Diverging Parallels: Canadian Literature and the Canada-US Border

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The Tenth Eccles Centre for American Studies Plenary Lecture given at the British Association for Canadian Studies Annual Conference, 2015

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Diverging Parallels: Canadian Literature and the Canada-US Border

The Canada-US border, we might argue, is most meaningful for Anglo-Canadian nationalists, not simply demarcating the international boundary between Canada and the United States but also standing as a symbol of Canada’s sovereignty, however fragile, that line that used to be referred to as the longest undefended border in the world offering and representing something that stands between us and full integration, or disappearance, into the US. As Ian Angus argues, “The existence of English Canada has been predicated on distinguishing ourselves from Americans” (113); further, he contends, “All concern with English Canadian identity, formulated abstractly, is engaged in maintaining a border between us and the United States” (47).

The border is both a physical location that distinguishes Canadian from US territory and an abstraction that underpins Anglo-Canadian identity, in Angus’s formulation, by distinguishing that identity from a US identity. Recurrent agonising over our differences from Americans – are they, as Lorraine Code writes, “mere variations in cultural timbre, inflection, intonation” or are they “deep divisions in the histories that have made these two nations what they are, both locally and globally” (82)? – these anxieties, this uncertainty about sameness and difference across the 49th parallel, often manifests itself in Canada-US border studies in the image of a mirror. Russell Brown writes that “the border is central to Canada’s self-awareness, because it is a part of Canada’s own image as well as of the image that America reflects back to Canada” (12); tweaking the image of the border as mirror, both Margaret Atwood and Jody Berland describe the Canada-US border as a “one-way mirror” (440, 476) as a way of illustrating how Canadians can and do look in on their American cousins across the border, while the reverse does not seem to be true. Canada, in these formulations, looks simultaneously at itself and at its neighbour, keen to identify differences as they arise, where the reflection from the US side results in Canada’s invisibility. Thus, the efficacy of the border from a Canadian nationalist position is often in doubt, a symbol of lack of defence between two countries that is itself need of defending, cross-border difference requiring constant reiteration in order to make the border effectively signify.

My research on cultural representations of the Canada-US border has focused primarily on the 1980s to the present, and thus the run-up to the ratification
of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the US, through the ratification of NAFTA, and beyond 9/11 and the implications of its fallout for Canada-US relations, much of which have focused, of course, on the nature of the Canada-US border itself. For today’s purposes, though, I want to start a little earlier, with the height of cultural nationalism—the 1970s—with a poem by bill bissett, entitled “LOVE OF LIFE, th 49th PARALLELL”:

in th fifties they sent in their teachers, their poets, their pretty-eyed intellectuals who were kind, of far out … looking for th academic freedom they cud find here, afraid from th dark bittr spell mccarthy had cast ovr ther land. we handid them jobs, places, freedoms, welcomd th guests, gave refuge

then came ther businesses also ther monopolies, ther cars ther tv shows, now they have control so much of our educational centres, th media, now there is no academic freedom here now they have th place to control th minds of our children, ths guests (65)

Anyone familiar with Dennis Lee’s essay “Cadence, Country, Silence” will recognize this sense here of Canada as a “colonial space” – colonial in relation to the United States, Lee argues. It is Canada’s relationship to the United States that makes us “live in space which is radically in question for us” (45). bissett continues:

now ther peopul arm themselves against us on th bordr between our countries now if not for our strength and our independence of ther fascist ways aftr th record industry nd rock show take ovr, rip off, aftr ther draft dodgers, if not for our strength, our independence wud cum

ther tanks, ther ballistik missiles, ther show of hate, ther army (66)

In addition to bissett’s articulation of US colonization of Canada, I’m interested in how he posits the distinction between Canada and the United States: the US being, in the ‘50s, a kind of fairy-tale place where McCarthy has cast a “dark bittr spell,” and Canada therefore acting as its antidote: the white magic to counter McCarthy’s evil. At the same time, bissett foregrounds a relationship of cross-border hospitality, the Americans moving to Canada having been welcomed as guests. And yet, that cross-border
hospitality, often seemingly echoed in official political rhetoric of friendship and neighbourliness between Canada and the US, gives way to a cultural colonization (monopolies, TV shows, educational centres, media). The so-called longest undefended border in the world leaves Canadian culture defenceless. bissett projects an image of a defended border (“ther peopul arm themselves against us on th bordr”), but this military defence quickly gives way in the poem to cultural matters – “th record industry nd rock show take ovr” – before the threat of military action resumes (“ther tanks, ther ballistik missiles, ther show of hate, ther army”). That bissett should be so focused on military action reflects US military intervention at the time of the poem’s composition, especially in Southeast Asia: “now th Americans movd already into cambodia, into canada” (67).

And while cultural nationalism may have had its peak in Canada in the 1970s, it has hardly disappeared. Stephen Cain’s 2005 collection, *American Standard/Canada Dry*, opens with the poem “American Standard,” which bears more than a passing resemblance to bissett’s:

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live free or die
toten hosen kremlin kapers krispy kreme
evil empire satan’s voice piss en masses take bait hate
crime love deaf to rights wrong by strong will power
the lawn square meal mouth agape maw only bleeding bullets
nike victory mike makes righteous war against drug lords of
slaves history blind faith guns christ black tower power plays (10)
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Cain’s play with language is different in nature to bissett’s, but the breathlessness of the litany of charges against the US is similar. The rant of “American Standard” is, unsurprisingly, more up to date in its points of reference, including allusions to Columbine, for instance. But it also refers to earlier conflicts in which the US is involved, such as through the mentioning of napalm (which we tend to associate it primarily with the Vietnam War). Cain also includes US military interventions in Latin America: “death squad / ties guatemala to el salvador grenada dominican nicaraguan and cuban” (12). Cain says comparatively little about Canada in “American Standard”: he refers to Dennis Lee’s *Civil Elegies*; asks “can nada rid us of a fascist / in the belly full of bilge” (13); and claims, “we’re trying to sympathize but it’s hard / wear our ensign on your back packs” (14). But the Canada-US border is not only implicit in this Canadian poet’s characterisation of the US but also explicit in references to “54 40 or fight” and the assertion that “good
borders make good boarders” (12), nation-state demarcation becoming interchangeable with accommodation, or perhaps hospitality for a price.

Cain’s invective against the country he calls “US america” includes charges of “new world orders genocide / small pox pine box ridge pelts or oil offensive operation” (10), compressing centuries of US genocidal history in relation to Indigenous peoples. Yet Cain could easily have implicated his own country in the genocidal history of the Americas. “American Standard” might function in part to combat the eclipsing of injustices done to Native Americans in the US by the focus on the history and fallout of slavery, but it also implicitly absolves Canada from its own devastating histories of colonization and injustice with regard to the First Peoples. That the Canada-US border is not a site of division between just and unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples is made clear in the work of Indigenous writers. Canadian literary scholars are likely most familiar with Thomas King, whose literary texts often represent the border-straddling Blackfoot. In King’s well-known short story “Borders” (1992), a Blackfoot child and his mother attempt to cross the Canada-US border at an Alberta-Montana crossing, on their way to visit the boy’s sister in Salt Lake City. The mother in the story initially appears to align herself with a Canadian nationalism, disdaining her daughter’s interest in Salt Lake City: “From here on down, they got lousy water… You’re going to have to buy your water in bottles if you want good coffee” (132), the mother warns. Preparing for their trip to Salt Lake City, the narrator notes, “I had to dress up, too, for my mother did not want us crossing the border looking like Americans” (133). Approaching the border crossing, he tells us, “My mother straightened the dress across her thighs, leaned against the wheel, and drove all the way to the border in first gear, slowly, as if she were trying to see through a bad storm or riding high on black ice” (134). But despite the mother’s ostensible distaste for American water and American fashion, it is not the United States she is bracing herself for, as her questioning by the US border guard demonstrates:

“Morning, ma’am.
“Good morning.”
“Where you heading?
“Salt Lake City.”
“Purpose of your visit?”
“Visit my daughter.”
“Citizenship?
“Blackfoot,” my mother told him.
“Ma’am?”
“Blackfoot,” my mother repeated.
“Canadian?”
“Blackfoot.” (134-5)

This line of questioning repeats itself through the story, with different US border guards, and with a Canadian border guard as well, when the Blackfoot woman and her son, refused permission to enter the United States, attempt to cross back into Canada. Before their encounter with the Canadian border guard, however, the American Inspector Pratt insists, “Everyone who crosses our border has to declare their citizenship. Even Americans. It helps us keep track of the visitors we get from the various countries” (136). Again, we see a language of hospitality at work in relation to the border. But in the context of King’s story, its location, and the people that form its focus, hospitality cannot possibly work in the same way. The narrator’s mother has not refused to declare her citizenship: it’s just that the border guards of both nation-states on either side of the Euro-North American boundary don’t like the answer that she gives. They cannot conceive of admitting the woman into either country, because they cannot afford to conceive of Blackfoot as a citizenship. As Daniel Heath Justice writes, “Indigenous is not ethnic difference; it is both cultural and political distinctiveness, defined by land-based genealogical connections” (239). The mother therefore asserts the political distinctiveness of the Blackfoot from the settler-invader nation-states on either side of the border, a border that cuts through Blackfoot territory. When a US border guard tries to trick the mother into betraying what he perceives her “real” citizenship to be, he asks, “Just so we can keep our records straight, what side [of the border] do you come from?” (135-6). The narrator tells us, “I knew exactly what my mother was going to say, and I could have told them if they had asked me”:

“Canadian side or American side?” asked the guard.
“Blackfoot side.” (136)

The Blackfoot side of the border is, of course, both sides of the border. The narrator’s mother is not a “visitor,” counter to the claims of Inspector Pratt. In hospitality terms, she is a host on both sides of the border, in Blackfoot territory, but her host position has been usurped by the settler-invader nation-states of Canada and the US. Those American and Canadian border guards might themselves have their identities recoded in hospitality terms premised on Indigenous peoples as hosts in the Americas.
Indigenous scholars have offered the following terms to identify settler-invaders: “visitor[s]” (Bellfy 199); “outside people who claim it [the land] now as their own” (Simpson 126); “Amer-Europeans,” who “will never truly be of this continent, never truly belong here, no matter how many generations they may dwell here” (Weaver xiv); and “neo-American[s],” who are “unguided by and disconnected from this continent” (Sheridan and Longboat 370, 377). In these terms, the settler-invader nation-states have no authority to draw a border across Indigenous lands, much less police that border in a way that abrogates Indigenous peoples’ border-crossing rights—and indeed, rights full stop. Unlike Cain’s poem “American Standard,” then, King’s short story does not excuse Canada from the violation of Indigenous rights. The Canadian border guard may be friendlier than the US border guards, who carry guns: the Canadian guard, having received the same response from the mother to the question of citizenship as the American guards, replies, “I know … and I’d be proud of being Blackfoot if I were Blackfoot. But you have to be American or Canadian” (138-9). Despite the Canadian guard’s friendliness and even enthusiasm for the idea of a Blackfoot identity, she maintains the privileges of the host to refuse entry to the Indigenous border crosser, protecting her nation-state, in Blackfoot territory, from the claims of Blackfoot citizenship. Thus, while the mother and son are not, as we know from the list of other questions they are repeatedly asked, smuggling alcohol or tobacco, bringing in fruit or plants that might threaten contamination across the border, or carrying firearms, the utterance of Indigenous citizenship at the border is deemed a substantial threat to the Canadian and US American nation-states—as, indeed, Indigenous presence and claims to the host position do fundamentally undermine the legitimacy of those countries and the line they have drawn between them.

The Canada-US border therefore signifies significantly differently in Indigenous contexts than it does in white Anglo-Canadian nationalist ones, and relationships of hospitality at and across the border must be reconfigured to account for the usurpation of the Indigenous host position in the Americas. And there are other narratives that disturb the Canadian nationalist association of the border as a protective buffer. The often-recruited narrative of the Underground Railroad, so central to Canada’s view of itself as a hospitable and racially just nation, finds itself tempered, tested, amended, contested in works by African-Canadian writers and their stories of black North American border crossings, both within and
outside the context of the Underground Railroad. Most prominently in recent years, Lawrence Hill’s wildly successful novel *The Book of Negroes* (2007) recounts the violent racism suffered by Black Loyalists who arrived in Nova Scotia at the close of the American Revolutionary War. In “American Standard,” Cain invokes both slavery and the KKK in its litany of American wrongs (or “standards”), but again, implicitly does so at the expense of acknowledging their presence in Canada. As *The Book of Negroes* demonstrates, enslaved African Americans were brought to Canada by white Loyalists; and Hill’s earlier novel, *Any Known Blood* (1997), addresses the presence of the KKK in Ontario. And as Afua Cooper points out, slavery in Canada actually stretches back to New France, but has remained Canada’s “best-kept secret” (68), so prominent has the Underground Railroad featured in the nation’s mythology. Black British Columbian poet Wayde Compton has consistently invoked the Canada-US border in his work, both in his treatment of black BC history, especially the mid-19th-century migration of the black San Francisco pioneers invited by Sir James Douglas but then disavowed by him upon their arrival, and in his engagement with present-day relationships between African-Canadians and African American culture. Contrary to a white Anglo-Canadian nationalist conception of the Canada-US border, Compton demonstrates, in Rinaldo Walcott’s terms, “how porous the Canada-United States border remains for diasporic blacks and what kinds of political identifications and relationships are possible” (32). As Walcott argues, a “nation-centred discourse can only prohibit black folks from sharing ‘common feeling’, especially when common actions seem to present themselves, time and again, in and across different spaces/places/nations” (45). Compton demonstrates these common actions in *49th Parallel Psalm*, in his representation of the San Francisco pioneers who, suffering infringements on their liberties in California, “determined to seek asylum in the land of strangers from the oppression, prejudice and relentless persecution that have pursued us for more than two centuries in this our mother country” (qtd. in 45). The pioneers were ostensibly offered hospitality by Sir James Douglas—and not just hospitality, but in fact, the opportunity to become hosts:

*lo: there’s land north, British, and literally setting foot on its soil = citizenship, freedom, safe quarter exchanged for toil.* (43)³
The pioneers are promised full citizenship across the Canada-US border. But, like the Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, their actual experiences across the border do not tally with what they have been promised. Canada becomes “Xanada” (49) in 49th Parallel Psalm. In the poem “Evening at the Colonial,” set in Victoria in 1860, a black man requests a ticket for the parquette, and is refused: “If you don’t like it, go back to the States. or go back to Africa while you’re at it” (65). This racist inhospitality refuses the possibility of even hospitality at a price (the payment for the parquette ticket). The black Victorian man asks, “please decipher for me this miracle equation, this truth more elusive than Xanadu … tell me how you run a business that requires not money from willing hands?” (66). Canada itself—as Xanada—in its imagined promised land capacity, is more elusive than Xanadu, a site of inhospitality to black North Americans, regardless of the Underground Railroad mythology that will become so central to the nation’s self-imaginings and its claims to hospitality and racial justice. Compton addresses the Underground Railroad specifically in his later text, Performance Bond, in the poem “Illegalese: Floodgate Dub,” which forges a connection between the hallowed Underground Railroad myth and contemporary Canada examples of asylum seeking:

... if it was heroic for runaway slaves to seep into Canada, why is it villifiable for Chinese migrants to hide in the belly of a dream now? (31)

For Compton, the experiences of the Chinese maroons in BC from 1999-2001 are an extension of the treatment of the Punjabi men on the Komagatamaru. Compton claims, through Biblical allusion and inversion, that “the stowaway that the border refused will be the head stone of the corner” (31), the reversal of “cornerstone” to “head stone” ominous in its equation of failed border crossings and death. In 49th Parallel Psalm, the border meant to safeguard the liberties of black North Americans becomes a “strait razorous border” (105), the border’s latent violence painfully clear, alongside a suggestion of suicide. The better life promised north of the border may be no life at all. Compton imagines a border crossing in which a border guard—or perhaps the nation itself—declares, “in the razor-thin space between my lines, / you may fit in” (106). This permission to enter is treacherous, inhospitable, circumscribed by impossible criteria of belonging and the ever-present threat of lethal violence. For Compton to “sin[g] the dotted line” (Performance 78) is not to celebrate it, but rather to interrogate the white Anglo-Canadian nationalist claims made on its
behalf. For Compton, settler-invader Canada is implicated in imperial violence:

in a rush to recruit more brown whites; entrepreneurs only, no more slaves or railroad builders…
… the wages
of empire have yet to be spilled. oka. all
I hafta do is spell it and the settled snow shivers. one settler,
one bullet. … is the mention
of bullets too american? (*Performance 16*)

Canada’s hospitality at its borders is deeply suspect in its immigration policies—past and present. As Mireille Rosello writes, “if a nation invites immigrants because they are valuable assets, because it needs them for an economic or demographic purpose, that country is not being hospitable. At least not unconditionally, infinitely hospitable” (12). Oka: all Compton has to do is spell it to remind us of the colonizing of relations of hospitality on this continent, the claiming of the host position by settler-invaders. The mentioning of bullets, he wryly observes, might be considered “too american”—an unseemly association with our neighbour to the south. Yet we cannot allow fears of US neocolonialism of Canada to absolve Canada’s own colonialism, or to forget, again Walcott’s warning about “common actions … present[ing] themselves, time and again, in and across different spaces/places/nations” (45) – and borders.

If bullets may seem “too American,” Argentinean-Canadian playwright Guillermo Verdecchia, in his play *Fronteras Americanas/ American Borders*, insists to his Canadian audience: “when I say ‘AMERICA,’ I don’t mean a country, I mean the continent. Somos todos Americanos. We are all Americans” (1-2). If Indigenous and African-Canadian perspectives on the Canada-US border unsettle white Anglo-Canadian nationalist assumptions about the 49th parallel, conceiving of the border in relation to Canada’s hemispheric positioning further troubles these assumptions. If the Underground Railroad has featured heavily in nationalist mythologies about Canada’s hospitality, Canadians have envisioned themselves as offering asylum to Latin American refugees, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. This hospitality forms the subject of Joan MacLeod’s play *Amigo’s Blue Guitar* (1990), in which a family living on a BC Gulf Island—comprised of university student siblings Sander and Callie and their father, Owen, a Vietnam draft resister—hosts Elias, a refugee from El Salvador: “I am
afraid of my house. Please let me come” (16), Elias says in an Immigration interview, a plea for hospitality. Elias refuses to narrate for his Canadian hosts the human rights abuses he faced in El Salvador, but he obliquely refers to the torture he and his family have suffered. Owen attempts to align himself with Elias’s struggles, narrating his crossing of the Canada-US border during the Vietnam War: “It was a big deal … We’d just gone over the wall, under the wire, crawled out on our bellies and arrived at a safe place. We’re heroes, man. The great escape” (25). Owen invokes images of not only the Underground Railroad but also of warfare itself (indeed, the very war he crossed the border to avoid) to project his heroic escape. But his son is not impressed: “C’mon, Dad. You drove up and they waved you through” (25). Hospitality to Elias, both nationally and domestically, comes with a good deal of conditions attached. Jacques Derrida distinguishes between conditional and absolute hospitality, arguing that the latter

requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolutely, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. (25)

Sander admits near the end of the play that he chose to sponsor Elias on the basis of his name: “I chose you. I chose your name” (60). The Canadian government’s hospitality is deeply conditional, predicated on the understanding that Elias will repay them for the airfare from Guatemala City to Vancouver. And his host family, despite Sander’s initial insistence, “You don’t owe us anything” (35), ultimately demands that he play the role of the grateful guest according to each of their needs: Callie wants the details of the torture Elias suffered; Sander, his sister observes, “want[s] him to say thank you every day of the week” (57). Sander deflects his frustration with Elias onto Owen’s American mother, Martha (Sander’s grandmother), castigating her for US intervention in Central America, and insisting to Callie, “It’s more her fault than ours” (44), absolving himself and his sister as Canadians for intra-American hostilities. While Callie rejects Sander’s attempt to identify their American grandmother as being responsible for Elias’s suffering—his need for hospitality in Canada—Callie herself fails to understand Elias’s position: “I thought he’d be, you know, more excited” (27) to be in Canada. But as Elias explains, “I do not come here because I want to. I come because I have no place to go” (34), emphasizing the ethical dimension of hospitality, the offer
of refuge, an ethics that both Canada and Sander’s family have compromised through their conditions.

In *Fronteras Americanas*, Verdecchia (who originated the character of Elias in *Amigo’s Blue Guitar*) presents two characters: “Verdecchia” and Wideload, the first a fictionalized version of himself (an Argentinean-Canadian actor) and the second an inflated Chicano stereotype. The play moves between “Verdecchia’s” grappling with his identity and Wideload’s confrontation of the audience with Latino stereotypes largely based on American popular culture but widely available to and consumed by Canadian audiences. “Verdecchia” reclaims the term “American” in the Spanish-language continental sense (*Americano*) in a way that both interpolates and interpellates Canadians, making clear that “American” is not synonymous with a citizen of the United States. Wideload, however, has a different tactic. When he first appears on stage, accompanied by the sound of gunfire and sporting a bandito costume, he speaks in Spanish to the audience, asking the Latin Americans amongst them to identify themselves. The rest, he says (in Spanish), are “gringos,” whom he then addresses in English: “Eh, jou en Mejico now. Jou hab crossed de Border. Why? What you lookin’ for?” (4). Where “Verdecchia” has attempted to incorporate Canadians into a shared continental Americanness, Wideload, in referring to the Canadian audience as gringos, aligns them with the power and privilege more usually (for Canadians) identified with the United States. For Wideload, the forty-ninth parallel is much less important, it seems, given Canadians and US Americans can equally be identified as “gringos.”

“Verdecchia” is diagnosed by El Brujo in Toronto as “hav[ing] a very bad border wound” (48), the genesis, it seems, of his identity crisis. This image recalls Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal study of the Mexico-US Borderlands, in which she describes North America’s internal southern border as an open wound (“una herida abierta”) “where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (3). The Canada-US border certainly does not map on to this position. But *Fronteras Americanas* redraws the borders of the Americas. Ultimately, “Verdecchia” decides, “I am building a house on the Border” (55)—the border, implicitly, between Canada and Argentina, one that is conceptual rather than geographical. Yet this is not the only intra-American border that defies conventional geographical logic in *Fronteras Americanas*. Wideload claims to “have an advance degree in avant-garde-geometry. …
I do some work with a consortium of experimental cartographers, mapping the flow of deterritorialized memories among migrant farm workers in Leamington” (15). Wideload thus invokes Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP), which, since 1974, has been open to Mexican labourers, permitting a limited method of intra-American migration, but one that denies its participants the rights of citizenship. As Adrian Smith argues of SAWP, Canada occupies the position of “a (legal-cultural) imperialist force in the Western Hemisphere,” as it “secures unfree labour by downloading onto sending states the costs of workforce training and social reproduction” while it simultaneously “endeavours to minimize its indebtedness to migrant farm workers for the duration of their employment in Canada” and denies them “the rights, privileges, and protections afforded to [Canadian] citizens and near-citizen workers” (132, 125, 126). Thus, the Mexican-Canadian border (in perhaps the avant-garde geographical sense), and the crossings it permits and denies, constitutes a site of deeply conditional hospitality, recalibrating Canada’s position of disempowerment in relation to the United States to one of considerable power in the continental sense.

The Canada-US border, therefore, is a site where Canada’s relationships to colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism overlap. Although from an Anglo-Canadian nationalist perspective, the border might “serve the useful purpose of containing the United States within the limits of its own boundaries and of forcing the expanding and increasingly corporate U.S. imperialism to stand in the light of recognition” (Traister 33), we must hold Canada itself to account for its colonial history and failure to de-colonize, for its history of racism and the persistence of racism that the historical offers of sanctuary to some racialized subjects must not eclipse, and for its economic and political privilege relative to the vast majority of countries with which it co-exists in the Western hemisphere. The Canada-US border may be a one-way mirror, especially from an Anglo-nationalist perspective, but it is not simply that: we must not make the mistake of drawing distinctions between Canada and the United States while assuming that everyone’s interests are aligned with and subsumed within those of the dominant culture. Canada must stand in the light of recognition in order to become meaningfully different, for citizens within its territory, for those who seek to reject or revise the status of citizen in our nation-state, for refugees or temporary labourers seeking passage across the nation-state’s threshold into the rights of citizenship, if the 49th parallel is truly to become the doorway to the just, hospitable space Canadian mythology declares it to be.
Notes

1. Excerpts from “LOVE OF LIFE, th 49th PARALLELL” are used here with the permission of bill bissett.

2. Excerpts from “American Standard” from American Standard / Canada Dry © Stephen Cain, 2005, are used here with the permission of Coach House Books.

3. Excerpts from 49th Parallel Psalm and Performance Bond by Wayde Compton are used here with the permission of Arsenal Pulp Press.

Works Cited


**Eccles Centre for American Studies Plenary Lectures at the British Association for Canadian Studies Annual Conference**

- **2006** Abenaki People from Where the Sun Rises by Alanis Obomsawin (unpublished presentation)
- **2007** Hunting, Shooting and Phishing: New Cybercrime Challenges for CyberCanadians in the 21st Century, by David S Wall
- **2008** Governance, Globalization and Unruly Populations: Governing the Aboriginal Cross-Border Economy in Canada, by Jane Gilmore-Dickson
- **2009** Mouthy Enemies: Canadian Writers and the Power of Being, Belonging and Celebrity, by Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson
- **2010** Citizen Reader: Canadian Literature, Mass Reading Events and the Promise of Belonging, by Danielle Fuller
- **2011** Insecurity in Canada’s Past: James Douglas Keeps the Peace on Vancouver Island, by Stephen A Royle
- **2012** Wilderness / Sophistication, by Faye Hammill
- **2013** From Cannon to Canons: Writing the Literary History of Francophone Canada, by Rosemary Chapman
- **2014** Parrots, Pasta and the Politics of Language: Making the Ethical Case for Language Policy in Quebec, by Leigh Oakes

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