Introduction

In our globalized world travel over long distances has become a reality in the lives of ordinary people, just as movements across borders between countries and continents have become the experience of millions of people. The shrinking of distances through air travel has enabled untold numbers of individuals to enter the spaces of other cultures, though admittedly political tensions and escalating threats of terrorism have created new impediments to the newly won freedom of the skies. Sixteen years ago three dozen scholars met in Vienna and examined the perception and representation of the heart of Europe in the works of North American fiction writers and authors of travelogues.[1] In October 2009 a number of them returned to the same place and were joined by another twenty scholars from North America and Europe to consider the crossing of borders from an even wider perspective. Five years before the 1994 conference on "Images of Central Europe" convened, the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain were dismantled, and the new freedom of movement transformed the experience of Europeans from Gibraltar to the Urals. In the intervening years journeys to more distant places became possible to many young people from the Occident who took advantage of the opportunities of getting to know new cultures and of interacting with individuals and groups inhabiting remote spaces. This was possible not least through international exchange programs between universities involving both faculty and students. Extended stays abroad reflected a desire for adventure, the privilege of the young, while many members of the older generations benefitted from the new opportunities made available by an expanding international tourism industry. But the economic disparities in the globalized world also prompted the migration of hundreds of thousands of people from Third World countries, who eagerly looked for opportunities in more favored places; moreover, the influx of refugees, asylum seekers and those eager to improve their economic prospects prompted legislation and other measures designed to prevent such border crossings, and so new barriers have been erected or at least advocated.

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[1] Cf. Zacharasiewicz, ed., *Images of Central Europe in Travelogues and Fiction by North American Writers*, Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1995.

The current global situation has given rise to distinct and seemingly incompatible tendencies among commentators and observers in the humanities and social sciences. Some praise the crossing of borders as a precondition for hybridity, which appears as the natural result of easy interactions and exchanges between members of different groups and different places. Others point out that such mobility has also brought about a growing anxiety about the erosion of cohesion and homogeneity at the local, regional, and national level. The latter concern has engendered the wish to shore up existing borders in the desire not to be swamped by the arrival of many travelers eager to remain and settle.

Considering these two contrasting trends it is no wonder that the topic of the international colloquium in 2009 appealed to so many distinguished scholars and prompted their critical analyses of a wide range of texts from the late 18th to the beginning of the 21st century.

Scholars in the humanities may hesitate to express their opinions on topical political issues but have often discovered interesting parallels and significant analogies to current events in texts from earlier periods, which they view from a critical distance and with a keen eye for the ways in which those might reflect timeless issues. As the colloquium addressed various aspects of this complex phenomenon, the accounts of real journeys across borders or the fictional representations of such experiences often mingle in exciting ways, providing illuminating comments on one another. The verbal testimonies of the factors prompting departures from familiar territories and the experience of entering new spaces reveal significant moments, both encouraging and disappointing, as is evident in the essays contained in this volume. That the response of the real or fictitious traveler depended on their preparation for that which was either a liminal or merely a liminoid experience is equally evident. Considering the insights furnished by numerous studies exploring the wide realm of travel literature, it will come as no surprise that the cultural baggage of the ordinary traveler was often overwhelming, preventing any balanced (let alone a fresh) look at the places visited. Discoveries of socio-psychologists about the predominance of ethnocentrism in the encounter with and the depiction of foreign places and people have meanwhile become familiar, and the various academic journals and numerous monographs and collections of essays in that field have prepared the reader of this volume for such impressions. But there are also many unexpected glimpses of the puzzlement of travelers and their nascent or sudden awareness of major differences between their home turf and the new territory visited. While the frequency of ethnocentric judgment cannot

surprise the informed reader, quite a few travelers seem ready to grant recognition to the foreign people encountered and to acknowledge the appealing beauty or sublimity of the strange spaces visited.

A number of essays contained in this volume focus on transatlantic experiences of European visitors of North America or European journeys of American travelers crossing physical and political boundaries. Even more space is given to articles providing real or fictional instances of the crossing of the divide between the USA and Canada and highlighting the differences between the societies in the two neighboring countries. Several of the contributions also consider the crossing of other borders, and investigate the obstacles to the encounters between members of different ethnic groups, for instance, in the course of expeditions or migrations, and examine the contact zone between humans and nature. The range of the denotations of the key concept of the "border" is further expanded in one essay in which the borderline between various artistic media and genres is thematized.

In the opening essay, an imaginative survey of the multiple functions of suitcases, Aritha van Herk blends autobiographical and factual accounts of the role of these inevitable accoutrements of travel in life stories with their fictional uses in contemporary literature. The wide range of functions includes that of potential aids for escapes, holding in their bellies promises of destinations and desires but also testimonies of inheritances lost and achievements forgotten. Van Herk thus brilliantly illustrates various conditions accompanying travel and the crossing of borders, which not infrequently suggest that the traveller may even lose his or her identity in transgressing numerous borders.

This tour de force is followed by a group of essays exploring late 18th- and 19th-century transatlantic journeys and exploratory travel of the North American continent, beginning with Robert Sayre's account of the experiences of Moreau de Saint Méry. This prominent French politician fled France during the reign of terror 1793 and, after an exhausting four-month transatlantic journey, began a three-year-long residence in various American cities. Sayre demonstrates how the experienced lawyer, familiar with the issues of colonial administration, developed a critical perspective on the American national character during the long sea journey, offering close observations of the contrast between the relatively small American crew and its French or French-Creole passengers. Sayre also argues that Moreau highlighted the carelessness ascribed to the Americans by drawing on his impressions gained during his residence in Philadelphia and his interactions with political leaders then.

Christoph Irmscher illuminates the colorful career of John James Audubon, his untiring criss-crossing of the North American continent and his unique ornithological publications with their famous illustrations, thus demonstrating the paradigmatic role of a scholar adventurer and artist. The borders Audubon crossed were not only geographical ones. Bridging science and art, autobiography and fact, he pioneered a tradition of American nature writing that anticipates the likes of Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson.

The following two essays by Hartwig Isernhagen and Arno Heller analyze the experiences of naturalists and artists of German descent who traveled through the Midwest and Far West in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s and who responded with sympathy to the treatment of Native Americans, who had been brought closer to the minds of readers on both sides of the Atlantic by the ethnographic travelogues resulting from the expeditions of Maximilian Prince of Wied. Their analysis redirects attention to the various individuals whose contributions in this respect have been eclipsed, such as that of cartographer Karl Ludwig Preuss, who distanced himself from the aggression towards Native Americans, while the versatile artist and fiction writer Balduin Möllhausen held a more favorable view of the progress of the frontier and the lot of Native Americans than Preuss.

While expeditions across the shifting frontier in the Midwest and West provided a major challenge for these surveyors and artists of European background, traversing the political borders in Europe in a critical phase was the goal of Louisa Catherine Adams, the wife of the future president of the United States, John Quincy Adams. Her journey from Tsarist Russia to Paris early in 1815 was prompted by the need to rejoin her husband there. Michael O'Brien's essay places Adams' narrative within the context of the practice of, and the debates about 19th-century women travelers, and he shows that her task required courage and circumspection, virtues rarely expected at that time from members of her sex. Not surprisingly, Adams would later present her account as evidence of female competence.

Instead of the turbulent Central European landscape Louisa C. Adams crossed in her carriage, Nathaniel Hawthorne rode a boat on the Erie Canal, which provided a watery thoroughfare to the developing Midwest. This offers Christopher Mulvey an opportunity for a detailed sketch of the social and economic conditions accompanying the construction of the canal. He also dwells on the writer's critical presentation of an Englishman's observations of his fellow travelers on the canal boat.

A distinct British perspective shaped the representation of society in North America in Anthony Trollope's travel book, the fruit of a transatlantic journey in the early phase of the American Civil War. James Buzard demonstrates Trollope's paradoxical refusal to let go of his convictions and prejudices in spite of his extensive journeys on the five continents and the crossing of many borders. For Trollope, the issue of race determines collective behavior but he carefully avoids offering more in-depth explanations of the divisions manifest in the Civil War America.

While one may therefore see in Trollope's *North America* a prototypical liminoid journey bringing about no change of perspective, Henry James's first confrontation with Rome, as an adult visitor, is a truly inspiring, transforming, and deeply emotional experience. It serves Peter Brooker as an ideal entrée for his discussion of the reactions of other expatriate American authors to whom London and Paris offered a vision of a culture seemingly absent in the American scene. Brooker refers to the prominence and function of such intense moments in modernist aesthetic and relates them to the role of perception with "new eyes" in the art of early photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz before returning to the distillation of James's impressions in his later travelogues, and before adumbrating the aesthetic consequences of Gertrude Stein's choice of permanent residence in Paris.

While these essays deal with transatlantic travel, the following contributions consider itineraries on the North American continent involving a crossing of various types of borders. Journeys on the US highways before or outside of the Interstate Highway System (established by President Eisenhower) in road novels and travelogues are the subject of James J. Schramer's essay. He juxtaposes three narrated itineraries crossing the continent from coast to coast in cars and including planned forays into neighboring countries or riding along the US border. Schramer reads their specific details as expressions of individual mentalities and as significant reflections of the times in which they were composed: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* mirroring, in the restlessness of the protagonists, the pent-up desire for freedom in the nineteen-fifties; John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charlie*, which captured the anxieties of the early sixties with the awareness of the loss of regional specificities and unsolved racial conflicts; and Least-Heat Moon's *Blue Highways*, which articulated a recovered sense of history.

Steinbeck's anger at the racism rampant in the Deep South had a parallel in the emotions accompanying the journey undertaken ten years earlier by the African American journalist Carl Rowan from Minnesota, who, in ar-

ticles later collected in *South of Freedom*, rendered in detail the multiple restrictions of his freedom and discrimination caused by racism and the Jim Crow laws in 1952. The threat of potential violence, and his status as a conspicuously black intruder in the South, influenced his behavior, prompting him to frequently change his clothes and to make careful choices even in mundane matters. In his essay, Gary Totten examines Rowan's strategies through a careful reading of important episodes which reveal the newspaperman's complex response to the distressing phenomena he witnessed. The exposure of the race issue in the South to his (white) middle class readers in the North was eventually modified by his recognizing how fluid the boundary was between the flagrant racism in the South and its more subtle version in the North.

The racism encountered by travelers in the 1950s reminds us of earlier periods in American history in which comparable experiences prompted movement across the border separating the newly independent United States and the remaining British colonies in North America. A similar influx occurred on the west coast of the continent in the 19th century. Winfried Siemerling thematizes such cross-border movements and explores the successful recovery of Black History in Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes*, which gives voice to Black characters. He first discusses the movement north of Black Loyalists in the late 18th century against the wider canvas of Black Diaspora studies and Black Atlantic scholarship before focusing on the less well known immigration from California to British Columbia of 600 free Blacks as settlers, as reflected in Wayde Compton's transgeneric volume *49th Parallel Psalm*. Siemerling offers a close reading of this complex long poem and comments on the cruxes in this experimental work as well as in its sequel *Performance Bond*. Both texts syncretically mix various artistic modes and transgress borders between written and spoken texts, voodoo mythologies and electronic media, thus conflating the history of the African diaspora and the present moment in its Canadian locale and context.

When V.S. Naipaul traveled through the South a generation after Carl Rowan and observed the necessary adaptation of traditional culture(s) of Blacks and Whites to the processes of massive transformation in Dixie, his own views were undergoing a sea change, too, as Robert Brinkmeyer demonstrates in his comprehensive survey of Naipaul's travel books. After his earlier inclination to offer sharp satirical pictures of the post-colonial societies he had visited around the globe, the Trinidadian author residing in the English countryside was now ready to acknowledge the strength of tradi-

tional lifestyles and the winds of historical change. *A Turn in the South* brings Naipaul's enriched perspective to bear on his encounters with his southern interlocutors.

In her essay Jeanne Dubino examines multiple border crossings in Josh Russell's recent historical novel *Yellow Jack* set in mid-19th century New Orleans. Russell is just one in a long list of writers who have paid tribute to New Orleans, extolling its dual Romance heritage, the hybridity of its population and its Old World aura, which seems to engender nostalgia in visitors and readers alike. Dubino examines the vagaries of Russell's anti-hero, the daguerrotypist Claude Marchand, a picaro who is ready to exploit the women he encounters and ignores moral boundaries in his irrepressible desire to indulge in all excesses in this spurious and decadent environment hit by a yellow fever epidemic. Russell's novel crosses the border into the carnivalesque and into the realm of disease and corruption, manifest in the daguerrotypist's memorials for the victims of yellow fever, with the protagonist himself finally meeting his death in the waters of a canal.

The next essay by David Staines opens a group of articles investigating various border crossings involving Canadian figures and settings. Staines succinctly presents the development of the points of view of two prominent Canadian academics and celebrated men-of-letters. He sketches the evolution of the political scientist and fiction writer Stephen Leacock, whose multiple journeys throughout the world strengthened his adherence to a nostalgic picture of Canada seen as a quiet backwater, and encapsulated in idyllic "Sunshine Sketches" of his retreat to a provincial town. Staines also traces the contrasted development of Marshall McLuhan's growing appreciation of his own country as an excellent observation point of the "world environment" of the USA. This position enabled Canada to serve as a mediator to the world of the neighboring country in the south, where McLuhan had spent the first ten years of his academic career before returning to the home turf he had originally scorned.

In her essay on Margaret Atwood's "Cartoon Art" Reingard Nischik examines the pictorial juxtaposition of comic figures in this hybrid genre. Atwood's visual mini-narratives involving national types (Canadian "Survivalwoman" versus US "Superham" etc.) represent the conflict resulting from neo-imperialist US cultural exports across the border as perceived by Canadians in the 1970s (which also prompted Hugh MacLennan's political application of Robert Frost's phrase "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors"). Atwood humorously but emphatically declares her attachment to a post-colonial position. As Nischik's essay shows, At-

wood's later self-conscious rendition of the burden of international book tours in entertaining comic strips reflects the rich experience of a leading writer much in demand across the world.

Atwood's early novel *Surfacing* and Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* provide William Stowe with a rich harvest in his investigation of the permeable borders between the human and the natural world(s). Drawing on key concepts of border theory developed in connection with Latino cultures he addresses the ecological concerns expressed in these (feminist) fictions and reads the development of the protagonists in their struggles with negative forces as indicative of the victory of life-enhancing notions which they embraced in crucial moments of contact with animate beings and with the land. Addressing issues raised in adverse critiques of these texts, he illustrates the significance of crossing arbitrary boundaries and the value of hybridity and demonstrates how the authors to different degrees permit their female protagonists on their quests to reach their goals.

Whilst the plot of Hogan's novel takes the characters across the (political) border into the lands of Canada's First Nations, John Steffler's poem *The Grey Islands*, the subject of Martin Löschnigg's article, renders in a text straddling generic boundaries the voluntary exile of the former Poet Laureate of Canada's Parliament on a deserted island off the coast of Newfoundland. The essay places this postmodernist long poem-cum-narrative in a literary tradition going back to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and (post)romantic wilderness writings, exploring the multiple border crossings implied in the deliberately (fragmentary) rendition of this liminal experience on that bleak island.

Heinz Antor's detailed analysis of Rudy Wiebe's metafictional historiographic narrative of the first expedition of John Franklin, *A Discovery of Strangers*, takes the reader back to the 19th century and reveals the multiple (potential or real) border crossings of the white members of the expedition. The challenges in the alien arctic landscape are shown to be well beyond their competence as their rigid imperialist presuppositions prevent them from learning in time from the experiences of the First Nations, the Yellowknife people. Instead, the Franklin Expedition members would uselessly name points in their surroundings, which they then come close to destroying through their arrogance. Even an exceptional figure such as Robert Hood, whose love affair with the native girl Greenstockings represents the only successful intercultural encounter in Wiebe's text, fails in his sketches to do justice to the wilderness of the Barrens, thus like the others thwarting the possibility of a truthful account of the region, the prime purpose of the

expedition. Its survivors, who cling to racist concepts, deny the breaking down of barriers of taboos when they came close to starving on the arctic tundra and try to uphold hollow imperialist ideologies and pious fabrications.

The Eurocentric misconceptions of Wiebe's historical personages contrast with the ostensible appreciation and sharing of indigenous perspectives and habits of the Eskimo in the writings of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. This famous Canadian explorer of Icelandic origin repeatedly crossed the northern boundaries of the North American continent and lived for some time with the Inuit, as Jan Borm discusses in his article on Stefansson's *My Life with the Eskimo*. He considers the promotion of the trope of the "friendly Arctic" by the ethnographer, who appreciated the social system (and virtues) of the Inuit, and reflects on seeming inconsistencies in his publications, in which expressions of condescension are due to contemporary anthropological axioms and patterns of thought interfering with his rhetoric and tropes of nordicity. Borm also addresses the issue of religion and of missionary activities among the Inuit and takes note of Stefansson's omission of his debt to his Inuit wife and failure to acknowledge his son.

It is the borderline separating Canada from the USA, rather than the various borders crossed in the Arctic, that draws Martin Kuester's attention in his essay on "Border Crossings." After surveying the perceptions of Marshall McLuhan and Clark Blaise of this boundary and considering prairie fiction set either side of the divide (such as Wallace Stegner's *Wolf Willow* and David Williams' *The Eye of the Father*), Kuester focuses on two novels by Guy Vanderhaeghe which revolve around crossing this border. He summarizes the debate on the two narrative strands in *The Englishman's Boy* linked to the notorious Cypress Hills Massacre and on the dubious presentation of the winning of the (North American) West, as well as the questionable mythologizing of crucial differences between the lands and societies north and south of the 49th parallel, before going on to explore the complex crossing of borders in the significantly titled *The Last Crossing*. The analysis of this historical novel relating the search of two British siblings for their brother vanished among the First Nations reveals the irrelevance of borderlines between countries, ethnicities, religions and genders. Kuester reads *The Last Crossing* as suggesting the aptness of overcoming the borderline between the aboriginals and the white community, an idea that seems to align the novel with John Ralston Saul's advocacy of the adoption of native values and perspectives for the collective identity of Canadian society.

A very different border, that between the visual and verbal arts, is considered in Gudrun Grabher's article on two of Jorie Graham's poems on paintings of old masters. This contemporary American poet, whose formative experiences included childhood and adolescence in Italy and her mother's example as a painter, in her philosophical and metaphysical poetry takes us beyond the sphere of the merely verbal when interpreting Italian visual art. Grabher relates Graham's frequent practice of rendering paintings in her poems to the popularity of dialogic ekphrasis in modern poetry and explicates Graham's goal of involving the readers fully and making them transcend the barrier between the spectator and the object. In her poems Graham implies the need to experience empathy by entering the canvases. Her program is illustrated by Grabher in her close reading of "San Sepolcro" (on Piero della Francesca's "Madonna del Parto") and of "At Luca Signorelli's Resurrection of the Body", with the latter poem demonstrating the (necessary) transgression of the boundaries between spirit and flesh in "entering" the anatomy and thus revealing the poems' function of offering understanding and even consolation.

The essay by Carmen Birkle considers multiple crossings of geographical borders and also of temporal boundaries as it analyzes Bharati Mukherjee's "global novel" *The Holder of the World* (1993). Relating the book to new trends in the academic discipline (notably the development of Atlantic and Hemispheric Studies), Birkle explicates the intricate migrations of (increasingly) adventurous individuals from late 17th century New England to the Coromandel Coast in India (via London) and back as their paths are researched by a modern descendant of these mobile figures who left the then busy commercial port of Salem for the expanding realm of the East India Company. While Birkle notes intertextual links to the characters in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, she also emphasizes that the strong exotic appeal of the Orient led to a tolerance absent in Puritan New England itself. The result is the intercultural union of Hannah (from Salem) with an Indian Raja and her transformation into the "Salem Bibi." Her return with the child of this relationship, Black Pearl, and the precious artifacts, especially miniature paintings, (allegedly) found by the narrator complete the recrossings of the oceans, which have established "a spidery web of connections" in this global novel, which emphasizes the hybridity of the positive agents and their talent(s) to heal and to bring peace.

In the final essay in the collection Sherrill Grace takes the theme of border crossings to another level as she addresses general issues of the boundary between ethics and aesthetics in the representation of (modern) war and

its resulting traumas. Eschewing examples from the Great War, the inspiration of so many Canadian authors as it fulfilled a crucial role in the process of nation-building, she chooses her texts from World War II. Timothy Findley's novel *Famous Last Words* and Marie Clements' play *Burning Vision* uncover broader international contexts and haunting questions as so many individuals were implicated in the terrible inhumanity crossing continents and oceans. Grace's essay provides a detailed account of the final journey of Findley's fictional protagonist to his Alpine hiding place and of the contestation concerning his belated (and qualified) "confession." It also offers a structural analysis of the dramatic indictment of the deadly exploitation of the unsuspecting Dene in the Canadian uranium mine used for the American atomic bombs dropped on Japanese cities in Clements' expressionistic and symbolic play. Grace's study finally refers to the current permeability of national borders in a world in which violence and evil seem pervasive and articulates the need for accepting collective, cross-border responsibility in a global world.