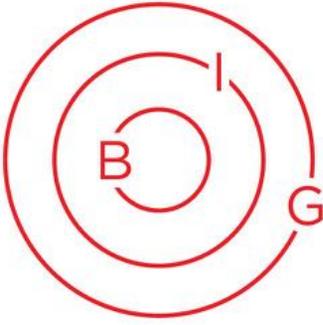




**BORDERS IN
GLOBALIZATION**





Borders in Globalization Research Project 22

Greater New England as Cultural Borderland: A Critical Appraisal

Randy William Widdis

University of Regina

Supervised by

History

Final Version

ABS Version

PowerPoint Presentation

There exists in the historical literature considerable debate over the idea of a “Greater New England” encompassing the Atlantic region of Canada and New England. While much of the debate has centered on cross-border flows of goods, people and capital, particularly during the pre-Revolutionary period, it is culture, I believe, that many view as being most important in the creation of the idea or ideal of an Atlantic borderland. This article addresses the question of whether or not culture, or more specifically, cultural diffusion, has produced a cultural borderland in this part of North America.

Introduction

The idea of borderland is most often associated with the argument that land on either side of a border exists in a liminal condition; i.e., it has many of the traits of both regions and yet is different because of the hybridization resulting from the merging of the two regions within this particular space. Michael Dear (2013) identifies borderlands as alternative or third nations, spaces inhabited by people who identify with each other on a number of levels based on a shared history and geography and blurred cultures.¹ Through exchange, it is argued, transnational cultures are created that are characterized by liminality and hybridity. While much of the debate around the existence of a “Greater New England”² has centered on historical cross-border flows of goods, people and capital, it is culture, I believe, that many view as being most important in the creation of the idea or ideal of an Atlantic borderland.³ Did cultural exchange in the Atlantic borderland produce a common culture and therefore a cultural region that is unique to this part of North America? That is the larger question that guides this paper.

The Historical Debate

John Bartlett Brebner, George Rawlyk and Graeme Wynn have described a pre-revolutionary Nova Scotia and Acadia as part of a wider economic and cultural unit whose

¹ Michael Dear, *Why Walls Won't Work: Repairing the US-Mexico Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71-72.

² Graeme Wynn, "New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Northeastern Borderlands: Four Centuries of Interaction*, eds. Stephen Hornsby, Victor Konrad, and James Herlan (Fredericton: Canadian-American Center, University of Maine and Acadiensis Press, 1989), 67.

³ The idea that there exists a distinct Atlantic borderland is espoused by Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad who divide the larger Canadian-American borderland zone into five distinctive cross-border regions, the other four being the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Plains/Prairies, and the Pacific Northwest. See: Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad, *Borderland Reflections: The United States and Canada*, Borderlands Monograph Series # 1 (Orono: Canadian-American Center, University of Maine, 1989).

constituent parts were linked by ties of trade and kinship.⁴ Before their expulsion, Acadians traded their agricultural surplus with New England and so New Englanders were familiar with the Bay of Fundy region. After the expulsion, farmers, then called ‘Planters’, primarily from eastern Connecticut and to a lesser extent from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, took up former Acadian lands in the Annapolis Valley, around the head of the Bay of Fundy, and along the St. John River. The Planters, with their particular English dialects, village greens, Cape Cod cottages, and Congregational and Baptist churches, introduced New England influences to the Maritimes’ cultural landscape.⁵ The end result, scholars have argued, was a northern extension of New England into the former Acadia. However, while the influx of Planters almost doubled the population of Nova Scotia, many subsequently returned home or left for the Ohio country despite the Royal Proclamation edict banning settlement west of the Appalachians.⁶

Even though the Planters chose not to participate in the American Revolution, they still remained, in Graeme Wynn’s opinion, “New Englanders at heart.”⁷ They brought with them a culture firmly rooted in New England traditions and continued to travel to New England states and maintain kith and kin connections. But they did not have too much success in transplanting institutions in their new homes. For example, as Elizabeth Mancke has demonstrated, the Planters were restricted from replicating the townships of New England in several crucial ways

⁴ John Bartlett Brebner, “New England’s Outpost: Acadia Before the Conquest of Canada” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1927); George Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia’s Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations 1630-1784* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1973); Wynn, “New England’s Outpost in the Nineteenth Century,” 64-90.

⁵ For more discussion, see: Donald Meinig, *The Shaping of America: a geographical perspective on 500 years of history, Vol. 1: Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); 273-74; Graeme Wynn, “The Geography of the Maritime Provinces in 1800: Patterns and Questions,” in *They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada*, ed. M. Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 138-150; J.M. Bumsted, “Americans,” in *Encyclopedia of Canada’s Peoples*, ed. Paul Magocsi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Multicultural Society of Ontario, 1999), 186.

⁶ R. Colebrook Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment before Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 166.

⁷ Wynn, “New England’s Outpost in the Nineteenth Century,” 65.

that tended to increase their reliance on Halifax.⁸ In fact, as Daniel Conlin documents, a considerable number of Planters from Liverpool, Nova Scotia operated as privateers targeting American vessels after the end of the war.⁹ And perhaps most importantly, as John Reid points out, the Planters “crossed into a different sphere from that which had spawned the rebellion. It was one in which loyalism was a possible and relevant choice, because of the crucial significance here [i.e., Nova Scotia] of the imperial state as well as the more pragmatic influence of the economic and military power of Halifax, but where the revolutionary crisis further south could reasonably be seen as a local difficulty that impinged but little on the wider world of which Planter Nova Scotia formed a part.”¹⁰ In this respect, Reid echoes the argument made by Viola Barnes who presents a case that the governor of the colony, Francis Legge, and the powerful Halifax merchants, saw an opportunity for Nova Scotia to expand its position in the North Atlantic triangle trade when New England competition would be reduced with the coming of the revolution.¹¹

While the Planters had considerable impact on the immediate period preceding the Revolution, it was the 35,000 Loyalists arriving during the war and shortly thereafter who would have the greatest impact on the future direction of the Maritimes. Donald Meinig, Graeme Wynn and J.M. Bumstead maintain that the Planters and the Loyalists introduced some key American political cultural values including representative government and as a consequence were key

⁸ Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, ca. 1760-1830* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁹ Daniel Conlin, “They Plundered Well: Planters as Privateers, 1793-1805,” in *Planter Links: Community and Culture in Colonial Nova Scotia*, eds. Margaret Conrad and Barry Moody (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2001), 23.

¹⁰ John Reid, “*Pax Britannica or Pax Indigena?* Planter Nova Scotia (1760-1782) and Competing Strategies of Pacification,” in *Essays on Northeastern North America, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. John Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 189.

¹¹ Viola Barnes, “Francis Legge, Governor of Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1773-1776,” *New England Quarterly*, 4 (1931): 420-47. This interpretation of Barnes’s argument is presented in John Reid, “Viola Barnes, the Gender of History and the North Atlantic Mind,” *Acadiensis*, 33, no. 1 (2003): 3-20.

players in the development of a Maritimes-New England borderland.¹² Yet Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth maintain that even though New England architectural styles made an impact on the Maritime landscape, “Maritime Canada did not become an extension of the New England cultural region, parroting every stylistic change as it came along. While the Cape Cod house was transferred to Nova Scotia, the Connecticut salt box house was not.”¹³ In a similar vein, Mancke warns that while the cultural landscape of Nova Scotia reveals evidence of New England origins, by the end of the eighteenth century Nova Scotian society had already been shaped in accordance with the institutions and values of the British Empire.¹⁴ Most notably, the loyalist presence was overwhelmed within a relatively short period of time by immigrants from Great Britain, particularly the Scottish migrants displaced by the Highland clearances and the Irish potato famine migrants.¹⁵

Although cross-border connections weakened somewhat after the American Revolution, the Maritimes colonies continued to trade timber and fish products with the “Boston states” in what Wynn chooses to call “Greater New England”. He adopts the core-periphery model developed by Donald Meinig and divides the international region into a core (Massachusetts), a domain (southern Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Maine, and Connecticut), and a distant sphere (Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, and northern New Brunswick and Nova Scotia).¹⁶

Boston served as the metropolis of this transborder region and what Wynn terms the eighteenth

¹² J.M. Bumsted, *Understanding the Loyalists* (Sackville, N.B.: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, 1986).

¹³ Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth, “Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Landscape of the Maritime Provinces - A Reconnaissance,” *Acadiensis* 10 (1981): 100.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Mancke, “Two Patterns of New England Transformation: Machias, Maine and Liverpool, Nova Scotia” (PhD. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1990), 334.

¹⁵ As B.C. Cuthbertson describes, the earlier Loyalists merged with the later British migrants to create a distinctive Nova Scotian character. See: B.C. Cuthbertson, “Introduction,” in *The Loyalist Guide: Nova Scotian Loyalists and their Documents*, compiler Jean Peterson (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1983), 5. Philip Buckner argues that “a majority of the 660,000 residents of the [Maritimes] region in 1861 must have been emigrants who had come directly from the British Isles or their children and grandchildren.” See: Philip Buckner, “The Transformation of the Maritimes, 1815-1860,” *The London Journal of Canadian Studies* 9 (1993): 20.

¹⁶ Wynn, “New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century,” 67.

century “Boston-Bay of Fundy axis” continued to function in the nineteenth century, in his opinion, as “a critical determinant of interaction.”¹⁷ Wynn chooses to leave Newfoundland out of the loop, which suggests that he considers it to be either too distant or too closely connected to Britain and thus too far removed from the United States to be considered part of “Greater New England”¹⁸.

Using this framework, Wynn identifies several “Greater New Englands”. The first he designates *a greater New England of experience* produced by seasonal and permanent movement of people from both sides back and forth across the border carrying goods and ideas which served to integrate the region and produce a common outlook. Over time, this movement became increasingly one-way but managed to maintain its directional focus in spite of the western fever gripping North America. Wynn also identifies *a greater New England of the primitive and the romantic*. Although much more pronounced later, the image of the Maritimes as a pristine wilderness was beginning to take shape at mid-19th century, creating a vacation hinterland for the more urban and densely populated New England core. Borrowing from the frontierists, Wynn argues that a ready availability of land, isolation, and pioneer conditions combined with proximity to the United States to create *a greater New England of attitudes and artefacts* which resulted in a relative decrease of British manners and customs. While he does recognize that over time the Maritimes developed regional, national and even imperial sentiments which found expression in the region’s culture, a common experience, interconnected economy, shared attitudes and a similar material culture would ensure the continuation of a “Greater New England”.

¹⁷ Ibid, 88.

¹⁸ He also omits Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Others have challenged Wynn's thesis, instead focusing on internal developments, growing links with central Canada and continuing connections with Britain that individually and collectively tempered New England's influence on the Maritimes despite increasing economic integration. Mancke maintains that Nova Scotia and Massachusetts developed differently because of different cultures of localism and governance.¹⁹ The British, she argues, governed Nova Scotia more directly than New England. Different cultures of localism and institutional practices of land grants and town incorporations facilitated an ideological spirit of independence among New England's settlers and adherence to authority among Nova Scotians, despite the fact that many of the latter were recent immigrants. In particular, she argues that the Nova Scotian townships were politically impotent and isolated from each other because imperial authorities curbed efforts to reproduce New England-style local autonomy.

In another forum, Mancke, applies her concept of intersecting and competing "spaces of power," by which she means "systems of social power, whether economic, political, cultural, or military, that we can describe functionally and spatially," to challenge the conventional use of the core-periphery colonial model to explain early modern empires in the northeastern part of North America.²⁰ Such empires, she contends, had more to do with multiple claimants to different spaces, activities, and resources than with a metropolitan controlled settlement [and here she means a transnational region dominated by Boston] as such. Early on, political boundaries in the region, she maintains, "became defined by the functional specificity of commercial and cultural relations between Europeans and natives rather than being taken from the abstract and mathematically defined boundaries articulated in royal charters. Those political

¹⁹ See Chapter One, Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire*.

²⁰ Elizabeth Mancke, "Spaces of Power in the Early Northeast," in *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*, eds. Stephen Hornsby and John Reid (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 32.

boundaries, in turn, encompassed strikingly different configurations of power than those of colonies whose boundaries more closely conformed to the spaces of power defined in charter grants.”²¹ Mancke also argues that during the eighteenth century, Nova Scotia was in no position to be self-financing like the other older colonies to the south and as such continued to be more dependent on imperial connections with a European core (Britain) than on links with a transnational region core (New England).²² Julian Gwyn insists that the evidence shows that Nova Scotia, and by implication the rest of the Maritimes, was never too dependent on New England even after economic ties strengthened. In spite of increasing trade over time, Nova Scotia was not the product of New England imperialism, but rather of British imperialism, in which New England played a significant role both before and after the American Revolution.²³

While there is little doubt that the Atlantic region continued to move within the orbit of both “Old” and “New” England and that increasing trade and migration, particularly the former, ensured a greater degree of integration between the Maritimes and the “Boston states”, the question remains as to whether or not economic links, historical connections and geographical propinquity ensured cultural integration during the period. Certainly the pre-revolutionary Planters and later the Loyalists left their imprint on the colonies in terms of material culture and social and political institutions but they were a divided group and as such carried with them a mixed bag of values and commitments to imperial, loyalist and republican ideals. American values, opinions and ideals, as well as material goods, were indeed carried to Atlantic Canada through the mediums of trade, migration and various forms of communication (e.g. newspapers). “But,” as William Godfrey asserts, “the reality was that the American loyalist presence was

²¹ Ibid, 38.

²² Ibid, 45.

²³ Julian Gwyn, “Comparative Economic Advantage: Nova Scotia and New England, 1720s-1860s,” in *New England and the Maritime Provinces*, 106.

being rapidly absorbed in Nova Scotia and would soon swamped in New Brunswick by immigrants from Great Britain.”²⁴

This position is defended most vigorously by Philip Buckner who has never strayed from his long-held belief that the Empire shaped Canadian identity. Regarding the relative impact of Loyalist versus later British immigrants, he states: “the British immigrants had succeeded where the Loyalist elite had failed in establishing metropolitan culture as the norm throughout the region ... the transformation of the Maritimes from a "borderland" region of the United States into a region increasingly aware of and committed to its British identity owed infinitely more to the flow of emigrants from the Britain after 1800 than it did to the influence of the Loyalists and their descendants.”²⁵ Whereas ethnic diversity, fragmented religions and geographical isolation combined to create what Wynn terms “a patchwork quilt of different ‘allegiances’ - Acadian, Loyalist, pre-Loyalist, Palatinate, Yankee, Scots, Irish, English”²⁶ - earlier in the century, such a description, according to Buckner, “is totally misleading” for the Maritimes of 1860.²⁷ In his view, the Maritimes of this period, and here he makes no mention of Newfoundland, was characterized by a population, at least an Anglophone population, which increasingly identified with their particular colony rather than with the wider region, British North America, Britain or the United States. As population density increased and geographical isolation was eroded, a process of ethnic fusion took place within the colonies that created a distinctive indigenous culture that was an amalgam of British, American and uniquely regional influences.²⁸ Perhaps

²⁴ William Godfrey, “Loyalist Studies in the Maritimes: Past and Future Directions,” *The London School of Canadian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1993): 10.

²⁵ Philip Buckner, “The Transformation of the Maritimes, 1815-1860,” *The London Journal of Canadian Studies* 9 (1993): 25.

²⁶ Graeme Wynn, "Ideology, Society, and State in the Maritime Colonies of British North America, 1840-1860," in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada*, eds. Alan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto, 1992), 285. As quoted in Buckner, “The Transformation of the Maritimes,” 26.

²⁷ Buckner, “The Transformation of the Maritimes,” 26.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

most importantly, he argues in another piece, “the existence of a border leads naturally to the evolution of different institutions and values.”²⁹

Considerable economic integration primarily through trade and secondarily through migration and investment took place between New England and the Maritimes after Confederation but attachment to Britain, a slowly evolving but challenging association with Canada, and a developing regional consciousness counteracted further incorporation into the U.S. orbit. Few advocated joining the U.S. but much debate occurred over the direction to be taken even before the end of the Civil War and the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty. Support for some form of British American union was more widespread in the Maritimes during the late 1850s and early 1860s than is commonly believed.³⁰ Maritimers were well aware that Canada needed winter ports on the Atlantic seaboard and recognized the potential that the colonies to the west presented in terms of a hinterland for Maritimes products. And while Maritimers welcomed American trade and investment, they were still wary of the threat of annexation.

A strong association between the Maritimes and New England, along with a growing relationship between Newfoundland and New England, continued after Confederation but the composition of this connection changed. Cross-border migration became even more significant but then declined in importance. Cross-border transportation by boat improved but land-based transportation, while improving significantly with the advent of the automobile, continued to be problematic. Cross-border investment increased but remained relatively minor compared to that taking place in other borderland regions. Cross-border communication expanded but was tempered by the development of technologies that extended the information field well beyond

²⁹ Philip Buckner, “How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Americans!,” *Acadiensis* 25, no. 2 (1996): 137.

³⁰ For evidence of this, see: Ged Martin, “The Idea of British North American Union 1854-64,” *Journal of Irish Scottish Studies* 1, no. 2 (2008): 309-33.

the borders of the transnational region. Cross-border trade continued but declined in relative importance in light of increasing connections taking place within both Canada and the United States. Cross-border governance became more important towards the end of the 20th century but faced obstacles that impaired its effectiveness. Integration continued but it was moderated by nationalist forces – economic, political, social and cultural.

The “Place” of Culture in the Atlantic Borderland

The question of culture as it pertains to borderlands, it seems to me, revolves around the degree to which cultural hybridization takes place as a result of historical processes of cross-border exchanges. Certainly there developed over time pronounced regional cultures on both sides of the border. Despite certain differences, the Maritime Provinces shared much in common including historical and cultural heritage and a traditional orientation towards the ocean. Newfoundland and Labrador developed a number of ties with the Maritimes but remained significantly different because of its unique history, culture, landscape, and arts. One feature that all provinces in Atlantic Canada had, and still have, in common is their peripheral place within Confederation, a position that has generated a shared set of values and outlooks towards the rest of the country. Despite the perception held by many Canadians that the region is inherently conservative by nature, and as such, has often voted for the party in power, there is ample evidence, James Kenny suggests, to support the argument that progressive and radical values have also shaped the history of Atlantic Canada.³¹ From such a political culture, there developed

³¹ Specifically, Kenny argues that “studies by David Frank and Ian McKay, for instance, reveal significant pockets of radicalism in the region during the first three decades of the century... [Ernest] Forbes and Margaret Conrad have shown that in the 1920s and 1950s regional politicians used the Conservative Party to advance a reform agenda at the federal level. The recent electoral success of the New Democratic Party in the region presents, perhaps, an even more serious challenge to a conservative stereotype of Atlantic Canadians, given that the poor performance of third parties has often been held up as evidence of regional traditionalism..See: James Kenny, “Political Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Atlantic Canada,” *Acadiensis* 29, no. 1 (1999): 122.

a concern towards the end of the period over the demise of Keynesian economic philosophy in the face of neo-liberalism and the beginning of a dismantling of the welfare state that had propped up a struggling economy for such a long time.

New England, on the other hand, has long been viewed as having a liberal political culture, a perception that dates back to the early nineteenth century when Federalists from the region united in opposition to Jeffersonian Republicanism and vociferously opposed the decision of the James Madison administration to engage in war against Britain. As James Curry submits, this cohesion on policy lay behind the decision made by the six states in the mid-twentieth century to develop the New England Regional Commission (NERC) to deal with shared problems including a struggling economy, a need for improved social welfare, and environmental concerns.³² History demonstrates, Curry maintains, that “throughout the last 200 plus years, the New England states and its leaders have been recurrently, if not continually, united by policy and politics.”³³ He goes on to argue that the collapse of the textile industry and the resultant economic decline earlier in the twentieth century have served as a unifying force in the region, much like economic stagnation has created regional coherence within Atlantic Canada.

However, Curry’s argument fails to acknowledge the diversity of ideology and political opinion that exists in New England. Daniel Elazar argues that there are three political culture types among Americans: a moral political culture, an individual political culture, and a traditional political culture.³⁴ The moral political culture, he suggests, is one that sees government as a positive force and operates from the belief that society is held to be more

³² James Curry, “A New England Brand of Liberalism: Regionalism in the U.S. House of Representatives,” Presented at the State of New England: People, Politics, and Policy Conference at Stonehill College, March 28, 2008, 4, accessed February 5, 2015, http://www.gvpt.umd.edu/jcurry/saps/documents/3_13/curry.pdf.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Daniel Elazar, *American Federalism: A view from the state*, 2nd edition (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1972).

important than the individual. The individual political culture, on the other hand, advocates limiting community and government intervention into private activities and works from the principle that private concerns are more important than public concerns. The traditional political culture, Elazar claims, views government as playing a positive but limited role in securing the maintenance of the existing social order and reflects an attitude that embraces a hierarchical society as part of the natural order of things. With these criteria in mind, Elazar assigns U.S. states to different political cultures and in doing so, divides New England in two, with “Upper New England” (Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont) classified as a moral political culture and “Lower New England” (Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut) categorized as an individual political culture. This political culture division correlates with the urban and economic division that also separates northern and southern New England.

Yet Elazar’s political regions may also be challenged on the basis of the significant difference in political ideology that has existed for quite some time between New Hampshire and Vermont. Elazar’s definition of “moral political culture” does not apply very well to New Hampshire which has a long history of libertarian politics as opposed to Vermont’s history of moderate communitarianism. The two states, so similar in geography and yet so different in social, cultural, political and economic structures, diverge considerably in their support of taxes and government spending and in their attitudes towards environmental protection. A study conducted by two Harvard researchers in 2007 suggest that during the latter half of the 20th century Vermont underwent a specific kind of inter-state migration composed of upscale, left-leaning people supporting a kind of progressive counter-culture that tended to be more left-leaning in its political ideology and more concerned about preserving a cleaner and more rural environment. They also point to the fact that starting in 1927 after massive flooding, Vermont

began to accept federal money and set in place a history of support of the principle of government intervention. New Hampshire, on the other hand, traveled a different path and created a political culture more supportive of industry and urbanization, thus making the state more attractive for more conservative blue-collar workers. This was particularly true for the southern part of the state.³⁵ That New Hampshire chose this path is understandable when one considers the fact that the state engaged fully in canal and railway building during the nineteenth century in order to attract capital for industrialization. Vermont, on the other hand, was more isolated and less blessed with industrial raw materials and as a result was largely bypassed by the development taking place elsewhere in New England. And while the decline of the mill industry hurt New Hampshire significantly, the southern part of the state would eventually benefit from the post-industrial hi-tech development spreading outwards from its New England core in Boston.

The differences between the north and south and the very significant distinctions among states, particularly between Vermont and New Hampshire, leads us to conclude that it is too facile and misleading to speak of a unified New England political culture. In the same vein, it is also misleading to put too much emphasis on the idea of a cohesive Atlantic Canada. For most of its history, Newfoundland operated in a very different context and as a result developed a culture, economy and society unlike that of the Maritimes.³⁶ As well, the Maritimes is also more culturally complex than many believe. For example, while the Acadian culture is present in all three Maritime Provinces, it is much more pronounced in New Brunswick, the only “official” bilingual province in Canada. Thus, I believe that it is too problematic to compare and contrast

³⁵ Corydon Ireland, “Vermont and New Hampshire, geographic twins, cultural aliens,” *Harvard Gazette* (November 1, 2007), accessed February 5, 2015, <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2007/11/vermont-and-new-hampshire-geographic-twins-cultural-aliens/>.

³⁶ For greater discussion of this point, see: Wade Locke, “Atlantic Canada: Myth or Reality?,” in *Shaping an Agenda for Atlantic Canada*, eds. John Reid and Donald Savoie (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 235-257.

an Atlantic Canadian political culture with a New England political culture for the simple reason that no monolithic or monoculture exists either north or south of the border.

The same reasoning applies to a discussion of literature. While the sea in general, and human interactions with the ocean in particular, are common frames of reference for both New England and Atlantic Canada, the literature of both regions differs in some fundamental ways. The shared position of marginality within Canada and the larger globalizing world is reflected in the literature of Atlantic Canada. Challenging Northrop Frye's garrison mentality thesis that views Atlantic Canada as a region of isolated individuals at the mercy of an unforgiving nature, Gwendolyn Davies instead sees this part of Canada as a cohesive community unified by a literature that is on the periphery, just like the region itself. Such a literature, she argues, has "mimetically explored the region's sense of identity by exposing the social, political, and economic forces attempting to erode it."³⁷ In a similar vein, Janice Kulyk Keefer suggests that Maritime writing is a unique body of literature produced from a distinct society whose primary features are a strong sense of community and an open attitude to nature.³⁸ Community as a source of identity is juxtaposed against the modern forces associated with central Canada.³⁹ The literature of Atlantic Canada has for some time now imagined the region in relation to a more powerful centre, whether it be central Canada or New England, more often the former than the latter.

This depiction of a region unified by a communal folk culture that stands against the forces of modernism coming from the outside has great appeal, particularly for the tourism

³⁷ Gwendolyn Davies, "The Anger and Despair I Feel Is Real': Social Reality in Atlantic Canadian Literature," *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 9 (1993): 45

³⁸ Janice Kulyk Keefer, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

³⁹ Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule. In *The Coming of Winter*, David Adams Richards portrays the Miramichi as a marginal locality within a marginal region, i.e., the Maritimes. His characters find little solace in community or a retreat into a mythic rural past. See: David Adams Richards, *The Coming of Winter* (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1974).

industry, even though most Atlantic Canadians have for some time now have lived in modern urban centres.⁴⁰ Such devotion flies in the face of those who argue that it is time to re-imagine the region beyond its hinterland relationship to a more powerful core. The philosopher Warwick Mules, for example, believes that “the advent of globalisation favouring local/global interconnections has the potential to disrupt and redefine the relation between the centre and its regions, where local sites previously subordinated to the power of the metro-centres can now find empowerment in their global interconnections.”⁴¹ Yet while modern technologies have expanded the spatial reach of many Atlantic Canadian communities and individuals beyond the region, “the quest of the folk” still remains strong and the attachment to place continues to play a significant role in the culture of the region.

According to the influential critic of American literature, Randall Stewart, New England literature at the time of the revolution was characterized by the Puritan tradition of order and restraint and a pervading religious tone.⁴² While Puritanism certainly made its presence felt, it was soon challenged by writers (e.g. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau) fully committed to transcendentalism, which emphasized spiritual understanding, the power of nature and the common man. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New England was viewed by its writers as the cultural hub of the nation and in no way inferior or dependent on any outside metropolitan centre. Yet it is too simplistic to think of a New England as a unified region, in this case a cultural region as defined by literature. Literature produced by New England-based writers covers a complex array of themes and so, as Kent Ryden states, “as a

⁴⁰ Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Warwick Mules, “The Edges of the Earth: Critical Regionalism as an Aesthetics of the Singular,” *Transformations* 12 (December 2005), n.p., accessed June 10, 2012, http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_12/article_03.shtml.

⁴² Randall Stewart, “Regional Characteristics in the Literature of New England,” *College English* 3, no. 2 (1941): 129-143.

physical presence, to be sure, New England has an independent presence; as a cultural region, however, New England is an emphatically human invention.”⁴³ The most obvious distinction, as we have discussed, is between the more industrial and urban south and the more rural and peripheral north but even within these regional subdivisions there are a variety of smaller scale cultures and distinct local economies.

As Ryden points out, there was a tendency among regional writers earlier in the twentieth century to portray New England as a pre-modern rural refuge from the ravages of history such as the Depression and the social challenges presented by a modernizing, urbanizing and industrializing world, while later in the century, writers criticized the idea of New England as a coherent cultural region, instead focusing more attention on those groups who have been excluded or marginalized from the popularly recognized regional identity.⁴⁴ In another article, he cites the argument made by Joseph Conforti⁴⁵ that critical regionalist authors, including Ernest Herbert, Carolyn Chute, and Richard Russo, have shifted the conceptual heart of the traditional New England northward, into Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. And yet, Ryden argues, these writers portray this part of New England in a manner very different than that which dominated before:

They explore the geographical and cultural margins of their region and then, explicitly or implicitly, use those explorations to question and critique the prevailing definitions of New England as well as the social and economic ramifications of those definitions. In their fiction and poetry, the often gritty details of place belie the

⁴³ Kent Ryden, “New England Literature and Regional Identity,” in *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, ed. C. Crow (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 196.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

comforting abstractions of region, and in portraying their subregion realistically they try to expand our definitions of what New England is, who New Englanders are, and why these questions even matter at all. Once the obscuring haze of region is removed, they demonstrate, an even richer world of place and meaning awaits our imaginative engagement.⁴⁶

By fusing the local with the global through situating current issues in a particular place, Marleen Schulte proposes that these authors have developed a **new** form of regionalist writing.⁴⁷ It is in this part of New England, they infer, that this kind of dynamic reflection can best take place, suggesting that southern New England has already been lost to the modern globalized world. Literature has provided the medium for New England writers to debate identity, which suggests that there is no unified regional identity upon which they can agree.

A folk culture strongly rooted in the past and framed by the region's hinterland status within Canada continues to carry weight in the interpretation and articulation of an Atlantic Canadian regional identity. The same cannot be said for New England literature although narratives of the past and the present have also centered on themes of anti-metropolitanism, economic decline, outmigration, and placelessness in the context of modernization and globalization. As stated, increasingly this literature has been set primarily, although not exclusively, in northern New England. While Atlantic Canadian and New England, particularly northern New England, literature share similar themes, the former remains more firmly

⁴⁶ Kent Ryden, "Region, Place, and Resistance in Northern New England Writing," *Colby Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2003): 120.

⁴⁷ Marleen Schulte, "Shifting Spaces in the Critical Regionalist Fiction of New England," *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies* 12 (2011), n.p., accessed February 10, 2015, <http://copas.uni-regensburg.de/article/viewArticle/139/165>.

committed to a pre-modern past where community serves as a bulwark against the configuration of Confederation that places the region into a peripheral position vis-à-vis the central Canadian core. The more recent representation of the New England space, on the other hand, focuses less on the region's peripheral relationship vis-à-vis a southern New England, or any other American, core and more on the negotiations made by places in response to overwhelming forces of modernization and globalization. While similarities in literary themes and tropes exist north and south of the border, most notably in the interpretation of the relationship between humans and the sea, differences do as well. More importantly, while border crossings do occur in Atlantic-Canadian literature from time to time, there exists no significant body of literature that articulates hybrid, fluid and liminal identities and cultures in the Atlantic Canada-New England borderland.

While New England and Atlantic Canada differ considerably in political culture and do not fully emulate each other in terms of regional literature, the movement of people, ideas and goods across the border ensured that culture was transmitted and shared during our study period. This diffusion of culture took many forms, including that of sport. Colin Howell shows that during the period between the world wars, "Maritimers and New Englanders developed a sense of shared sporting culture through connections on sporting diamonds, in hunting grounds, on the ocean, and along long-distance race courses."⁴⁸ "What made borderlands sporting interaction particularly important to Maritimers during the interwar period," Howell suggests, "was the region's deep-seated sense of alienation and isolation from the rest of Canada."⁴⁹ However, after the Second World War, he asserts, the imagining of the northeast as a coherent transnational

⁴⁸ Colin Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines, and Big Game: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region," in Hornsby and Reid, *New England and the Maritime Provinces*, 279.

⁴⁹ Colin Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region in the Interwar Period," *Journal of Sports History* 29, no. 2 (2002): 266.

sporting region gave way to other constructions, most notably a pan-Canadian sporting connection that served as a countervailing force to a borderland sporting culture.⁵⁰

New England and Atlantic Canada also differ somewhat in their visual arts traditions. Realism, which attempts to represent subject matter truthfully and without the framing of “ideal” conventions and mythological elements, distinguished the arts of Atlantic Canada for much of the twentieth century. Atlantic Canadian realism grew out of rural roots and was most prominent in New Brunswick where artists such as Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt and Mary Pratt painted and photographed in a realist style. Colville, who taught at Mount Allison University in Sackville, had several gifted students including Mary Pratt and Tom Forrestall who helped spread the realist tradition throughout the region. While Colville and others were influenced by the American Realist movement which also began as a reaction to and a rejection of Romanticism, the direction taken south of the border differed considerably from that in Atlantic Canada. While some realist artists (Andrew Wyeth, Norman Rockwell) sought to interpret rural and small town imagery, American realism was generally more urban in focus than its Canadian counterpart. In particular, the Ashcan School of New York City, which included artists such as George Bellows and Robert Henri, portrayed the social existence of lower class immigrants residing in cities. The urban focus of American artists did have an impact on some Maritime realists including Miller Brittain and Jack Humphrey, both of whom studied in New York and, in the case of Humphrey, also in New England. But the work of these Saint John-based artists stands out as an exception to the general inclination towards rural themes in Atlantic realism.

While American realism was expressed by artists and writers all across the country, it was most pronounced in New York City. The visual arts tradition in New England, on the other hand, was different. Like their Maritime counterparts, New England artists reacted against

⁵⁰ Ibid, 267.

modernism but did so by embracing a romanticism influenced by the colonial revival movement. The colonial revival was a loosely defined cultural movement inspired by a romantic connection with the past fostered by the alienation and angst associated with an urbanizing and industrializing present. Writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe set stories in puritan New England while impressionist artists such as Childe Hassam and Adelaide Dering painted bucolic New England landscape scenes and pre-urban folkways (Figure 1). The subtle modulations of colour and the impressionist techniques of such painting stand in stark contrast with the detail, colours, shapes and styles used by the realist artists of Atlantic Canada (Figure 2).⁵¹

⁵¹ For discussion of Alex Colville and Atlantic Canadian realism, see: David Burnet, *Colville* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1983). For discussion of American realism and the Colonial Revival, see: T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Richard Wilson, Shaun Eyring, and Kenny Marotta, eds., *Re-creating the American Past: essays on the Colonial Revival* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).



Figure 1

Childe Hassam: *Golden Afternoon*, 1908

Source: "Childe Hassam: Golden Afternoon" (11.40) In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/11.40>. (October 2006), accessed January 11, 2016.



Figure 2

Alex Colville: Boy, Dog and St. John River, 1958

Source: London Regional Art Gallery. www.imagemakers.mb.ca/canart/colville/colville06.jpg.

This image is included in: Painting the Child: Realism in Canada Exhibition website, accessed January 11, 2016,

http://picturingchildren.concordia.ca/2010/exhibition/PC_Exhibition_Painting_the_Child_DV.pdf.

There are many different levels and scales of cross-border culture. So far, our discussion has emphasized that while people, primarily from the Atlantic Canadian region, brought elements of their culture with them across the border and that cultural messages and meanings, primarily from New England, accompanied the flows of communication and capital crossing that same border, there developed no significant hybrid Atlantic or northeastern culture, at least at the meso- or regional scale. While human relationships with the sea produced similar iconographic landscapes on both sides of the border (e.g. lighthouses, quaint fishing villages, etc.), they were more the result of analogous historical and geographical conditions than cultural hybridization. Over time, it appears the traditional flows and networks that linked Atlantic Canada and New England changed and, to some extent, weakened. Communications and transportation technologies (e.g. television, air travel) facilitated cross-border flows but did not necessarily produce greater cultural integration. The economic and, to a considerable extent, cultural ties between Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada, particularly the centre, increased over time. Certainly, economic dependency between this periphery and the central core strengthened. It was within Canada that the Maritimes, and Newfoundland after 1949, chose to delineate their cultural identities. The United States in general, and New England in particular, continued to play a role in this project but it was the region's relationship with Canada that served as the dominant frame of reference.

Identity, affinity and imagination are important ingredients in the development of a border culture. These elements are difficult enough to discern in the present, let alone the past. Nevertheless, there is evidence, I believe, which shows that it was at the local scale and between proximate communities that cultural interaction and mixing was most intense during the study period. It was in these places that two peoples, separated by a border, had the greatest

opportunities to work and play together and communicate ideas and values. Border culture, in this sense, is most pronounced and manifested at the local scale and in the case of the Atlantic borderland, the space in which this took place was, and to a considerable extent, still is, circumscribed by distance. While the majority of Atlantic Canadians migrated to Boston and surrounding industrial cities and in certain contexts had some opportunity to interact with each other at a social, workplace or family level, they had no place from which they could assert a place-bound identity that would support either processes of cultural differentiation or cultural hybridization. There is little evidence of a trans-local fusion of a Maritime or Newfoundland culture with a New England culture taking place either in Boston or most New England communities where Americanization, however defined, proved to be victorious, nor in Atlantic Canada where the number of American-born was so insignificant as to be of any consequence. However, a meeting of Atlantic Canadian, or at least Maritimes, and New England cultures did take place along the New Brunswick-Maine border. It was in these much smaller and more proximate border communities that processes of differentiation and interconnection were contextually bound, culturally specific and, as a result, most intense.

This line of reasoning parallels that of Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly who identifies the specific culture of borderland communities as one of four analytical lenses from which to view borderland regions.⁵² Victor Konrad and Heather Nicol extend this argument even further, asserting that within the Canada–United States borderlands, culture needs to be “re-imagined as a heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous concept,” thereby incorporating diverse perspectives.⁵³ In this context, place and its related features plays a major role in determining

⁵² Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” *Geopolitics* 10, no. 4 (2005): 633-49.

⁵³ Victor Konrad and Heather Nicol, “Border Culture, the Boundary Between Canada and the United States of America, and the Advancement of Borderlands Theory,” *Geopolitics* 16, no. 1 (2011): 70.

how culture impacts people. A borderland “place” is a location defined by the intersection occurring between the global and the local and the social relations resulting from the interaction of people from both sides of a border. Such interaction happens within specific contexts and in the case of the Atlantic borderlands was, and is, most pronounced along the New Brunswick-Maine border.

It is in this zone that people and communities interact most directly on a daily basis and share an array of interrelated activities and cultural expressions. It is the area where, theoretically, the greatest potential exists for cultural overlap, if not cultural hybridization. Frequent contact generates trans-cultural processes which transcend or mediate cultural differences. Also important is the fact that people on both sides of the border also face the same environmental conditions which results in shared cultural adaptations and, consequently, similar cultural behaviour.

This is the premise behind the work of Edward (“Sandy”) Ives who made a career out of studying the cultural connections that developed between Maine and the Maritimes. In particular, he shows how the lumber woods of New Brunswick and Maine fostered a vibrant folksong tradition during the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁵⁴ With the migration of Maine lumbermen to the northern woods of the Midwest in the late nineteenth century, scores of men from the Maritimes and Québec, but primarily from New Brunswick, came to Maine to work in the camps and in doing so brought their cultural baggage, including their music, with them. Ives demonstrates how many of these songs reflected the integration of work in the woods and social activity in the camps. The music centered on shared themes and referred to specific places and people on both sides of the border. He also points to an asymmetry present in the Maine-New

⁵⁴ See, for example: Edward Ives, “Maine-Maritimes Folklore: The Lumberwoods Connection,” in Hornsby and Reid, eds., *New England and the Maritime Connections*, 201-205.

Brunswick folksong culture: “In my fieldwork over the past forty years, I have found ten good singers from the Maritimes to everyone from Maine, and even those who were from Maine were often second-generation Maritimers or had strong Maritime connections Taking that one step further, most of these thousands of province men who came to work in the Maine woods had two things in common: they were from poor rural areas and they were of heavily Irish or sometimes Scottish ancestry.”⁵⁵ Eventually, Ives began to document via oral histories the details of lumbering and the lives of the workers employed in that industry. Regardless of which side of the border they were employed, the lumbermen of the St. John valley faced similar conditions and shared common lifestyles. Victor Konrad suggests that Ives and others (e.g. Richard Judd, W.E. Greening) identified a cross-border migration of loggers, techniques, machines, capital and traditions that produced a *temperate woods tradition* which extended from New England and the Maritimes in the east to British Columbia, Washington and Oregon in the west, and even north to Alaska and the Yukon.⁵⁶

In a similar vein, Greg Marquis argues that early in the 20th century “New Brunswick’s old-time musicians, although rooted in local communities ... shared a borderlands musical culture with New England and beyond.”⁵⁷ Among other places, it was in the lumber camps, the lumber drives and in the mills that fiddle music was shared among workers from Maine, the Maritimes and Québec, thus promoting a trans-border popular culture which originated in a common Celtic background that transcended regions throughout the eastern part of North America. The advent of radio followed by television further strengthened this musical bridge as people on both sides

⁵⁵ Ives, “Maine-Maritimes Folklore,” 205.

⁵⁶ Victor Konrad, “The Borderlands of the United States and Canada in the Context of North American Development,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies /Revue internationale d’études canadiennes* 4 (Fall/Automne 1991): 77-95; Richard Judd, “Timber Down the Saint John: A Study of Maine-New Brunswick Relations,” *Maine Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 195-218; W.E. Greening, “The Lumber Industry in the Ottawa Valley and the American Market in the Nineteenth Century,” *Ontario History* 62 (1970): 134-136.

⁵⁷ Greg Marquis, “The Folk Music of Anglophone New Brunswick: Old-Time and Country Music in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of New Brunswick Studies* 3 (2012): 61.

of the border, but primarily on the Canadian side, could listen to and see musicians from across the line perform tunes that appealed to their shared nostalgia for the “old country”. Over time, regional variations developed as the southern style of fiddling and country music out of Nashville more and more dominated old-time and folk music south of the border and the “down-east” style, perpetrated by groups such as Don Messer and the Islanders, came to take over the Maritimes scene. Thrown into the mix was the Acadian style of folk music that resonated in certain regions such as Madawaska.⁵⁸ Eventually, traditional Maritime folk and old-time music diminished somewhat in the face of musical styles coming from outside the region although there is evidence that towards the end of the 20th century, there was a significant revival of long established influences in both the folk and the folk rock scenes.

In contrast, traditional Newfoundland music, with its pronounced Celtic and other European roots, continued to flourish. American troops stationed in military bases in Newfoundland and Labrador during World War Two brought country and western and swing music with them. In particular, the American radio station VOUS (Voice of the United States), broadcast out of St. John’s, brought American popular culture to Newfoundlanders.⁵⁹ Over time, other kinds of music from the United States and elsewhere were introduced to the province by radio and then from other media. Nevertheless, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians continued to celebrate and maintain their unique musical heritage even as some of them moved away from traditional folk music. Towards the end of the 20th century, many bands actively combined original and traditional material in their repertoire. However, the musical connection that joined the Maritimes and northern New England did not exist to the same extent for Newfoundland. The province’s distance from New England meant that its music remained relatively isolated from

⁵⁸ Ibid, 61-65.

⁵⁹ Jenny Higgins, “The American Presence in Newfoundland and Labrador,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage* website, accessed December 10, 2014, http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/us_pres.html.

that market even though over time the national media of Canada, the CBC in particular, ensured that the folk music culture of Newfoundland would expand beyond its borders to the rest of the country and even beyond.

Cultural diffusion in the context of borderlands implies transnational flows of people, symbols, practices, texts, ideas, etc. that together create a dynamic process of interchange which is reciprocal in nature. The outcomes of such diffusion are varied; they can include assimilation, pluralism, hybridization, or a combination of one or more of these processes. Scholars of the Atlantic borderland generally point to the Madawaska region of the upper St. John River as the place where cross-border culture is most pronounced. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Madawaska had developed as a unique district in the northeast, a place where Acadians, Québécois, Anglo-Maritimers, primarily from New Brunswick, and Anglo-Americans, primarily from Maine, came together to form a cultural fusion that was clearly different and more distinctive from any other borderland place within the wider region. Arguably, it was the French “fact” that distinguished this particular borderland place; the dominance of the French language, architectural styles, customs and Catholic religion enabled Acadians, Québécois and Brayons,⁶⁰ despite their internal differences, to control space and create a place that would offer protection from an overwhelming Anglo-American and Anglo-Canadian cultural presence. As Victor Konrad argues, it was a combination of a cross-border culture, market forces and trade flows, cross-border political influences and the policy activities of multiple levels of government that produced a functional borderland place unmatched elsewhere, either in the northeast or, arguably, any other part of the Canada-United States borderland zone.⁶¹ Debatably, Madawaska

⁶⁰ Brayons are francophones living in the Edmunston, New Brunswick area who have stronger connections with Québec than Acadia.

⁶¹ Konrad, “The Borderlands of the United States and Canada.”

serves as the best example of what Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad identify as a “divided cultural enclave”, a culturally homogeneous region split in two.⁶²

However, over time, the French “fact” played less of a role in joining the New Brunswick and Maine sides. While the French language has survived in New Brunswick, the result of language legislation, cultural institutions and constitutionally guaranteed French-language school systems, it has declined dramatically in Maine, particularly among the young. Familial and economic connections fostered by proximity still operate within the region but an increasing language division has, arguably, eroded cross-border culture. The decline of French on the American side dates back to the early 20th century when the language was forbidden in the classrooms of Maine except as a foreign language. In fact, until 1960, state law required that English be the only language used for teaching in the public schools of the state.⁶³ More recently, there has taken place an expanded effort to preserve French language and culture in Madawaska, which is generally regarded as the hearth of Acadian culture in Maine. Acadian heritage is still celebrated on the Maine side in the form of festivals and music events but any association with this particular legacy has been weakened through the loss of language.

Strong cross-border connections also developed during the 19th century between St. Stephen and Calais. Such linkages continued throughout the 20th century, further reinforcing the idea that together these two communities represent one of the most integrated borderland places within the greater northeastern region. Brandon Dimmel shows how residents of these two small lumbering towns crossed the St. Croix River to work, visit, shop and participate in sporting events, festivals and national holidays. Dimmel suggests that the relationship between the two

⁶² Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad, *Borderland Reflections: The United States and Canada*, Borderlands Monograph Series # 1 (Orono: Canadian-American Center, University of Maine, 1989).

⁶³ “French Language,” Acadian Culture in Maine website, accessed June 12, 2011, <http://acim.umfk.maine.edu/language.html>.

communities at the turn of the 20th century represents the borderland model that McKinsey and Konrad identify as “balanced cultural interaction,” occurring “between comparable centers, especially urban centers with equivalent levels of development.”⁶⁴ He refers to the celebration of Victoria Day by residents of Calais and commemoration of the 4th of July by citizens of St. Stephen and co-participation in a combined Calais-St. Stephen baseball club that played against clubs from other New Brunswick and Maine towns as examples of cross-border interaction that resulted in the development of a cross-border identity. The economic integration resulting from the movement of cross-border labour and capital and illegal goods, referred to earlier, “translated,” Dimmel argues, “into deep social and cultural connections between St. Stephen, Calais, and the Milltowns. Local men joined fraternal organizations that not only welcomed members regardless of their citizenship but attempted to maintain good relations between residents of St. Stephen and Calais.”⁶⁵ Strong connections between the two communities were also forged by cross-border marriages. “Calais marriage records,” Dimmel states, “show that nearly one in ten marriages in the 1890s involved a resident of Calais marrying a person from St. Stephen or Milltown, New Brunswick. During the decade encompassing the First World War (1910-1919), approximately 17 per cent of all marriages recorded in Calais were of the transnational variety.”⁶⁶

However, the cohesive fabric of this transnational community, Dimmel shows, was weakened to some extent with the onset of the First World War. At first, St. Stephen residents demonstrated modest support for the Canadian war effort, a reaction Dimmel suggests that may:

⁶⁴ McKinsey and Konrad, *Borderland Reflections*, 11. Quoted in: Brandon Dimmel, “Bats Along the Border: Sport, Festivals, and Culture in an International Community during the First World War,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2010): 329.

⁶⁵ Brandon Dimmel, “Outside Influences: Great War Experiences Along the Canada-U.S. Border” (PhD diss., Western University, 2012), 173.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 173-174.

... have been the result of its relationship with its American neighbour, Calais. Across the St. Croix River, the Calais *Advertiser* wholeheartedly adopted President Woodrow Wilson's policy of neutrality. This led the *Advertiser* to criticize not only the war, but also those who embraced it. Given that the people of St. Stephen and Calais had for generations shared a common social sphere, it is possible that American neutrality had an impact on Canadian perceptions of the conflict in this region.⁶⁷

This would change, he maintains, with Canada's participation in the Battle of Second Ypres in April of 1915 which resulted in the first casualties of St. Stephen and area soldiers. From that point until the U.S. entered the war, St. Stephen residents supported the war effort and were critical of American neutrality and any negative opinions towards the war expressed in the very conservative Calais newspaper. The war also brought out attachments to the British Empire and fostered greater national pride.⁶⁸ However, Dimmel argues, support for the Canadian war effort in Calais increased over time particularly as residents of the Maine community recognized the price their northern neighbours were paying on the battlefields of Europe. And with the American entry into the war in April of 1917, the bond between the two borderland towns increased even more.⁶⁹ This connection continued throughout the study period even as St. Stephen and Calais faced increasing economic uncertainty. Notably, Dimmel posits that the

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 181-182.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 183-184, 188.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, 194, 200.

relative isolation of both communities from larger provincial and state neighbours encouraged strong local and, by extension, transnational identities.⁷⁰

Although Madawaska and Calais differed in some significant respects, both places throughout the 19th and 20th centuries shared a peripheral position within New England and were isolated from the political, economic and cultural center of the region located to the south. A geographical position characterized by peripherality within and isolation from New England quite possibly made these two communities and other Maine towns along the international border more susceptible to influences from Canada in general and from New Brunswick and eastern Québec in particular. People in Madawaska, Calais, Fort Kent, Edmunston, St. Stephen and other communities on both sides of the border developed an association with each other and the location they shared, and in this sense developed over time an attachment to and an identity based on this specific borderland place. Borderland identity and culture is context-dependent. The isolation facing these communities produced some degree of place dependency as well as sense of place and place attachment. In Madawaska, traditions from different cultures blended together in the same place to create something that did not previously exist. But such mixing was not nearly as evident in Calais-St. Stephen or any other communities within the New Brunswick-Maine borderland zone during the period under question. If anything, the landscapes of late capitalism characterized by chain stores and malls and having very little to do with the unique cultural landscapes of the past in either the Atlantic region or New England came to dominate.

Conclusion

Did cultural exchange in the Atlantic borderland produce a common culture that is unique to this part of North America? My answer is a qualified no. While proximity and a shared

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 298.

environment ensured the development of many interdependencies, there is little evidence, outside of the Madawaska area, of the emergence of an Atlantic cultural hybrid, i.e., a third space where cultural antecedents were altered by the process of mixing. Outside of Madawaska, I see little evidence of hybrid landscapes or identities that reflect either elements of both the Atlantic region and New England or their respective borderlands. Cultural similarities do exist; for example, New England Loyalists and Planters introduced architectural and urban designs to the Maritimes but this was cultural transfer, not cultural hybridization. Strong historical and geographical similarities including a shared Anglo-Celtic settlement, a pronounced French presence, and a marked orientation towards the sea also ensured connections. Over time, American culture in the form of media (e.g. cable television) and consumerism, more often conveying messages and values from outside than from within New England, made increasing inroads into Atlantic Canada but these influences were more than counteracted by the interweaving of a developing national culture and a strongly entrenched regional culture. It is much too simplistic to reduce the Atlantic borderlander to a model based on the cultural anomaly of Madawaska.

Historians debate the existence of what Graeme Wynn calls a “Greater New England”. One side argues that a common experience, interconnected economy, shared attitudes and a similar material culture ensured the continuation of a “Greater New England” with New England in general and Boston in particular constituting the core and Atlantic Canada comprising a dependent hinterland. Opponents argue that internal developments, growing links with central Canada and continuing connections with Britain individually and collectively tempered New England’s influence on Atlantic Canada despite increasing economic integration. A discussion of this debate is included in the full version of this paper. What I want to do today is consider this question: did interchange and diffusion in the Atlantic borderland produce a common culture that is unique to this part of North America? The question of culture as it pertains to borderlands, it seems to me, revolves around the degree to which cultural hybridization takes place as a result of historical processes of cross-border exchanges.

Political Culture

Despite the perception held by many Canadians that Atlantic Canada is inherently conservative by nature, there is ample evidence, James Kenny suggests, to support the argument that progressive and radical values have also shaped the history of Atlantic Canada. From such a political culture, there developed a concern towards the end of the 20th century over the demise of Keynesian economic philosophy in the face of neo-liberalism and the beginning of a dismantling of the welfare state that had propped up a struggling economy for such a long time.

New England, on the other hand, has long been viewed as having a liberal political culture. James Curry maintains that the New England states and its leaders have been recurrently united by policy and politics. However, Curry’s argument fails to acknowledge the diversity of ideology and political opinion that exists in New England. Daniel Elazar contends that that there

are two political culture regions in New England: a moral political culture region which he calls “Upper New England” (Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont), distinguished by a culture that sees government as a positive force and operates from the belief that society is held to be more important than the individual; and a individual political culture region which he calls “Lower New England” (Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut), characterized by a culture that works from the principle that private concerns are more important than public concerns.

Elazar’s political regions may be challenged on the basis of the significant difference in political ideology that has existed for quite some time between New Hampshire and Vermont. Elazar’s definition of “moral political culture” does not apply very well to New Hampshire which has a long history of libertarian politics as opposed to Vermont’s history of moderate communitarianism. The differences between the north and south and the very significant distinctions among states, particularly between Vermont and New Hampshire, leads me to conclude that it is too facile and misleading to speak of a unified and monocultural New England region. In the same vein, it is also misleading to put too much emphasis on the idea of a cohesive Atlantic Canada which is more culturally complex than many believe. It is problematic to compare and contrast an Atlantic Canadian political culture with a New England political culture for the simple reason that no monoculture exists either north or south of the border.

Literature

While the sea in general, and human interactions with the ocean in particular, are common frames of reference for both New England and Atlantic Canada, the literature of both regions differs in some fundamental ways. The shared position of marginality within Canada and the larger globalizing world is reflected in the literature of Atlantic Canada. Gwendolyn Davies sees this part of Canada as a cohesive community unified by a literature that is on the periphery,

just like the region itself. In a similar vein, Janice Kulyk Keefer suggests that Maritime writing is a unique body of literature produced from a distinct society whose primary features are a strong sense of community and an open attitude to nature. The literature of Atlantic Canada has for some time now imagined the region in relation to a more powerful centre. This depiction of a region unified by a communal folk culture that stands against the forces of modernism coming from the outside has great appeal even though most Atlantic Canadians have for some time now lived in modern urban centres. While modern technologies have expanded the spatial reach of many Atlantic Canadian communities and individuals beyond the region, “the quest of the folk”, as Ian McKay calls it, still remains strong and the attachment to place continues to play a significant role in the culture of the region.

Randall Stewart suggests that New England literature at the time of the revolution was characterized by the Puritan tradition of order and restraint and a pervading religious tone. While Puritanism certainly made its presence felt, it was soon challenged by writers (e.g. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau) fully committed to transcendentalism, which emphasized spiritual understanding, the power of nature and the common man. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New England was viewed by its writers as the cultural hub of the nation. However, it is too simplistic to think of a New England as a unified region, in this case a cultural region as defined by literature. Literature produced by New England-based writers covers a complex array of themes and so, as Kent Ryden states, “as a cultural region, New England is an emphatically human invention.” The most obvious distinction is between the more industrial and urban south and the more rural and peripheral north but even within these regional subdivisions there are a variety of smaller scale cultures and distinct local economies.

As Ryden points out, there was a tendency among regional writers earlier in the twentieth century to portray New England as a pre-modern rural refuge from the ravages of history, while later in the century, writers criticized the idea of New England as a coherent cultural region. Critical regionalist authors, including Ernest Herbert, Carolyn Chute, and Richard Russo, have shifted the conceptual heart of the traditional New England northward, into Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. It is in this part of New England that this kind of dynamic reflection can best take place, suggesting that southern New England has already been lost to the modern globalized world. Literature has provided the medium for New England writers to debate identity, which suggests that there is no unified regional identity upon which they can agree. Finally, while border crossings do occur in Atlantic-Canadian literature from time to time, there exists no significant body of literature that articulates hybrid, fluid and liminal identities and cultures in the Atlantic Canada-New England borderland.

Sports

The movement of people, ideas and goods across the border ensured that culture was transmitted and shared. This diffusion of culture took many forms, including that of sport. Colin Howell shows that during the period between the world wars, Maritimers and New Englanders developed a sense of shared sporting culture. “What made borderlands sporting interaction particularly important to Maritimers during the interwar period,” Howell suggests, “was the region's deep-seated sense of alienation and isolation from the rest of Canada.” However, after the Second World War, he asserts, the imagining of the northeast as a coherent transnational sporting region gave way to other constructions, most notably a pan-Canadian sporting connection that served as a countervailing force to a borderland sporting culture.

Visual Arts

New England and Atlantic Canada also differ somewhat in their visual arts traditions. Realism, which attempts to represent subject matter truthfully and without the framing of “ideal” conventions and mythological elements, distinguished the arts of Atlantic Canada for much of the twentieth century. Atlantic Canadian realism grew out of rural roots and was most prominent in New Brunswick where artists such as Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt and Mary Pratt painted and photographed in a realist style. While Colville and others were influenced by the American Realist movement which also began as a reaction to and a rejection of Romanticism, the direction taken south of the border differed considerably from that in Atlantic Canada. American realism was generally more urban in focus than its Canadian counterpart. The visual arts tradition in New England, on the other hand, was different. Like their Maritime counterparts, New England artists reacted against modernism but did so by embracing a romanticism influenced by the colonial revival movement. Impressionist artists such as Childe Hassam and Adelaide Dering painted bucolic New England landscape scenes and pre-urban folkways. The subtle modulations of colour and the impressionist techniques of such painting stand in stark contrast with the detail, colours, shapes and styles used by the realist artists of Atlantic Canada.

Scale

Border culture is most pronounced and manifested at the local scale and in the case of the Atlantic borderland, the space in which this took place was, and to a considerable extent, still is, circumscribed by distance. The majority of Atlantic Canadians migrated to Boston and surrounding industrial cities. There is little evidence of a trans-local fusion of a Maritime or Newfoundland culture with a New England culture taking place either in Boston or most New England communities where Americanization, however defined, proved to be victorious, nor in Atlantic Canada where the number of American-born was so insignificant as to be of any

consequence. However, a meeting of Atlantic Canadian, or at least Maritimes, and New England cultures did take place along the New Brunswick-Maine border. It was in these much smaller and more proximate border communities that processes of differentiation and interconnection were contextually bound, culturally specific and, as a result, most intense. It is in this zone that people and communities interact most directly on a daily basis and share an array of interrelated activities and cultural expressions. It is the area where, theoretically, the greatest potential exists for cultural overlap, if not cultural hybridization.

This is the premise behind the work of Edward (“Sandy”) Ives who made a career out of studying the cultural connections that developed between Maine and the Maritimes. In particular, he shows how the lumber woods of New Brunswick and Maine fostered a vibrant folksong tradition during the 19th and early 20th centuries. With the migration of Maine lumbermen to the northern woods of the Midwest in the late nineteenth century, scores of men from the Maritimes and Québec came to Maine to work in the camps and in doing so brought their cultural baggage, including their music, with them. Ives demonstrates how many of these songs reflected the integration of work in the woods and social activity in the camps. It was in the lumber camps, the lumber drives and in the mills that fiddle music was shared among workers from Maine, the Maritimes and Québec, thus promoting a trans-border popular culture which originated in a common Celtic background that transcended regions throughout the eastern part of North America.

The advent of radio followed by television further strengthened this musical bridge. Over time, regional variations developed as the southern style of fiddling and country music out of Nashville more and more dominated old-time and folk music south of the border and the “down-east” style, perpetrated by groups such as Don Messer and the Islanders, came to take over the

Maritimes scene. Thrown into the mix was the Acadian style of folk music that resonated in certain regions such as Madawaska. Eventually, traditional Maritime folk and old-time music diminished somewhat in the face of musical styles coming from outside the region although there is evidence that towards the end of the 20th century, there was a significant revival of long established influences in both the folk and the folk rock scenes.

In contrast, traditional Newfoundland music, with its pronounced Celtic and other European roots, continued to flourish. American troops stationed in military bases in Newfoundland and Labrador during World War Two brought country and western and swing music with them. Over time, other kinds of music from the United States and elsewhere were introduced to the province by radio and then from other media. Nevertheless, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians continued to celebrate and maintain their unique musical heritage even as some of them moved away from traditional folk music. Towards the end of the 20th century, many bands actively combined original and traditional material in their repertoire. Despite an American presence during the war, the province's distance from New England meant that its music remained relatively isolated from that market even though over time the national media of Canada, the CBC in particular, ensured that the folk music culture of Newfoundland would expand beyond its borders to the rest of the country and even beyond.

Madawaska

Scholars of the Atlantic borderland generally point to the Madawaska region of the upper St. John River as the place where cross-border culture is most pronounced. By the middle of the 19th century, Madawaska had developed as a unique district in the northeast, a place where Acadians, Québécois, Anglo-Maritimers, and Anglo-Americans, came together to form a cultural fusion that was clearly different and more distinctive from any other borderland place within the

wider region. Arguably, it was the French “fact” that distinguished this particular borderland place; the dominance of the French language, architectural styles, customs and Catholic religion enabled Acadians, Québécois, Franco-Americans and Brayons (francophones living in the Edmunston, New Brunswick area who have stronger connections with Québec than Acadia) to create a place that would offer protection from an overwhelming Anglo-American and Anglo-Canadian cultural presence. As Victor Konrad argues, it was a combination of a cross-border culture, market forces and trade flows, cross-border political influences and the policy activities of multiple levels of government that produced a functional borderland place unmatched elsewhere.

However, over time, the French “fact” played less of a role in joining the New Brunswick and Maine sides. While the French language has survived in New Brunswick, the result of language legislation and constitutionally guaranteed French-language school systems, it has declined dramatically in Maine, particularly among the young. Familial and economic connections fostered by proximity still operate within the region but an increasing language division has, arguably, eroded cross-border culture. The decline of French on the American side dates back to the early twentieth century when the language was forbidden in the classrooms of Maine except as a foreign language. More recently, there has taken place an expanded effort to preserve French language and culture in Madawaska, which is generally regarded as the hearth of Acadian culture in Maine. Acadian heritage is still celebrated on the Maine side but any association with this particular legacy has been weakened through the loss of language.

St. Stephen and Calais

Strong cross-border connections also developed during the 19th century between St. Stephen and Calais. Such linkages continued throughout the 20th century, further reinforcing the

idea that together these two communities represent one of the most integrated borderland places within the greater northeastern region. Brandon Dimmel shows how residents of these two small lumbering towns crossed the St. Croix River to work, visit, shop and participate in sporting events, festivals and national holidays. Dimmel suggests that the relationship between the two communities at the turn of the 20th century represents the borderland model that McKinsey and Konrad identify as “balanced cultural interaction,” occurring “between comparable centers, especially urban centers with equivalent levels of development.” The economic integration resulting from the movement of cross-border labour and capital and illegal goods “translated,” Dimmel argues, “into deep social and cultural connections between St. Stephen, Calais, and the Milltowns.

The Impact of Isolation

A geographical position characterized by peripherality within and isolation from New England quite possibly made Madawaska and Calais and other Maine towns along the international border more susceptible to influences from Canada in general and from New Brunswick and eastern Québec in particular. Borderland identity and culture is context-dependent. The isolation facing these communities produced some degree of place dependency as well as sense of place and place attachment. In Madawaska, traditions from different cultures blended together in the same place to create something that did not previously exist. But such mixing was not nearly as evident in Calais-St. Stephen or any other communities within the New Brunswick-Maine borderland zone during the 19th and 20th centuries. If anything, the landscapes of late capitalism characterized by chain stores and malls and having very little to do with the unique cultural landscapes of the past in either the Atlantic region or New England came to dominate.

Conclusion

Did cultural diffusion in the Atlantic borderland produce a hybrid culture that is unique to this part of North America? My answer is a qualified no. While proximity and a shared environment ensured the development of many interdependencies, there is little evidence, outside of the Madawaska area, of the emergence of an Atlantic cultural hybrid, i.e., a third space where cultural antecedents were altered by the process of mixing. Outside of Madawaska, I see little evidence of hybrid landscapes or identities that reflect either elements of both the Atlantic region and New England or their respective borderlands. Cultural similarities do exist; for example, New England Loyalists and Planters introduced architectural and urban designs to the Maritimes but this was cultural transfer, not cultural hybridization. Strong historical and geographical similarities including a shared Anglo-Celtic settlement, a pronounced French presence, and a marked orientation towards the sea also ensured connections. Over time, American culture in the form of media and consumerism, more often conveying messages and values from outside than from within New England, made increasing inroads into Atlantic Canada but these influences were more than counteracted by the interweaving of a developing national culture and a strongly entrenched regional culture. It is much too simplistic to reduce the Atlantic borderlander to a model based on the cultural anomaly of Madawaska.

Eventually, it appears the traditional flows and networks that linked Atlantic Canada and New England changed and, to some extent, weakened. Communications and transportation technologies facilitated cross-border flows but did not necessarily produce greater cultural integration. The economic and, to a considerable extent, cultural ties between Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada, particularly the centre, increased over time. Certainly, economic dependency between this periphery and the central core strengthened. It was within Canada that

the Maritimes, and Newfoundland after 1949, chose to delineate their cultural identities. The United States in general, and New England in particular, continued to play a role in this project but it was the region's relationship with Canada that served as the dominant frame of reference.



Greater New England as Cultural Borderland: A Critical Appraisal

Randy William Widdis
University of Regina



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Introduction

- **Historical Debate over A Greater New England**
 - one side: Graeme Wynn, Bartlett Brebner, George Rawlyk, J.M. Bumstead and others
 - a common experience, interconnected economy, shared attitudes and a similar material culture ensured the continuation of a “Greater New England”
 - New England in general and Boston in particular constituting the core and Atlantic Canada comprising a dependent hinterland
 - other side: Elizabeth Mancke, Julian Gwyn, Philip Buckner and others
 - internal developments, growing links with central Canada and continuing connections with Britain individually and collectively tempered New England’s influence on Atlantic Canada despite increasing economic integration
- **Cultural Debate**
 - did interchange and diffusion in the Atlantic borderland produce a common culture that is unique to this part of North America?
 - key consideration: degree to which cultural hybridization takes place as a result of historical processes of cross-border exchanges

Political Culture

- **Atlantic Canada: conservative or progressive?**
 - James Kenny (1999): argues progressive and radical values have shaped the history of Atlantic Canada
 - a concern towards the end of the 20th century over the demise of Keynesian economic philosophy in the face of neo-liberalism and the beginning of a dismantling of the welfare state that had propped up a struggling economy for such a long time
- **New England: a liberal political culture? – divided opinions**
 - James Curry (2008): argues New England states are united by policy and politics
 - Daniel Elazar (1972): two political culture regions in New England
 - “Upper New England” (Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont), distinguished by a culture that sees government as a positive force and operates from the belief that society is held to be more important than the individual
 - “Lower New England” (Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut), characterized by a culture that advocates limiting community and government intervention into private activities and works from the principle that private concerns are more important than public concerns

Political Culture

- **New England: a liberal political culture?**
 - significant difference in political ideology has existed for quite some time between New Hampshire and Vermont
 - “moral political culture” does not apply very well to New Hampshire which has a long history of libertarian politics as opposed to Vermont’s history of moderate communitarianism
 - too facile and misleading to speak of a unified and monocultural New England region
- **Atlantic Canada: a cohesive region?**
 - Atlantic Canada is more culturally complex than generally believed
- **problematic to compare and contrast an Atlantic Canadian political culture with a New England political culture for the simple reason that no monolithic or monoculture exists either north or south of the border**

Literature

- although there are common frames of reference for both New England and Atlantic Canada, the literature of both regions differs in some fundamental ways
- **Atlantic Canada: marginality/peripherality**
 - Gwendolyn Davies (1993): sees Atlantic Canada as a cohesive community unified by a literature that is on the periphery, just like the region itself
 - Janice Kulyk Keefer (1987): suggests that Maritime writing is a unique body of literature produced from a distinct society whose primary features are a strong sense of community and an open attitude to nature
 - literature imagines the region in relation to a more powerful centre, whether it be central Canada or New England, more often the former than the latter
 - a region unified by a communal folk culture that stands against the forces of modernism
 - Ian McKay (1995): “the quest of the folk”

Literature

- **New England: changes in tradition**
 - **Randall Stewart (1941): pre-revolutionary Puritan tradition**
 - **transcendentalism (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau)**
 - **New England as cultural hub of the nation**
 - **too simplistic to think of a New England as a unified region, in this case a cultural region as defined by literature**
 - **literature covers a complex array of themes**
 - **Kent Ryden (2003): “as a cultural region, New England is an emphatically human invention”**
 - **writers earlier in the twentieth century portrayed New England as a pre-modern rural refuge from the ravages of history (Depression and the challenges presented by a modernizing, urbanizing and industrializing world)**
 - **later writers (egs. Ernest Herbert, Carolyn Chute, and Richard Russo) criticized the idea of New England as a coherent cultural region**
 - **these writers explore the geographical and cultural margins of their region and then use those explorations to question and critique the prevailing definitions of New England as well as the social and economic ramifications of those definitions**
 - **it is the northern and more peripheral part of New England that dynamic reflection can best take place, suggesting that southern New England has already been lost to the modern globalized world**
 - **literature has provided the medium for New England writers to debate identity, which suggests that there is no unified regional identity upon which they can agree**
 - **while border crossings do occur in Atlantic-Canadian literature from time to time, *there exists no significant body of literature that articulates hybrid, fluid and liminal identities and cultures in the Atlantic Canada-New England borderland***

Sports

- **diffusion of culture took many forms, including that of sport**
- **Colin Howell (2002, 2005): shared sporting culture during the period between the world wars fostered by the Maritimes deep-seated sense of alienation and isolation from the rest of Canada**
 - **after the Second World War, he asserts, the imagining of the northeast as a coherent transnational sporting region gave way to other constructions, most notably a pan-Canadian sporting connection that served as a countervailing force to a borderland sporting culture**

Visual Arts

- **Atlantic Canada: the impact of realism**
 - rural roots (Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Mary Pratt)
 - **New England: a different kind of realism**
 - American realism generally more urban in focus but the New England tradition was different
 - like their Maritime counterparts, New England artists (egs. Childe Hassam, Adelaide Dering) reacted against modernism but did so by embracing a romanticism influenced by the colonial revival movement
 - subtle modulations of colour and the impressionist techniques of such painting stand in stark contrast with the detail, colours, shapes and styles used by the realist artists of Atlantic Canada



Alex Colville: Boy, Dog and St. John River, 1958



Childe Hassam: Golden Afternoon, 1908

Scale

- the importance of local scale
- in the case of the Atlantic borderland, the space in which border “culturing” took place was, and to a considerable extent, still is, circumscribed by distance
- little evidence of a trans-local fusion of a Maritime or Newfoundland culture with a New England culture taking place either in Boston or most New England communities where Americanization, however defined, proved to be victorious, nor in Atlantic Canada where the number of American-born was so insignificant as to be of any consequence
- however, a meeting of Atlantic Canadian, or at least Maritimes, and New England cultures did take place along the New Brunswick-Maine border
 - it is in this zone that people and communities interact most directly on a daily basis and share an array of interrelated activities and cultural expressions
 - it is the area where, theoretically, the greatest potential exists for cultural overlap, if not cultural hybridization
 - frequent contact generates trans-cultural processes which transcend or mediate cultural differences
 - also important is the fact that people on both sides of the border also face the same environmental conditions which results in shared cultural adaptations and, consequently, similar cultural behaviour

Scale

- **Edward (“Sandy”) Ives**
 - shows how the lumber woods of New Brunswick and Maine fostered a vibrant folksong tradition during the 19th and early 20th centuries
 - music centered on shared themes and referred to specific places and people on both sides of the border
 - shared music promoted a trans-border popular culture which originated in a common Celtic background that transcended regions throughout the eastern part of North America
 - impact of new technologies (radio, television) and changes in the reception and practice of traditional music

Scale

- **the Newfoundland difference**
 - continuing vitality of traditional music
 - American and other “exotic” influences
 - the impact of distance
 - the Canadian discovery of Newfoundland

Madawaska

- the place where cross-border culture is most pronounced
- a unique district in the northeast, a place where Acadians, Québécois, Anglo-Maritimers, primarily from New Brunswick, and Anglo-Americans, primarily from Maine, came together to form a cultural fusion that was clearly different and more distinctive from any other borderland place
- the French “fact”
- Victor Konrad (1991): a combination of a cross-border culture, market forces and trade flows, cross-border political influences and the policy activities of multiple levels of government produced a functional borderland place unmatched elsewhere
- the decline of the French “fact”: the loss of language on the Maine side

St. Stephen and Calais

- **these two communities represent one of the most integrated borderland places within the greater northeastern region**
- **Brandon Dimmel (2010, 2012): shows how residents of these two small lumbering towns crossed the St. Croix River to work, visit, shop and participate in sporting events, festivals and national holidays**
 - **suggests that the relationship between the two communities at the turn of the 20th century represents the borderland model that McKinsey and Konrad (1989) identify as “balanced cultural interaction,” occurring “between comparable centers, especially urban centers with equivalent levels of development**
 - **economic integration resulting from the movement of cross-border labour and capital and illegal goods translated, Dimmel argues, into deep social and cultural connections between St. Stephen, Calais, and the Milltowns**

The Impact of Isolation

- a geographical position characterized by peripherality within and isolation from New England quite possibly made Madawaska and Calais and other Maine towns along the international border more susceptible to influences from Canada in general and from New Brunswick and eastern Québec in particular
- borderland identity and culture is context-dependent; the isolation facing these communities produced some degree of place dependency as well as sense of place and place attachment
- in Madawaska, traditions from different cultures blended together in the same place to create something that did not previously exist
- such mixing was not nearly as evident in Calais-St. Stephen or any other communities within the New Brunswick-Maine borderland zone
- if anything, the landscapes of late capitalism characterized by chain stores and malls, and having very little to do with the unique cultural landscapes of the past in either the Atlantic region or New England, came to dominate

Conclusion

- **did cultural diffusion in the Atlantic borderland produce a hybrid culture that is unique to this part of North America?**
 - my answer is a qualified no
 - little evidence, outside of the Madawaska area, of the emergence of an Atlantic cultural hybrid
 - strong historical, cultural and economic similarities exist
 - over time, American culture in the form of media and consumerism, more often conveying messages and values from outside than from within New England, made increasing inroads into Atlantic Canada but these influences were more than counteracted by the interweaving of a developing national culture and a strongly entrenched regional culture
 - much too simplistic to reduce the Atlantic borderlander to a model based on the cultural anomaly of Madawaska
 - traditional flows and networks that linked Atlantic Canada and New England changed and, to some extent, weakened
 - communications and transportation technologies facilitated cross-border flows but did not necessarily produce greater cultural integration
 - economic and, to a considerable extent, cultural ties between Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada, particularly the centre, increased over time
 - it was within Canada that the Maritimes, and Newfoundland after 1949, chose to delineate their cultural identities; the United States in general, and New England in particular, continued to play a role in this project but it was the region's relationship with Canada that served as the dominant frame of reference