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*Cultural Production and
Negotiation of Borders*

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Borders within. Tourism growth, migration and regional polarization in Baja California Sur (Mexico)

Alba Gamez and Manuel Angeles^{1*}

Abstract: *Tourism in Baja California Sur (BCS, in the Baja California Peninsula in Northern Mexico) can be understood as an example of the internationalization of the services sector and the integration of relatively isolated regions to the processes of the global market, particularly that of the United States. The success of the Los Cabos corridor (between San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas in the southernmost tip of BCS), as one of the most dynamic tourist spaces in Mexico, has been central to this trend in the state. Subscribing to a flexible understanding of borders (Brunnet-Jailly 2005) that goes beyond geographical boundaries, this growth has implied a restructuring of intra and interregional interaction patterns not just in Los Cabos but in the whole state. International tourism has fostered internal borders in BCS, due to the enclave nature of tourism growth as expressed by increasing investment concentration, income inequality, and social exclusion. This article analyzes the effects and perspectives of a tourism growth that is tightly related to the US market, has changed demographic patterns locally, and has increased opportunities for BCS, even though the growth has also made BCS more vulnerable to negative external impacts, including environmental deterioration, intraregional economic disparities and social exclusion. The text is divided into three sections: the first addresses the economic importance of tourism internationally and for Mexico; the second part highlights the most recent patterns in the sector's performance in BCS, to which Los Cabos as the state's most important tourist destination is crucial; and the third reflects upon the relationship between growth and development as they are linked to tourism in the region. A call is made about the need to reconsider how to sustain growth while changing the development of negative tourism-related patterns, a concern that government officials, private investors and the local community should share and act upon.*

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Between Borderlands and Bioregionalism: Life-Place Lessons along a Polluted River

Perlita R. Dicochea*

Abstract: Considered one of the most polluted rivers in North America, the New River, overlapping the desert border region of Baja California and Southern California, symbolizes neglect, uneven development, and struggle for residents who live nearby. Ranging between their mid-30s and mid-60s, the twelve men and women whose interviews are the focus of this analysis demonstrate the process by which they have come to distance themselves from, yet, relate to the New River. Facilitated by a bioregional vision and borderlands scholarship, I propose that the process of detachment from the toxic river is possible because of an existing degree of binational, bioregional consciousness and life-ways articulated by individual respondents. Indeed, ecological crises such as the toxic New River and subsequent human disconnection from the environment contextualize much of bioregional scholarship and activism. In the face of ecological crisis, how has the New River pollution problem shaped the way individual border residents conceptualize and relate to their environment? How might border thinking inform the sense of place and ecological awareness articulated by the individuals interviewed?

I contend that the sense of loss and despair among all of the respondents in this study, while an indication of the negative impacts of river pollution on community health, also signifies the characterization of a social problem. The very act of naming the problem of the contaminated river means that its current state has yet to become a normalized, accepted, or invisible disposition. Indeed, respondents indicate a fragmented and transregional sense of place. From a collection of individual border residents' perspectives and experiences, I extrapolate the possibilities for bioregional reinhabitation, or reconnecting with the environment, through problem-naming and increased public participation as crucial steps toward environmental sustainability.

“...We are not getting justice...we want domestic tranquility. But how can we have domestic tranquility if we have this monster in our city? This monster that doesn't let us grow, doesn't let us work on it. We can't put roads or parks. It gives us bad odors. I'm sure somebody has gotten sick from it...A scientist won't put their finger in it.” Juan Martínez, Imperial Valley resident (2005)

Descripción de MEXICALI: Una nube de polvo...un río de cagada...y un calor de la chingada!

Description of MEXICALI: A cloud of dust...a river full of crap...and a heat from hell! (T-shirt design 2002)

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Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders: Introduction to the Dossier

Guest-editors: Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe*

Abstract: The cultural production of borders can be as read as referring to part of the economy, as an aesthetic site of creativity and border negotiation, and a cultural factor in the bordering process. The need to understand these cultural dimensions of borders and borderlands has lead to interdisciplinary interest in narratives, aesthetic forms, and cultural memory. Border poetics and related forms of spatial poetics can provide fruitful approaches to specific literary texts, films and other artworks, as well as to bordering in general. This special dossier for the Journal of Borderlands Studies presents papers from the 2008 ABS European conference in Kirkenes, which had "Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders" as its theme and which brought together a wide range of researchers from both the social sciences and the humanities, raising questions about the role of culture in borderlands and also focusing on borders in Sub-Arctic Europe. The following selection of papers addresses films, poetry, novels and cultural heritage connected to specific topographical borderlands.

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Roman Borders and Contemporary Cultural Criticism

Timothy Saunders*

Abstract: *This article takes as its starting point the observation that several of the most common terms used in contemporary cultural criticism – terms such as delimit, define and, indeed, term itself – a) derive from Latin; and b) invoke notions of the border. On this basis, it then sets out to excavate some of the ancient Roman foundations of the borders we continue to encounter and assert each time we as critics venture out to patrol the cultural realm. Taking the poems of arguably the most important classical Roman poet of them all, Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil), as its primary archaeological resource, it illustrates how for the Romans too the borders of such things as farms, empires, concepts, laws and literature were all inextricably interlinked, as well as how they were variously produced, negotiated, and, as their linguistic traces in modern languages such as English also suggest, how they might continue to inform modern debates about culture in general and borders in particular.*

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Cultural Boundaries and Intercommunication in Two Films from the North-West Of Russia

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Abstract: *This article discusses two recent films devoted to the borderland regions of North-West Russia: Island (Ostrov 2006) and Cuckoo (Kukushka 2002). In the first film, the borderland to the White Sea and to the inhabitable is the site of a Christian monastery. People go there on semi-legal pilgrimages in order to obtain definitive answers to their problems. The Northern borderland acquires a holy and cathartic status in this film. The second film, by contrast, deals in particular with the problem of miscommunication between representatives of three different nations, a Russian, a Finn and a Sami, who are accidentally brought together by the ever shifting boundaries between enemies in World War Two. They are unable to communicate their essential identities, the kind of identities Island seeks, but find their own way of non-verbal communication, friendship and romance. The Northern borderland in this film is therefore a space of both humour and mutual generosity. By applying a broadly conceived cultural-historical approach to these films, rather than one based primarily in film studies, this article will explore both the reasons for and the effects of these contrasting representations of Russia's North-Western borderlands.*

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Challenging the Border as Barrier: Liminality in Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line*

Holger Pötzsch*

Abstract: *This paper is about the cultural production and negotiation of borders and boundaries in and through contemporary Hollywood war and action movies. It works on the assumption that the way borders are represented in artifacts of popular culture has an impact on political discourse and, therefore, on border practices. War and action movies are read through the concept of the border, i.e. the way in which conventions of representing self and other, friend and foe, give rise to epistemological and topographical barriers limiting the subject positions available within a particular movie discourse are sketched out. After having assessed these border effects in Aliens, Black Hawk Down, and 300, the article turns to The Thin Red Line. The concept of liminality is introduced in order to describe the techniques through which Malick's movie challenges and disrupts the notion of borders as barriers interlocking self and other in relations of mutually exclusive hostility. In reconfiguring the border as a zone of contact and negotiation, liminality enables a subversion of the subject positions implied by these barriers and enables a reconstitution of both the divided entities, effectively turning dogs-of-war back into human beings.*

“It is the process of bordering, rather than the border outcome per se, which should be of interest to all border scholars. [...] It is the process through which borders are constructed and the categories of difference or separation created.”

David Newman (2007, 35)

“War don't ennoble men. Turns them into dogs. Poisons the soul.”

Pvt. Witt in *The Thin Red Line* (2:00:45)

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Living Racial B/Order in First Nations Canadian Novels: Richard Wagamese's *Keeper' N Me* and Lee Maracle's *Ravensong*

Kristina Aurylaitė*

Abstract: *The paper discusses two border narratives by First Nations Canadian writers, Richard Wagamese's Keeper' n Me (1994) and Lee Maracle's Ravensong (1993), both constructed upon the motif of the white-indigenous border within Canada's (post)colonial space. While Wagamese's novel is a familiar homecoming narrative, which highlights indigenous people's success in domesticating and appropriating imposed colonial spatial constructs, such as reserves and the restricting racial border, Maracle's text works to hyperbolize the racial segmentation of space, resulting from the absence of cross-cultural interaction. The border here is marked by what Bhabha calls "fixed" differences and prejudice, which preclude active borderline engagements. The border in the novel is the controlling element of the spatial arrangement of the reserve and the town as two adjacent but incompatible segments. Both novels choose to foreground the ways the racial/cultural border is experienced and imagined. In this essay, I discuss the border in terms of contact with and performance for the racial Other, during which cultural differences are negotiated and a racial border constructed, reconstructed, or unsettled.*

"There is no spatiality that is not organized by the determination of frontiers." (Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 123)

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Local Discursive Strategies for the Cultural Construction of the Border: The Case of the Portuguese–Spanish Border

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The border will be addressed as a discursive object as the purpose of this paper is to explore discursive strategies involved in the cultural construction of the border and of local identity. The paper will focus on a section of the Portuguese-Spanish border between Portuguese Beira Interior Norte and Spanish Castilla Y León. Taking as a case the rhetoric of borders' population, I intend to show that political borders are mainly mental, symbolic and cultural constructions. I will also argue that in the process of construction and reproduction of the border, social and economic practices that have long ceased to characterise the area and its population are, in this matter, stronger elements than those of the present. Discursive local strategies constructing the border and local identity reproduce a certain asymmetry depending on the producer and the context of production. I will address the issue by focusing on two different kinds of discursive strategies. On the one hand, I will be referring to those strategies that, because they work on an individual level, are not planned as real strategies, i.e., they are not designed with a specific goal, operating instead mainly on an unconscious level. On the other hand, I will deal with some discursive strategies that are specifically planned and intended to produce an effect that relates to the construction and reaffirmation of local identity. In approaching this issue I will consider museological discursive practices from smuggling museums in Melgaço (North of Portugal) and Santana de Cambas (South of Portugal) and smuggling routes in Montalegre County in the North of Portugal.

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