and economic savagery from Canadian civilization" (189). Consequently, bordering and othering are needed in order to develop a sense of self and national identity.

The term homeland is linked to the concept of frontier and by extension to constructions of U.S. national identity and expression of national self-hood in terms of history, politics, and security. Kaplan posits that the new rhetoric of U.S. "homeland" is in stark contrast to the usual mobility-related conceptualizations of the United States:

> Though American national identity has always been linked to geography, […] these meanings, bounded and self-enclosed, represent a departure from traditional images of

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> American nationhood as boundless and mobile. […] A *nation of immigrants,* a *melting pot,* the *western frontier, manifest destiny,* a *classless society* – all involve metaphors of spatial mobility rather than the spatial fixedness and rootedness that *homeland* implies. (86)

Homeland entails "notions of racial and ethnic homogeneity" (Kaplan 86). For Rodney homeland includes "nostalgia" and "defensiveness" (386). She states that "[…] the discourse of security serves to mask profound insecurity in North American relations and the introduction of resurgent nationalisms that have been played out around the site of the border" (Rodney 386).

In addition, Victor Turner's idea of the "liminoid" (491) is a useful concept. Liminoid is related to liminal and can be called "liminal-like" (Turner 491). A novel would be a "liminoid genre" (Turner 491–92). Turner describes the difference between liminoid and liminal in the following manner: "Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal phenomena, tend to develop apart from central political and economic processes, along the margins, in the interstices, on the interfaces of central and servicing institutions – they are plural, fragmentary […] and often experimental in character" (Turner 492). He further declares: "Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal, do not so much *in*vert as *sub*vert quotidian and prestigious structures and symbols" (Turner 493). Subversion aside from inversion is at the heart of *Border Songs*. Consequently, Lynch's novel is liminoid and not only liminal, even though both terms, liminal and liminoid, are characteristics of border fiction.

5.2.1 "Nonchalant Border:" The Canada-U.S. Border (Ditch)

The context is of paramount importance in the conception of Lynch's novel and in making the border message (that borders are arbitrary and rebordering is a U.S. overreaction) central. The historical context referencing the arbitrary location and drawing of the political boundary is evoked in former Canadian professor Wayne's rant and jester-like soliloquy right at the Canada-U.S. border in front of the visiting political elite. The northern border is regarded as a problem, and politicians diagnose similar problems in the North as in the South of the U.S.: "Congressmen were demanding more studies and greater investments in security" (91). The National Guard is offered and Southern minutemen want to help out in the North along the Canada-U.S. border (91). The political and the cultural differences in the perception of the border become evident in the critique of the massive and large-scale undiscriminating rebordering and security efforts in the wake of perceived terrorism, smuggling and overall security threats on the part of the United States. Lynch's novel was launched in a timely manner

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just prior to the full implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative in the summer of 2009.[41]

The twofold nature of the border including and excluding as well as the in-between state of belonging neither here nor there is vividly rendered in the novel. Lynch realistically portrays the border and shows a blurred boundary in geography and by extension a blurring in his characters' imagination. This tangible and full-fledged depiction of the geographical border and the overall setting in the valley between the Pacific and Mount Baker leads to the reader's identification with and adoption of Lynch's portrayal of the cross-border community. The natural landmarks matter on both sides of the international Line: "Mount Baker, an American Fuji, the most northerly of the necklace of American coastal volcanoes" (Coupland 91). Coupland further states:

> Mount Baker is important to the Vancouver psyche in that it stands there, huge, record-breaking and serene, shooting off just enough steam every few years to let us know that if it really wanted to, it could bury us. It's a metaphor for the United States: seductive but distant, powerful and at least temporarily benign. (91)

Very detailed metaphors convey a sense of "Ecotopia" and Cascadian spirituality: "The highway followed the foamy Nooksack up through cathedrals of cedars and birch and young hemlock as graceful as ballerinas" (58). Lynch addresses almost all senses, when he writes about the "stench" and the "heat" in the valley or of "Baker's cool canopy into the low, blinding valley" (58). The olfactory senses, sight and emotions are addressed, as well as the audio-visual perception when he recognizes "the one-note song of the varied thrush" (58). Place names are used explicitly such as Semiahmoo Bay, Sumas River, Mount Baker, Nooksack (58–60). He also mentions the characteristic West Coast plant "salal[42]" (61).

Key settings are introduced through the eyes of Brandon, who literally cruises the streets of his life. The reader experiences "these farmlands and humble towns pinned between the mountains and the inland sea along the top of Washington State" (4). Brandon describes how the valley is transformed by commercialization: "More retirement ranches were popping up […]. Closer to Lynden, new cul-de-sacs sprouted alongside the bulldozed moonscape of the future Paradise Links […]. Closer to the border, bushy raspberry rows now doubled as potential smuggling lanes and the future casino's steel girders lunged toward the sky" (101). The valley changes as gentrification unfolds, resulting in the lack of spontaneous

41 An analysis of the reception and the possible differences in the reception by American and Canadian readerships will be a future project.

42 See Laurie Ricou's work *Salal: Listening for the Northwest Understory*.

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encounters between Americans and Canadians, a development Brandon much regrets especially when he is thinking about Madeline Rousseau (6). The reader follows Brandon in his car driving around past homes and sharing his thoughts about the people and the valley with the readers. Later on he explains that "[t]he people were changing on him too" (101). With his success as Border Patrol agent he receives more attention from the people around him, even his parents. However, for Brandon, being at the center of everyone's interest, "jammed his circuits" (101). Lynch uses the character Dirk Hoffman as a self-righteous conservative citizen who has a reader-board comment on everything and expresses his tabloid-like views such as: "CANADA EXPORTS DRUGS AND TERROR" (92). This character is a caricature of the freedom-of-speech-loving right-wing American. Lynch critically views his American compatriots and his home country. His presentation confirms that people in this cross-border region have more in common with each other than with politics made in the political centers.

Border Patrol chief Tony Patera has some congressmen visit, and they inspect the border. He gives "his spiel," a monologue, explaining security in his sector and the kind of problems the agents are fighting against in their job. He paints a bleak picture of border security along the Canada-U.S. border and complains about the Canadian counterparts: "Unfortunately, the Mounties don't have the manpower and Canadian courts don't have the will to do much about it" (120). Patera explains the different ways smugglers get the drugs into the United States:

> With ninety percent of their market down here, of course they get it across in every way imaginable. If they don't want to risk sneaking it through the port of entry, they jump this ditch here or run it through raspberries over there or put a car on each side, make sure we're not around, then throw some hockey bags over, drive off and *poof* – gone before we can respond. Plus, they can paddle across the bay in kayaks, or use helicopters, snowmobiles and remote-controlled planes. (121)

One of the congressmen suggests "putting in concrete barriers like we have in front of the Capitol" (121). He is from Tennessee and "later called the Canadian border *the Mexican problem squared*" (121). The narrator seems very critical of the rebordering efforts as evident in the comments on Patera: "[…] [H]e evangelized about other surveillance options, including tethered blimps and unmanned drones and even a virtual fence made up of ground-based radars that could all serve as 'force multipliers'" (122). Patera links the war on terror and the war on drugs. He calls the Canada-U.S. border "the border of choice for almost anybody trying to sneak into our country" and emphasizes that the Border Patrol "increasingly catch[es] Mexicans flying to Vancouver on Japan Airlines and walking across here because it's so much safer" (122).

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During Patera's border tour and lecture for the congressmen, Wayne shows up in the manner of the movie star, John Wayne, to whom Lynch links Wayne by his first name. The professor's last name is reminiscent of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Overall, it is a fitting name since the professor is a philosopher, but in the way of a cowboy. Wayne Rousseau finally emerges as a sort of hero. He tells the gathered congressmen that a surveying error has occurred and that the border is in fact elsewhere. Wayne voices the criticism found in the newspapers by pointing out where and how America has gone wrong. He does so in an ironic and self-confident manner: "As the interim spokesman for the great nation of Canada, I ask you to please not let my good friend Chief Patera persuade you that you need to throw more agents at this border or pay for intrusive cameras or whatever other placebos he's hawking" (122). Former UBC political science professor Wayne Rousseau is smoking while talking to the politicians and invites them to smoke with him.

One "stout Michigan congresswoman" confronts Wayne on his claim that Jefferson and Washington grew marihuana. The other congressmen are looking forward to this exchange: "Miss Piss 'n' Vinegar sparring with one of Canada's pothead intellectuals" (123). In this encounter Wayne paraphrases a Mark Twain quote[43] and is very sarcastic: "'Didn't you people learn anything from Prohibition? Oh, that's right. I forgot superpowers don't study history. *You spread freedom*. […] 'Americans have freedom of expression and freedom of conscience and the prudence to never use either'" (123). The Michigan congresswoman retorts that she "personally [doesn't] find your country's peculiar brand of socialist monarchism worth emulating" (124). Wayne points out when the group leaves that "[they]'ve been standing in Canada illegally this entire time anyway" (124). He can prove by the help of GPS that the border marker is not located on the forty-ninth parallel (124). Additionally, Wayne informs the politicians that the Canada-U.S. border is

> an arbitrary line agreed upon in 1846 by politicians in London and Washington, D.C., and how finding and defining the 49th parallel soon turned into a comic competition. […] Biased sextant readings resulted in multiple-choice borders, with incoming settlers discovering an American, a Canadian and a compromise in-between. In the early 1900s, intrepid border teams headed out on a Monty Python-like quest to find the original rock piles and establish permanent monuments along a still imprecise line that nature erases every few years anyway. (124)

43 Mark Twain's original: "It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them." < http://www.cmgww.com/historic/twain/about/quotes3.htm>.

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The former professor describes it as “an ongoing comedy” that the congressmen are part of in their efforts to find out how to increase security along “this nonsensical border [they] know so little about” (125). The superimposed outside views become apparent as do power games and political will at the expense of local expertise and insights.

5.2.2 Borderlands Transformations: Globalization and Securitization

The Canada-U.S. border in the Pacific Northwest cannot withstand the forces of globalization and securitization played out on a larger scale. Due to the presence of fewer dairy farms, more agri-business, and rich people building fancy homes the formerly rural valley is transformed. The locals are relegated to merely watching their lives and livelihoods deteriorate. This underlines how times have changed in the community and have given way to distrust and anonymity as compared to “[…] when the ditch was just a ditch, the Vanderkools just peculiar American neighbors and Brandon just an oversized kid […]” (13). A feeling of nostalgia for the good old times sets in when the unfolding transformation is observed and experienced first-hand.

Many scenes delineate the community borders between the old and the new lifestyles, between old-timers and longtime local residents on the one hand and new and rich urban residents relocating to this rural neighborhood on the other. Brandon’s father Norm, a stubborn old-time dairy farmer, feels sorry for himself, since he foregoes the good fortune other people seem to have. He does not have abundant riches, but only plenty of worries concerning his wife and son and also his cows. His anger is directed at the divide between the hard-working old-timers and the fast money the newcomers make, he harbors a “growing sense of an upside-down economy. While he squeezed a living from sickly cows, Canadians made millions selling drugs and Seattle kids earned fortunes in Internet and wireless worlds Norm didn’t need or understand” (32). Norm sees himself and other small dairy farmers in opposition to the “big boys” (32–33) who are only in the dairy business for profit and do not care much about their cows. Divisions deepen between small and big dairy farmers, the longstanding locals and the newcomers, often rich and without any expertise regarding dairy farming. This development upsets Norm tremendously: “But what pissed Norm off even more than dairies turning into berry farms was dairies turning into cul-de-sacs or toy ranches for the rich. And worst of all was when the rich left the barns and silos standing out of some do-gooder nostalgia for an America they never knew” (33). Old times are changing fast due to economic reasons. With the re-bordering effort and increasing security the little that is left of an old time local

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border community is impacted negatively. The neighborhood feeling is replaced by distrust and greed for money. Everyone wants to get his or her share of the booming economy.

Reminiscent of the biblical flood Lynch describes the natural forces unleashed after Brandon's success as Border Patrol agent. Lynch thus adds to the ominous aftermath of the bust "The entire border, after closing for twenty-seven hours, remained in paranoid mode" (89). Lynch's description of the paranoia echoes the developments along the border immediately after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The border shut down and "southbound drivers were interrogated as if all thirty million Canadians had suddenly become suspects" (89). In the post-9/11 security-driven era the 9/11 myth persisted, U.S. sources claiming that the terrorists entered the United States via loopholes in the border enforcement and immigration system in Canada.

As a former journalist Lynch cannot deny his apprenticeship and includes current events and recent changes along the Canada-U.S. border in the decade after 9/11. He chronicles in a fictionalized manner the thickening of the Canada-U.S. border particularly in the area he calls his home, the Pacific Northwest. Despite claims to the contrary in the disclaimer at the beginning of the novel, the informed reader or border resident is able to connect actual events and developments with the fictionalized events in *Border Songs*. Lynch also comments on the role of the media by stating in his novel that "[t]he few juicy particulars were repeated endlessly" (90). The situation along the border escalates again, when in Vermont's Kingdom County illegal border crossers are caught and for the Americans the "world's longest undefended border" becomes a sort of "government gaffe" (91). In the novel, the media are in fact depicted as complicit by adding to the feeling of paranoia: "Television crews fanned out to illustrate just how unguarded these 4,200 miles actually were, and *border* seemed like too big a noun for what they found" (91). The media keep the story alive and want to outdo competitors "casting the western end of the border as a farmer's, retiree's and outlaw's paradise, or dredging up its rum-running days, and its historical ebb and flow of legal and illegal commerce" (91). Full-blown paranoia ensues and Canada is blamed for drugs and terrorists. The narrator describes Canadians' alarming sense of insecurity when the U.S. president "warned that any country housing 'evildoers' would be treated as an enemy" (92). This reflects the words of President George W. Bush referring to the "axis of evil."

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5.2.3 Border as Frontline: Farewell to a "Geographical Handshake"

Lynch sets the stage for his novel with Brandon's arrest of "the Prince and Princess of Nowhere" (3). Brandon stopping the illegal migrants becomes a story told numerous times by all the local residents. Only later this event is categorized as the start of a major change in the community: "As the story evolved it was ultimately seen as the beginning of a madness and temptation that blew through the valley, but that perspective came later" (8). Lynch also begins the second and third part of his novel with border and law enforcement crises highlighting the importance of security and paranoia for the plot set on the Canada-U.S. border in the borderlands of British Columbia and Washington.

Norm goes to the Border Patrol to pick up his son after the border bust with the Pontiac Sunbird. He sees the Border Patrol from a different perspective, the Border Patrol buildings seeming "bunkerlike" (79). These buildings all look the same, making it impossible for him to find an entrance. Openness and transparency are not a main priority. The metaphor of warfare emerges. Concerned about Brandon, Norm asks himself upon seeing the razor wire all around: "The patrol had always looked like glorified security work, but now he felt as if he'd sent his son to the front lines of a war he hadn't realized was going on in his own neighborhood" (79). Norm shows his love for his son hidden in his deep concern for him. The border is not just a simple line but by now has become a frontline. When Norm finds Brandon, he is surprised that Brandon is so big. Brandon is somewhat disoriented and very white, resembling "an enormous mime" (82).

Part two begins where the first part of the novel ends. Lynch paints a stark and bleak picture after Brandon's success. The military metaphors are upheld throughout. The rain does not stop, but it rains for ten days straight. First it rains "mercifully," then "violently, punishing the land" (89). The "Pacific rain factory" does not stop with repercussions for locals: "The relentless downpour added to the sense of siege by trapping people indoors, but there was no getting away from it" (89). Using this vocabulary adds to the newspaper-like style and tone of this passage and conveys the insecurity and paranoia of the locals and officials. The Border Patrol automatically assumes that travelers must be suspect: "Commuters with NEXUS passes were no longer waved through [...]" (89). This downpour is reminiscent of the Great Flood in the Bible. The narrator mentions Noah's ark in connection with Brandon's sense of wonder and awe. Regarding the fauna Brandon compares the animals to "some Noah's Ark spoof" (59). The rain continues and everything is damp and "water overflowed on both sides of

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the ditch, swamping stretches of Boundary and Zero where BPs and Mounties hydroplaned along in record numbers, squinting at a landscape blurred beyond recognition" (89). Lynch describes how the inspection process works and how much contraband the agents found including weapons, eagle feathers, and fake IDs (89). The agents get carried away with their inspections and grill seniors, children and profile racially, since "Arabs were strip-searched, especially if they had accents" (89). Lynch criticizes this exaggeration and shows the implications for the locals residing near the border, the border crossers, and the agents.

The Canada-U.S. border is portrayed as a ditch, arbitrary line and delineation between different jurisdictions and value systems in terms of drug consumption and migration. There is war in the Peace Arch Park comprising a binational area. Lynch juxtaposes war and peace and in so doing exposes the inherent irony in border paranoia and security fears taken too far. The border "has become the location of fear" (Rodney 387). However, this geopolitical line amounts to a "geographical handshake" becoming a concrete handshake during the "Hands Across the Border" festival in Peace Arch Park. A festival is a temporary event. Foucault distinguishes "heterotopias" and "heterochronies." There are two types of "heterochonies," one in which time is expanded and one linked "to time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival" (Foucault and Miskowiec 26). The lingering spirit of "Ecotopia" (Callenbach) permeates the narrative. The cross-border region of Cascadia, represented by the Salish Sea or the Peace Arch Park, manifests itself in Lynch's novel. The converging factors of life on the line are stressed, even though the narrative's focus is centered only on one border agent, Brandon, who enforces the power of the nation-state at the geopolitical boundary. The novel's main protagonist embodies a cross-border and Northwestern identity. In Cascadia, Victor Konrad and John Everitt find that "enhanced security has sharpened national identities on both sides of the border and narrowed the space for expressions of a transnational and regional borderlands identity" (303). Regarding creative and imagined constructions of identities in the Pacific Northwest they refer to Lynch's novel: "'Borderlands' literature and art flourish in the Pacific Northwest, and are exemplified in Jim Lynch's novel *Border Songs* (2009), in which protagonist and security officer Brandon Vanderkool grapples with who and where he is in the border zone" (Konrad and Everitt 303). The Peace Arch Park, featured prominently, is a symbol of mutual understanding and straddles the international boundary. There, people can walk from the United States to Canada and vice versa. Nevertheless, this historically grown interaction in the borderlands becomes increasingly difficult.

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Permeability and mobility across the border is no longer taken for granted. With the thickening of the Canada-U.S. border after 9/11, due to increased securitization and new documentation requirements for travelers, local communities all along the 49th Parallel are at a crossroads.

The increase in security measures has led to a decrease in personal interaction, especially from people fearing to be racially profiled: "East Indians who'd grown raspberries along the U.S. side for decades stopped visiting Abbotsford relatives to avoid the humiliating questions and searches on the drive home" (208). Due to the use of border cameras and surveillance local residents felt a total lack of privacy and an erosion of civil rights and liberties: "And complaints about the border cams rose to a boil. They track us whenever we step outside! residents told local councils with no say over the patrol or its cameras" (208). Not only are new security cameras installed, but also airborne surveillance established:

> Still, the security and surveillance continued to escalate as Patera almost doubled patrols yet again to keep his ever-growing force busy. Most vehicles cruising the northern line after dusk were now green-and-whites. Few people took notice of the little flying drone when it first began traversing the 49th like some oversized, high-altitude bird, though they were alarmed to learn that the unmanned military aircraft's cameras could read a cereal box from fifteen thousand feet. (208)

Lynch, the former journalist, picks up on local news stories and recent security policies under the Obama Administration concerning the Canada-U.S. border:

> Instead of 'un-thickening' the border, the new administration has kept the Bush policies in place and even piled more on: in February, the U.S. sent unmanned aerial surveillance drones to patrol parts of the border with Canada. The drones, which can detect human movement 10 km away, are supposed to help catch smugglers. But they have raised concerns about privacy in border communities, and although they are unarmed, give the 49th parallel something in common with the tribal lands between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Savage 28)

At the beginning of part three, that is chapter 30, the reader learns about yet another escalation similar to the beginning of part two when the border was closed after Brandon's amazing bust of the alleged bomber. This time Lynch uses a park evacuation to show the extremes to which the exaggerated climate of paranoia leads. At the Girl Scout festival in Peace Arch Park an alleged bomb was found (221). The Pacific Northwest is all of a sudden on the map of news coverage and public awareness:

> A dirty-bomb scare that caused the evacuation of eight thousand Girl Scouts at Peace Arch Park was enough to lead a slow news day, especially with the kickers of dairy terrorism, a firebombing and an impending curfew. A war of sorts – what else could you

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> call it? – had seemingly rolled over the Canadian border into the Pacific Northwest. (222–23)

Fear spread and people "went to bed numbed by the sensation that their country, their county, even their *neighborhood*, was under attack" (223). In the end it turned out to be false alarm on all accounts (223). There is a strong fictionalization of actual events. Lynch also includes the Lynden tunnel[44] in his novel (274–75). Brandon, though no longer a border agent after having resigned to help out with his father's dairy, puts two and two together and discovers the tunnel (271). He warns his love interest Madeline who was involved in the bud smuggling.

In *Border Songs* eventually it all comes down to money. Trade and the economy are the catalysts in creating normalcy again along the border in the Pacific Northwest:

> The border cams – first feared, then ridiculed – were now forgotten. Nineteen-year-old Americans resumed crossing the ditch for the ritual thrill of legal drinking. More Canadians ventured south to buy groceries and gas and awaited the September 10 grand opening of the Lucky Dog Casino just over the line. Bud smuggling slowed down, as if there'd been a cease-fire or the outlaws themselves had lost interest, although a better explanation surfaced in *The Economist*, which concluded that the rising Canadian dollar had accomplished what the drug czar and Border Patrol and police forces couldn't. (276)

Life returns to what it used to be thanks to the exchange rate and not due to the official border management.

5.3 Border Echoes: Beyond Bodies, Buds, and Birds

The geopolitical border between the United States and Canada is frequently transgressed in the novel. Illegal drug and human trafficking take place. These activities subvert the border while, at the same time, relying on its existence in order to make a profitable business. Lynch's article "A trip to 'Vansterdam'" highlights the differences in attitude between Americans and Canadians regarding marijuana, Vancouver being the New Amsterdam or "Vansterdam." Coupland emphasizes the scale of bud growing operations, equaling a tremendous business and large industry in British Columbia (48). In his piece of journalism Lynch quotes Peter Ostrovsky, an agent with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, as saying: "The geography lends itself to smuggling. It

44 See <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/07/21/tunnel-uscan050721.html> 5 Dec. 2009.

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always has" and the border resembles "a fenceless, invisible seam" (Lynch, "Vansterdam"). Smuggling is thus not a new phenomenon and does not justify a sudden rebordering effort out of proportion.

The author echoes the significant transformation of the border from neighborhood place to a "generalized danger zone" (Rodney 385) or "a war-front (Barta). Lynch plays with contrasts between idyllic and dangerous, when he first describes the well-known idyllic features of the valley and then refers to the "muddy El Camino with Arizona plates" announcing the arrival of the minutemen[45]:

> [Brandon] turned off Badger onto Swanson and tried to focus on comforting familiar sights: freshly plowed fields of dirt the color of powdered chocolate; pastures so thick with dandelions he saw nothing but yellow; pom-poms of blooming maples, crabapples and alders packing the eastern hillsides […]. He wheeled past a rusty dozer 4 SALE […], before braking alongside a muddy El Camino with Arizona plates on the fringe of Gil Honcoop's sixty wooded acres, a border-straddling mix of trees, bushes and meadows popular with smugglers and songbirds. (102)

Smugglers and songbirds both transgress and transcend the border. They represent two legally disparate forms of border crossings. Brandon encounters the Southern minutemen who also want to build a fence on the Northern border (104). Rodney postulates that "the increasing militarization of the land borders has led to a paradigm shift in the conception of the border, which is now managed as a singular line that needs fortification and control" (Rodney 385). Furthermore, Rodney encapsulates the changes along the borders of the United States with its neighbors as a "heightened climate of border insecurity" (385). Instead of creating security, paradoxically insecurity is increased along the borders.

5.3.1 Liminal Limbo: "Line Dancing"

After their arrest, the Prince and Princess of Nowhere have to inhabit for an undisclosed amount of time a liminal space of "betwixt and between" (Turner 465). By illegally crossing the Canada-U.S. border and being caught by Brandon they crossed a "threshold," as liminality means "literally 'being-on-a-threshold'" (Turner 465) and find themselves in a precarious in-between space. They are caught seemingly in flight during a blizzard and are then held in custody. The need to identify their place of residence and nationality is paramount to extradite

45 "The Minutemen Project, a popular American movement that has been growing since its founding in 2004, is perhaps the strongest signal of the invigorated pathology of border insecurity" (Rodney 386). Minutemen comprise "[a] group of armed volunteer civilians […]" (Rodney 386).

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these illegal migrants. Lynch criticizes the detention of illegal aliens through protagonist Brandon's thoughts upon reading the article entitled "STUCK IN LIMBO HELL" (130) on the Princess of Nowhere. The illegals are numbered as Brandon observes: "the princess was 908, just like Pearl was 39" (131). The term "limbo" is reminiscent of Victor Turner's explanation of van Gennep's "rite of passage" (Turner 466). Van Gennep's second stage according to Turner "margin or limen (meaning threshold), the subjects of ritual fall into a limbo between their past and present modes of daily existence" (Turner 466–67). The worth of migrants is seemingly on par with that of animals. Being in between, neither able to stay in the United States nor to go back home, most of the illegals "would wait in cells for months, even years – if the government didn't know where to send them – before they ever got a hearing" (131). They have to wait[46] in a Bhabha-like "third space," in-between, neither here nor there, on the border in a no-man's land. This "limbo" state is likened to hell, another waiting place, though in a different realm. Waiting without knowing one's fate or the time-frame is a permanent stasis. Illegal border mobility thus leads to a frozen and indeterminate state of immobility. Brandon is haunted by his involuntary contribution to the liminal state of the Princess of Nowhere as he paints her with a fleeting expression. Migrants are quintessentially liminal as they exit one life and enter a new life of hope and opportunity.

5.3.2 Anthropomorphous Aviary: Arresting Art and Migrants

Brandon paints all the migrants he accidentally apprehends – while birding on the job – as human migratory birds. His abstract paintings emanate from his memory (245) and he states in a conversation with Madeline that he does not emulate "a camera" (247). The paintings are stacked everywhere in his room and showing Madeline the canvasses Brandon recalls "whom he caught where and what they did or said" (246). Brandon's art is arresting in both senses of the term. Madeline describes his art as "amazing" (246) and is literally arrested by the sight, "her eyes fixed on another startling painting, a flock of birds with Asian faces" (248–49). These dual migrants – illegal aliens and simultaneously migratory birds – have been arrested by Brandon when they tried to illegally cross the Canada-U.S. border to stay or to smuggle contraband. These arrested people are an arresting sight to behold, whether for Brandon in the moment of capture or for the person looking at their painted resemblances.

46 Reminiscent regarding stasis and waiting are for instance the following literary works: Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and Kafka's *Before the Law*.

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Birds seasonally migrate, easily transcend boundaries, and their flight patterns and destinations are more or less predictable. This is not the case for human migrants. They are less predictable. Migratory birds are often treated more humanely than human migrants, who are treated like animals, caught and caged. Human unlike avian migrants cannot transcend geopolitical boundaries at will. Their passage and entry is regulated, restricted, and monitored. Illegal migrants are treated as criminals in spite of human tragedy or the promise to welcome those "yearning to breathe free" (Lazarus). Even legal migrants, newcomers to a place and perceived as "strangers" by the locals, have a hard time. Migratory birds always return to their place of origin, whereas migrants in times of transnationalism and globalization often stay. Nonetheless, Eastern Canadians (and others) flocking to sunny and warm Florida and other warm locales in winter are humorously called "snowbirds" and annually migrate. The designation "Snowbirds" is also the name for the famous squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force performing and representing Canada at air shows. These mechanical snowbirds stand in for state-power and a glorious and national identity-inducing military past while resembling performers in a national aviary.

The concept of flyways regarding migratory birds parallels the practice of varying smuggling routes for human migration. These escape routes for migrants follow certain pathways as do flyways for migratory birds. In *Border Songs* the human migrants resemble migratory birds, whose bird songs become border songs for the humans. The linkage between humans and birds is a pervasive and persuasive trope in the novel. Exotic migrants such as the Prince and Princess of Nowhere and neotropical migratory birds share foreign connections and land in the midst of the local cross-border community. "Big Bird" Brandon paints the human migrants as migratory songbirds singing their desperate border songs in their distinctive voices. It is a crucial difference if one travels or escapes inhumane conditions and needs to emigrate.

The connection between human and avian migration is further corroborated by Ivan Grabovac's article "Preserving the Great White North: Migratory Birds, Italian Immigrants, and the Making of Ecological Citizenship Across the U.S.-Canada Border, 1900–1924." He states various reasons on the part of the United States and Canada regarding the 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty[47], at the time Great Britain representing Canada (Grabovac 117–18). According to Grabovac,

47 "Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 which established protection for birds migrating between the United States and Canada, and also protected their eggs, feathers and nests from any form of disturbance" (Konrad and Nicol 224).

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"[t]he Migratory Bird Treaty was negotiated in the context of nativism in the U.S. (English-speaking Canada produced its own complementary version of nativism)" (118). Grabovac posits that "wildlife preservation and immigration restriction" went hand in hand "in the first quarter of the twentieth century" as far as the United States were concerned (120). Racial profiling happened at the Canada-U.S. border for non-Nordic migrants: "Even as the U.S.-Canada border remained 'soft' for Nordics – and migrating birds – it became 'harder' for certain groups of human migrants, whom preservationists in both countries, but especially the U.S., regarded as threats to wildlife abundance" (Grabovac 120). Konrad and Nicol do not stress the connection to "nativist environmentalism" (Grabovac 119 referring to Park and Pellow), but also highlight the diverse composition of the proponents in favor of protecting birds as a "coalition of conservationists and hunters" (Konrad and Nicol 224).

In "The Ugly Mediterranean" U.S. author Jonathan Franzen, himself a passionate birder and vocal spokesperson for engaging in birding and protecting birds, describes "songbird trapping" (Franzen 75) as a practice still widespread in Cyprus, Malta, and Italy. He writes about how the European bird directive is circumvented and illegal operations to make money unfold under the pretense of keeping an important tradition alive. Franzen uses the term "migrants" and means migratory birds by it. Therefore, the border between avian and human migrants is blurred as in Lynch's novel. The discovery of his love for birds commits Franzen to the protection of the environment and fighting against climate change. Along with a couple of other birders, Franzen is part of the U.S.-based HBO documentary[48] on birding in Central Park.

In Lynch's novel actual birds and bird-like humans abound. The image of an aviary presents itself. On one side of the boundary is one national aviary, and on the other side is the other national aviary. The border as a "sanctuary line" and "meeting place" resembles a metaphorical bird sanctuary or a transnational aviary. The nation-states control their respective air spaces. This security measure is encapsulated by the unmanned drones used for surveillance on the border. As opposed to a bird cage, an aviary creates the illusion of freedom for the birds and more closely resembles bird habitat. Nonetheless, birds in an aviary are ultimately enclosed and guarded by the zookeepers. The border guards representing state power act as zookeepers for the border residents in their aviaries. Lynch explicitly describes certain people with bird-like

48 See <http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/birders-the-central-park-effect#/> 27 July 2014.

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characteristics such as in the bar scene when some of the locals wear their garb. Border guard "Big Bird" Brandon blurs the distinction between zookeeper and birds enclosed by the aviary. He becomes part of the birds while birding. The actual birds are free to transcend the international boundary between Canada and the United States at will, but the bird-like humans in the novel resemble anthropomorphous birds in an aviary. The illegal migrants, though in name also likened to free neotropical avian migrants or migratory birds, if caught, are not only part of the aviary system kept in place by the zookeepers, but are stuck into a bird cage. This bird cage is a detention center and called "in limbo hell." Dancing the liminal limbo is like a bird being stuck on a lime stick (Franzen). A migrant, whether avian or human, can flap the wings, but without hope to escape on their own.

The state symbol on the coat of arms of the United States is the eagle. This majestic bird soars and is above and beyond the mundane. The cross-border community in Blaine, WA and White Rock, BC is envisioned as an aviary. In this aviary the U.S. eagle represents state power. The powerful eagle is likened to the U.S. border guards or the zookeepers in the aviary scenario sketched out above. The Canadian national symbol is the beaver. A beaver lives in the water, fells trees and builds dams. Even though the Canadian representation is not a bird, a beaver transcends borders in the water and makes rivers and ponds flood, also across boundaries. Both national representations have the potential to undermine the boundary. However, Canada's icons also include birds such as Canada geese and common loons[49], and the aforementioned snowbirds.

The American eagle is part of the Great Seal, the seal of the President, and is thus featured on the U.S. dollar bills. A real-life eagle soars, diving down to catch salmon and is a bird of prey. Eagles in this scenario watch the border with eagle eyes, though themselves transcending earthly human-made boundaries. The airspace is also policed and controlled according to national sovereignty, but for animals in contrast to airplanes this does not apply. The Migratory Bird Act protects migratory birds. Local birds cannot be hindered either to fly over the international boundary at will. The same holds true for other animals. Regarding the aviary conceptualization the focus is on birds though.

49 A loonie is a Canadian one dollar coin featuring a loon on one side of the coin, hence the designation. <http://www.mint.ca/store/mint/learn/the-new-1-coin-6800004#.UY5pvFYYrKc > 11 May 2013.

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5.3.3 Airborne: Brandon "Free as a Bird"[50]

Brandon, a successful agent himself, compares his trainer Dionne's confident interrogation style to the techniques employed by good birders: "Then she came at them again, closing in without making it obvious, just as good birders approach birds without ever walking directly at them" (65). In chapter ten Lynch depicts how the Border Patrol works and shows the morale of the Roadies in contrast to rooky Brandon and Dionne. McAfferty asks the quintessential question regarding the significance of what the Border Patrol does: "I mean, what are we really doing? Stopping people from getting work or – God forbid! – getting high" (68). Recreational drug usage needs to be distinguished from medicinal drugs[51]. At the bar, where the Border Patrol agents are gathered, the community meets, and agents and the locals mingle. The bar setting and the alcohol create a level playing field. For Brandon people "in their loudest garb" resemble "songbirds in spring" (70). Spring is a season of renewal and blossoming abundance. So bird metaphors come up time and again regarding people's appearances or behavior. Lynch even uses the Pontiac "Sunbird" make as one of the cars Brandon successfully pursues (77).

The bird trope is ubiquitous in the novel. Moreover, the birds are anthropomorphic. They seem to speak to Brandon. He can distinguish the words or lyrics of their mating and territorial songs, for instance the "know-it-all robin" who sings: "*I know everything*" (103). This incident occurs with Madeline in mind. Brandon, the bird aficionado, is so absorbed and consumed with the Border Patrol and his involuntary arrests that he even stops listing the birds: "Brandon was too distracted to count the birds. In fact, he hadn't been able to muster an accurate daily count for weeks now" (103). The birding count is like a meter measuring his mood, so Brandon not counting birds any longer signals the level of stress he experiences.

The author employs the bird trope very frequently throughout the novel. Already, the book's title *Border Songs* alludes to bird songs. Lynch uses intermedial and intertextual references to connect the bird trope with his interpretation of the meaning of the border. In a book review by Barber this tendency is summarized: "Lynch's comic borderland is not only palpable, it is richly metaphoric" (2). Lynch alludes to Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Walton Ford's painting *Falling Bough* on the hardcover jacket of *Border Songs*, and the Beatles

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50 "Free as a Bird" is also the title of a "Beatles" song released as part of the "Anthology".

51 Elections 2012 Results in WA State <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/nov/6/three-states-poised-to-legalize-pot/?page=all>.

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song *Blackbird*. The lyrics[52] are a powerful reminder of the beauty of freedom when a bird with broken wings finally regains his strength, soars into flight and sings. The notion of freedom, that Americans vocally claim and want to retain, is the very thing that is undermined by the security efforts and paranoia. Americans become hostages to their fears, suspicions, and anxieties. The American dream of freedom is seemingly over.

Apart from these bird references, Brandon, the main protagonist does not only love birding and has an extraordinary gift for this activity, but also paints birds and bird-like people he apprehends in the line of his duty. He sees himself akin to birds, being in a sense an anthropomorphous bird. Himself feeling very close to nature and animals, he is "overwhelmed" by the fauna as he watches "a low flock of eleven tundra swans [who] soared overhead in subdued exile" as well as other birds such as dunlins (59). He also feels a kinship to cows: "Seeing them play relaxed him, just as it enraged him to see them bullied. How could anyone be cruel to animals that were powerful enough to walk through walls yet hated to be alone and balked at stepping over hoses, puddles or even a bright line of paint" (58–59)? Brandon is like one of them in the sense that he is as big and equally sensitive. When he observes "one of the largest flocks of snow geese he'd ever seen" and sees them take off, it is a magnificent sight and sound and he "tilted back and joined in, honking along with the flock […]" (60).

When Brandon arrests the illegal migrants of Nowhere he "flew twenty-six feet from takeoff to landing" (8). It is described as "his flight" (8) by the town gossips. He himself describes it as being "airborne long enough to watch himself in flight" (9). For Brandon it is an "out-of-body sensation" related to his special *"gift"* (9). It is rendered by Walton Ford's painting on the book jacket. This painting represents a human, a statue-like giant, in flight, though on closer inspection it is a bough or branch carried away by carrier pigeons. The human in flight matches Brandon and the idea of Brandon, which Lynch depicts: "Regardless, he saw himself from above, his arms flung out like albatross wings until they collapsed around the runaways in a flying hug as he used their brittle bodies to break his landing" (9).

Another flight experience connected to actual birds is the swan experience. Brandon has a training session with Dionne when he sees the trumpeters. He

52 "Blackbird singing in the dead of night / Take these broken wings and learn to fly / All your life / You were only waiting for this moment to arise […]" (Beatles). <http://www.songtexte.com/songtext/the-beatles/blackbird-7bd292ac.html> 26 Mar 2013.

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is mentally transformed into a swan and wants to take off with the flock of one hundred swans:

> Brandon imagined his own bones hollowing, his legs disappearing, his neck stretching, his pectoral muscles thickening, his brain shrinking to fit into a tiny soft skull, his 17,238 feathers working as one to catch up with the others. He twitched his butt muscles, steering with his tail feathers, and raised his arms, fully extending his seven-foot wingspan […]. (30)

For Brandon being and flying like a bird in a flock finally means fitting in into a community, albeit of swans, escaping human and societal demands and just living. In a conversation with Madeline he states that he feels connected to animals and believes in reincarnation (247). The deepest connection he feels is with "Jersey cows, snowy owls, Australian shepherds, blue herons and so on" (247). Thanks to his special gift as someone probably autistic and definitely dyslexic the natural world is a world that is easily accessible, much more easily than the human world with all the complicated factors in human behavior and society. He is at ease in the natural environment.

Being very big and tall the shoes from the Border Patrol are too small for Brandon. This creates "the floating sensation of being detached from the earth" (6). The notion of "floating" corresponds with the bird trope. Brandon transcends the earth-sky dichotomy and seemingly floats everywhere, similar to the ditch that "overflowed into both countries every fall" (4). The picture of Brandon arresting the two illegals is circulated on both sides of the line and is a taste of future greatness to come for Brandon: "That image soon made the rounds on both sides of the border, the first irrefutable evidence that Brandon Vanderkool's stint with the BP was more than a onetime sight gag […]" (8). Brandon and Wayne have more in common than their function in Lynch's basic scheme to show the arbitrariness of the border and the absurdity of security escalation and concomitant paranoia. In addition they both share the love for Madeline. Wayne as Madeline's father loves her very much and in the end succeeds in sending her to rehab after providing her with a false alibi. Brandon in turn makes this possible out of his love for Madeline, because he warns Madeline when he finds the illegal border tunnel before he alerts the Border Patrol about the tunnel. Both men save Madeline from herself and the consequences of her destructive addiction and lifestyle. Thanks to both of them there is a chance of redemption for Madeline. Their love trumps the vicious circle of addiction and the traps of illegal drug smuggling and growing.

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5.4 Summary

Lynch's novel *Border Songs* deals with borders in more than one way: He highlights the geographical border setting between Canada and the United States and reveals the process of bordering within a given, in this case a cross-border, community. Identity formation in terms of self, family, community, and nation is inextricably linked to notions of borders and the physical and metaphysical presence of divisions and bordered entities. Lynch uses the medium of the novel to reflect upon important developments in Canada-U.S. relations embodied in the shared international boundary between the two countries. He constructs the key components of his novel such as plot, setting, characters, and the tropes to underline his border message. This is encapsulated in his critique of the arbitrariness of borders, whether geographical or societal, his warning against paranoia, and his call to question power relations as well as top-down politics and policies. He does so by the reversal of commonly held notions regarding the enforcement of the geographical boundary as represented in the fictional yet realistic story-world of *Border Songs*. The subversion of power relations at the border (between Border Patrol agents and people crossing the border legally or illegally), by means of irony and humor is shown.

These narrative techniques infuse Lynch's vivid and succinct language as well as the humorous and captivating tone of the novel, albeit the occasional cliché and the use of any memorable news story related to the Canada-U.S. border. Lynch uses all conceivable and prominent issues concerning U.S. borders in the novel, from the tunnel to the minuteman, from the notion of the marihuana party in Canada to alleged racial profiling in the United States. He draws on the standard notions of how Canada and the United States see each other and who the bad guy is and who is not. He also employs Canadian references to create a sense of place, for example in Wayne's house. Lynch's characters, the Rousseau and the Vanderkool families, are stricken not only by one disaster but several. The idyllic small-town Pacific Northwest border life is disrupted by illness, loss, addiction, unfulfilled longings and suppressed desires, dysfunctional father-child relations, lack of money, loneliness beneath love, and redemption in this triad of trial, tragedy, and triumph. In sum, the border is arbitrary, simultaneously including and excluding, needed and not needed for identity construction of self and community. Consequently, the border fulfills multiple often contradictory functions, is ambivalent and complex and manifests itself geographically, and in a more abstract, metaphysical way, in terms of society, community, and self.

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6 Conclusion

The theoretical frame at the confluence of literatures, cultures, and borders is widened and deepened by a spatial and border-related reading of contemporary North American fiction. This has been precisely this study's approach and procedure. New insights have been gained for both American studies and border studies. Border readings inform the understanding of borders, borderlands, and bordering practices and processes. Here, border fiction has been analyzed in context, focusing on the notion of the "beyond". While binaries are often created by bordering processes and the prevalence of geopolitical boundaries in a globalized, though also reterritorializing world, these binaries are transcended through various literary methods in fiction. The diverse, but complementary settings include King's border river in the Prairies and Plains, Mosher's utopian "third space" of Kingdom Mountain situated on the Vermont-Quebec boundary, and Lynch's Washington and British Columbia cross-border community. This study's underlying premise and theorem is one of transcendence as encapsulated in the bird trope. Birds fly across boundaries and symbolize the idealized projection of societal and geopolitical concepts beyond border binaries. In *Border Songs*, birding as well as being bird-like is contrasted to bordering and exaggerated border policing. "Big Bird" and border guard Brandon embodies this stance.

By discussing three border texts selected from the narrative work of King, Mosher, and Lynch, I have illustrated the concept of the beyond by analyzing the writers' narrative strategies and their conscious choice of settings, tropes, characters, and plot. The authors "write back" creatively, employing humor and irony. They foreground a border spectrum that oscillates between the "unnational monument" (Stafford) and the "mend[ed] wall" (Frost). The level of border permeability varies according to boundary-crosser as well as time and place depicted in the novels. Bird-like, Lynch's protagonist Brandon Vanderkool transcends boundaries in his capacity as a birding border guard. However, other characters are portrayed as illegal immigrants and are captured at their attempted crossing. The novels of King and Mosher feature in-between spaces and the boundary is inscribed with meaning as in King's river Shield and Mosher's Kingdom Mountain. Not only a variety of borders is portrayed and shown as socially

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constructed, but also alternative conceptualizations and projections of border spaces are proposed and promoted.

An activist approach to the arbitrariness of boundaries and bordering becomes apparent in all three works. In King's novel, colonial borders are undone by Monroe Swimmer's practice of painting back in a postcolonial fashion. The Natives in the landscape paintings reappear, the Western church is made to blend in with the surrounding landscape, and the buffaloes are resurrected through sculptures. Societal borders are subverted in Mosher's novel through the very presence of Kingdom Mountain as a utopian, or even "ecotopian" (Callenbach), and color-blind edenic space and Jane's practice of bending the norms of society. Moreover, as mixed-heritage characters, Jane and Henry defy so-called propriety and inhabit a "third space" at the edge of the village. Lynch's *Border Songs* portrays the geopolitical boundary explicitly as arbitrary and security as overblown. The main character, Brandon, transcends many borders, whether geographical, societal, or mental and physical such as the borders between apparent health and illness as a person with dyslexia who may be on the autism spectrum. The authors subvert preconceived notions not only in and through their novels, but also in terms of lived experience. This holds particularly true for Thomas King who crosses borders as an American and Canadian, a Native and a non-Native person.

The exclusive treatment of contemporary North American novels in a border context serves as a barometer to the issues of significance for residents in the regions along the Canada-U.S. border. Novels as a medium of publication are one of the most popular in the realm of fiction. Therefore, novels set on the Canada-U.S. border reach a wide readership and offer reflections on contemporary societal issues, for example addressing issues of security and border management. Though the selected novels vary in subject matter, set of characters, and area, they are nonetheless united by the importance of the Canada-U.S. border setting and the prevalence of bordering practices on the plot level. Although the three authors appear to be a homogenous group, since all three of them are male, predominantly white with the exception of mixed-heritage Native writer Thomas King, and U.S. American, diversity is a defining characteristic in their lives and works. The authors collectively address currently debated and important border-related issues such as colonialism and contemporary indigeneity (King), historical multi-ethnicity and borderlands as a utopian space (Mosher), and post-9/11 security and bordering practices (Lynch).

Two intertwined themes emerge in the three selected novels, one is the theme of resistance and subversion and the other theme pertains to border imaginaries

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and conceptualizations. The need to resist and subvert a given border and ensuing order is closely linked to people's border concepts. The local residents compare and cannot reconcile their everyday experience of the Canada-U.S. border with the imaginaries of the friendly and neighborly international line between the two countries. Therefore resistance directed at the type of border management resembling a police state emerges as portrayed in a fictionalized manner in Lynch's novel. In the end, paranoia and distrust reign supreme in the once viable cross-border community of Blaine, WA and Lynden, WA and their Canadian counterpart White Rock, BC. Action leads to reaction and the Canada-U.S. boundary is resisted in the form of subversion. At other times, the same boundary is also used to economic advantage, although illicitly. Depending on the border imaginaries of certain groups of people these illegal activities do not appear against the law to them, because the imposition of the legally binding border is not recognized in the first place as is the case for some indigenous tribes, whose homelands are bisected by the international boundary. Border imaginaries inspire and justify acts of resistance and subversion of the Canada-U.S. border. In fictional representations of the border these imaginaries surface and can then be analyzed in connection with means of resistance in the same realm and even beyond the literary scene both including and influencing lived experience at the international boundary.

The three novels resist the imaginary of the Canada-U.S. border as an absolute or naturally given construct and instead stress in-between spaces. These interstitial spaces include a Stygian-like border river in King's novel, Kingdom Mountain in the fictional work of Mosher and the borderlands of Cascadia in Lynch's text. Fictional representations of borders, boundaries, and borderlands, together with borderscapes and bordering, create new possibilities of conceptualizing the ontology and epistemology of borders. Maps as palimpsests underline the procedural nature of borders that are always in flux. Additionally, the three authors use strategies of remapping and rewriting and subverting superimposed boundaries, as well as preconceived and dominant notions. Closely related to the practice of palimpsests are the arts as illustrated in the three novels. Particularly, King's character Monroe Swimmer is linked to acts of subversion by painting back the Native presence in landscape paintings. The dog-cart man in Mosher's *On Kingdom Mountain* uses outdoor structures as canvas transcending the dominant conception of what constitutes art and proper paintings. Yet another approach to expression and subversion through art is achieved by Lynch's protagonist Brandon, who exhibits characteristics of the land art movement and also engages in painting illegal border crossers in an abstract manner. Though

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not fully being a palimpsest, the different interpretive layers of meaning are of paramount importance and are reminiscent of palimpsests.

Another visual metaphor is the one of parallax. By shifting positions, new perspectives can be gained and horizons broadened. Through parallax certain paradoxes inherent in symbolic borders and geographical boundaries become more tangible and conceptually describable, opening up intellectual spaces of discovery and discussion. Borders resemble Janus-faces, beginning and end, division and unity. Residents of borderlands rally around the international boundary rather than their respective nation-state flags, because they share similar concerns as the neighbors on the other side of the geopolitical divide. This becomes obvious in all three novels, since residents of both sides visit and know the other from the land beyond the line. They share life in the borderlands, whether in the Prairies and Plains, at the border between Vermont and Quebec, or in the Pacific Northwest.

The imaginative freedom to conceptualize and fictionally represent borders, borderlands, and bordering processes is the cultural capital of novels and other creative writing. Particularly fiction gives authors the freedom to formulate their viewpoints on current situations in poetic forms. These imagination-based approaches to lingering geopolitical issues and social challenges are frequently more prone to yielding stances of parallax and ensuing innovative problem-solving and conceptualizations than the empirical approaches of social and political sciences. Border prisms in the humanities and poetic prisms in the socio-political sciences need to converge through parallax and sometimes paradox to open new ways and reading the nature of borders. Fresh thinking can point to alternative and innovative concepts of borders and bordering. To thrive the human condition longs for belonging, a sense of purpose, and a basic order. Literature offers a variety of representations of the current state of political affairs and social relations and contextualizes these often border-related imaginative representations in lived experience. The insights of the present study contribute to improve the conceptualization of borders as well as the reasons for representing these borders and bordering practices in fiction. Representations and constructions of borders are co-constitutive and only by taking both into account can there be a deepened understanding of the nature of borders, borderlands, and bordering practices. This in turn is needed to find alternatives to untoward implications of borders and bordering processes such as exclusion and a lack of flexibility.

Though the scope of this study is limited to three contemporary North American novels, the analyses of the selected border fictions help to comprehend socially constructed borders, boundaries and bordering practices in a more

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nuanced and informed manner. This new understanding can lead to more comprehensive and multi-faceted concepts of borders. It resembles the multiple nature of geopolitical boundaries and symbolic borders. Future projects could deal with borders as represented in fiction by female and male authors from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and tackle border texts written in the period before and post-9/11. Moreover, additional border locales along the Canada-U.S. boundary should be included, for instance the Alaska-Yukon boundary as well as the circumpolar North with the emerging geopolitical challenge of climate change, the extraction of natural resources and the themes of sovereignty and indigeneity.

The analysis of the three novels has proven the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach based on the concept of North American studies, the notion of "worlding," and comparative border studies. Only by using a holistic approach can the results be productive for both fields, literature as well as border studies. The analysis of King's, Mosher's and Lynch's novels in conjunction with each other covers the whole spectrum of important border and bordering-related issues. Changing perspective and adopting a position of parallax with regard to the three novels has led to mutually complementing insights for literary and border studies reminding of the multidimensional results of repositioning the drawing compass. The notion of "worlding" transnational American studies and Canadian studies broadens theoretical horizons, while North American studies and the inclusion of indigenous studies accommodates the subject positions of all stakeholder groups involved in border constructions and literary productions. Border studies in the vein of border poetics and with a strong emphasis on bordering processes and practices beyond mere description help shape the dialogue of contemporary North American border fiction in the context of concurrent geopolitics and underlying socio-mental border constructs.

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