“The Grass Ain’t Greener, The Wine Ain’t Sweeter, Either Side of the Hill”

--Robert Hunter, *Ramble on Rose*

**University of Alberta**

Divided Landscapes: The Emergence and Dissipation of "The Great Divide" Landscape Narrative

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

Department of History and Classics

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Fall 2011
Edmonton, Alberta

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In Memory of Uncle Joe

## ABSTRACT

Heights of land are, in a North American context, geographical boundaries—defined by the division of waters and a certain degree of elevation that sets them apart from the immediate environs. Heights of land are also landscaped places. Indeed, the hegemonic narrative that frames the height of land idea—the intertwined processes of division, separation and opposite movements—is challenged when one applies a measure of literary criticism and the nature of political ecology to the landscape perception. Cultures (and other living systems), move along, across or over the height of land as a matter of course. Heights of land are not simply primordial geographical entities but culturally conditioned ways of making sense of spaces.

This study takes as its starting point the idea that the imposition of a specific Rocky Mountain height of land reading—"The Continental Divide/Great Divide"—was the medium by which social groups expressed relative power over others through spatial practice. The route that this narrative has taken since nationhood reflects the geographic meaning invested by the Canadian state into the process of nation building at the end of the 19th century. In the decades between 1840 and 1900, a specific landscape vision was gradually established and imposed over people who did not necessarily express a similar understanding of the importance of the height of land as a continental-wide boundary making system. The consequences of such an imposition were profound. The "Great Divide" interpretation of the Rocky Mountain height of

land remained predominant through the Second World War, largely as a result of nation building and its attendant processes. The supposed universal consensus of "The Great Divide" established in the wake of this imposition began to fragment, however, as cultural and social groups from both within and outside the region began to challenge the "Great Divide" idea. Indeed, at the dawn of the 21st century, "The Great Divide" idea remains a powerful icon of the Canadian Mountain West, but is now used as an identifiable frame of reference for groups pushing their own interests in ways markedly different from earlier times.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The concern is not where to start but when to finish. My love, my soul mate, my trainer—thank you for being all of these people, Christine. I believe its your turn. To my understanding and patient son Devin: From "read to me Daddy" to reading *to* Daddy. Your honour feather will always guide you. To Duane & Carole—thanks for being there. You two are not just "useful" doctors but pretty exceptional in-laws as well! Mom & Dad: Thanks for bringing me to this place. I couldn't have done it, much less been here, without you! Brent, Harrison & Ashley: I'm still, and will always be in debt to you but remember: I will always wear the Championship belt.

The Ph.D. doesn't come cheap. I would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the Eleanor Luxton Foundation, Province of Alberta, University of Alberta and Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE). The thesis is never really written in complete isolation. I appreciate the assistance offered by the archivists and librarians from the University of Alberta, Whyte Museum, British Columbia Archives, University of Victoria Archives and Red Deer Archives. I would also like to thank the following conference organizers for providing me the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences: Ruperts land 2008, Multiculti 2010, BC Studies—Place and Space 2009, and Under Western Skies 2010.

A special place for my muses—some in Edmonton and some far-flung. Thanks E-town and Alberta friends and mentors—Sarah W., Erik L., Katie P., Lauren W., Roberta L., Melanie N., Doug & Lisa, Anne-Marie & Crew, Brian & Cassandra, Dr. David Marples, Dr. David Johnson, Dr. Carolee Pollock,Dr. Bob Irwin and the unfailing support of Dr. "D." To the Breakfast Club---thanks for sharing the stimulants and inspiring conversations. Finally, a musical thank you to the Good 'Ol Grateful Dead. "Nothing left to do but smile, smile, smile."

In the dissertation business, it is a good thing when remarking that the writing gets done both in spite of, and as a result of, the supervisor. Thank you Gerhard for more than either you or I or anyone else could possibly imagine. You have humbled and strengthened me—sometimes at the same moment. One thousand words could hardly do justice in describing my gratitude. So here are 90,000 (give or take) instead.

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# INTRODUCTION

In his book "The Lost Art of Walking," Geoff Nicholson makes a compelling case for the fundamental connection between walking and writing: "The pace of words is the pace of walking, and the pace of walking is also the pace of thought…you put one foot in front of another; you put one word in front of another." The single step, like the single word, may be one of the most basic acts, Nicholson points out, but if one connects enough of these building blocks, enough steps, enough words, he may find that she's done something special: "The thousand-mile journey starts with the single step; the million-word manuscript starts with a single syllable."[1] Where the word, walk and idea intersect is the place at which my dissertation starts. What follows—in language, thoughts, movement—over the next several chapters is a story in constant transformation.

My years of portaging along and between Precambrian landscapes of rock, water and trees in Ontario & Quebec, and tramping up, through and down cordilleran watersheds in Alberta & British Columbia, have allowed me much time for thinking critically and conceptually—usually at the *end* of the path, mind you, when the heart rate slows, muscles cool, mosquitoes move on/in, and the mind is again at ease. The one recurring notion retained in these places I'm passing through *on the trail*—preceding even those concerned with thirst, fatigue and bears—is a desire to confirm the half-way point, the moment where the energy consumed by the heart & lungs is transferred to the thighs and calves (of course some parts of the body continue to carry the strain). No doubt this spot was not 'half-way' in a quantifiable or tangible sense, but for a body (and mind) under the stress of exertion, what lies ahead is more amenable than what lies

[1] Geoff Nicholson, *The Lost Art of Walking: The History, Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Pedestrianism* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 256. Also see Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin, 2001).

behind. On virtually every hike, and most portages, this *Shangri-la,* or learning moment, is the height of land. No matter if it isn't actually the mid-way mark in space or time, much less a place where waters actually divided from its source. To reach the height of land is to experience a place invested in meaning. In both physical and philosophical realms, the height of land is both an ending and beginning—a liminal zone. The height of land is a tangible place of mutual transformation, mediated by memory, experience and environment—a *landscape*.

My own 'private' height of land is also a public place, mediated by *geographical* abstraction and power relations. Heights of land are places where the present calls upon the past to provide reference, to offer context, in order to shape the future. In other words, a height of land is also 'felt' from afar, especially as a site of narrative meaning. *My* height of land is already documented *on paper*—an abstracted geographical space. Yet, the topographical maps and field guides I carry provide both too much information and not enough. Just as the well-meaning (and better fit) colleague who doubles back to offer assistance to travelling companions becomes more of a hindrance when she rounds up (or down) the distance to an unimaginably short and fanciful one, the map has ways of providing equal doses of frustration and wishful thinking. How one approaches this conundrum of information depends on several factors, including the time of day, sharpness of mind and level of fatigue.

Landscapes and geographies, then, seem to work at opposite ends of the human experience of the height of land but are actually co-constitutive. The argument for the separation of landscape and geography, much like place and space, wilderness and civilization, is complicated by the intermingling of both. Within the realm of the geographical, heights of land become places of cultural meaning—most often as distinctly bounded vessels framed as sites of inclusion & exclusion. Heights of land are, in a North American context, boundaries—defined

by the division of waters and a certain degree of elevation that sets them apart from the immediate environs. Heights of land are also places, however, where geographical fascinations with dividing lines are transcended—much in the same way as those used to compromise bifurcated concepts. Indeed, the hegemonic narrative that frames the height of land idea—the intertwined processes of division, separation and opposite movements—is challenged when one applies a measure of literary criticism and the nature of political ecology to the landscape perception. Cultures (and other living systems), move along, across or over the height of land as a matter of course. Heights of land are not simply primordial geographical entities but culturally conditioned ways of making sense of spaces.

This study discusses the ways in which a particular culturally-conditioned landscape perception is established, imposed, implemented and eventually adopted by various groups for divergent ends. A recognizable sequence of events at each level reflects the ways in which each stage of the process developed. At the initial or established level, the height of land idea became an anthropomorphic landscape at the moment it was transformed into a boundary-making concept. Following in the wake of, and sometimes acting simultaneously with its establishment, the imposition of the height of land boundary making system was facilitated through a host of regimes, including knowledge, cartographic and legislative ones. The implementation of such a geographical landscape came largely through the various means of normalization—in particular various kinds of writing, visual representation and, most importantly, the media. By the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century, a particular manifestation of the height of land idea—“The Great Divide”—had been adopted and increasingly used by various social and cultural groups as a frame of reference for the pursuit of their interests. This and other heights of land which have dominated other landscapes, open a window into the historical geography of North America in

general and Canada in particular.

Three geographical-landscape concepts, somewhat related to each other but also different in crucial respects, inform the general scope of this project. The first concept, the "*height of land*," has a relatively extensive history that transcends the historical and geographical scope of the thesis. The second concept, "*Continental Divide,"* dates back to the early to middle 18th century. The third term, *"Great Divide,"* is more narrowly defined to the Americas during the era of nation building but also has its roots in certain culturally-inflected ways of thinking and abstraction yet still maintaining geographical-landscape roots to the above ideas. The applicability of these three complex concepts to a Canadian context calls for a brief explanation of how these three terms were part of a larger colonial state building process.

The pursuit of geographical knowledge of North America from the mid-18th century on was not just about learning. This process was also about commerce and communication.[2] Nevertheless, employing old world language on to a New World landscape had a profound effect on the historical geography of Canada and the cartographic imagining of the continent in general—in particular the symmetrical drainage[3] and pyramidal configurations[4] of the height of

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[2]John Allen, "To Unite the Discoveries: The American Response to the Early Exploration of Rupert's Land," in Richard C. Davis and Richard I. Ruggles (Eds.), *Rupert's Land: Cultural Tapestry* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), 79-81

[3] Ibid, 81-82. Allen argues that "as early as the 1720s the combination of British theoretical geography and exploration had introduced the concept of symmetrical geography to the North American continent. It was known that the rivers flowing west from the Appalachian into the Mississippi basin had sources relatively close to the Atlantic Ocean where they interlocked with the source water streams heading east to the Atlantic. According to the tenets of symmetrical geography, the same set of conditions should apply on the western margins of the continent. This reasoning on symmetrical drainage divides soon resolved itself into definite views of the nature of western drainage divides, and it was buttressed by experience when Samuel Hearne, one of the oldest British explorers in the Canadian west, told of mountains in the western reaches of the continent, beyond which all the rivers ran westward. Hearne postulated, without seeing it, the Continental Divide, and his notions on the dividing nature of the western range became fixed in British geographical lore during the eighteenth century." Allen posits that the "cartographic representations" of the western interior produced by Hudson Bay Company employee Peter Fidler and Peter Pond of the Northwest Company, in addition to Hearne, would later shape American images of the interior.

[4] Ibid. According to Allen, the concept of a pyramidal height of land, a singular place where all major rivers were sourced, appeared in geographical writing as early as the sixth century, A.D. See John Allen, "American Images of the Louisiana Territory," in James P. Ronda (Ed.), *Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena: University of Montana Press, 1998), fn. 27, p. 56.

land (and Continental Divide) associations which rose to ascendancy in North America by the middle of the 18th century. In 1763, the height of land idea was applied to the boundary making process with the *Royal Proclamation* in the wake of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). The *Proclamation* introduced a British system of governance which recognized that Aboriginal Peoples lived on traditional lands, and that these lands belonged to groups and nations, not individuals. Furthermore, only the Crown could buy or accept Aboriginal lands and an agreement was needed to obtain them. A significant portion of the Proclamation concerned the geographical scope of Britain's North American possessions. The height of land became the primary marker for determining these outer limits. In the area of the Thirteen Colonies, the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains were "reserved" to the Indians as their hunting grounds. The height of land (also called the "Head") and its connection to "dividing" waters figured particularly prominently in determining the Quebec portion of the Proclamation:

> The Government of Quebec bounded on the Labrador Coast by the River St. John, and from thence by a Line drawn from the Head of that River through the Lake St. John, to the South end of the Lake Nipissing; from whence the said Line, crossing the River St. Lawrence, and the Lake Champlain, in 45. Degrees of North Latitude, passes along the High Lands which divide the Rivers that empty themselves into the said River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Sea; and also along the North Coast of the Baye des Châleurs, and the Coast of the Gulph of St. Lawrence to Cape Rosières, and from thence crossing the Mouth of the River St. Lawrence by the West End of the Island of Anticosti, terminates at the aforesaid River of St. John.[5]

In short order controversies would arise over determining the exact location of the "High Lands" that apparently "divide[d]" these waters.

Constructing "Continental Divides" through the height of land was no less clear. In western North America, where the mountains and rivers came together to form the "divide" that parted the continental waters, explain this divide proved to be both contentious and

[5] http://www.bloorstreet.com/200block/rp1763.htm#2 (accessed May 31, 2011)

contradictory.[6] Few of the geographies presented the divide as one created by the existence of a major mountain range that ran the length of the continent. A more common view, if a much less accurate one, was that of a drainage divide in the form of a pyramidal height of land, or upland plateau from which rivers flowed in several directions and which, for many geographers, did not take the form of a mountain range at all but was represented as a level and extensive plains region lying between more mountainous regions to the north and south. At the turn of the century, according to geographer John Allen, "the drainage divide between eastward and westward flowing streams need not be a range of mountains but might just as well be a high plateau, an area of extensive plains, a theoretical "height of land." Determining the exact nature and location of the height of land was not merely an abstract intellectual exercise. There was immense utilitarian value to this landscape. For the ever hopeful early 19th century explorer, "if the heads of the Missouri and Columbia were in the same area, and if that area were a level upland rather than a mountain barrier, then only a short and easy portage would be necessary to link the seas of the East and West and bring all the commerce of the Orient to the republic.[7] This supposition was still largely in the realm of the hypothetical. As Allen points out, "The Rockies, Shining Mountains, or Stoney Mountains were there, but their size, extent and nature as a continental divide were not understood."[8]

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[6] Allen has pointed out that the pyramidal height of land idea was "applied to North America by the Canadian and French and appeared in geographical lore in the United States through the travel accounts of Jonathan Carver." In this geographical imaging, the geographer John Pinkerton could state that "the four most capital rivers on the continent of North America, viz., THE ST. LAWRENCE, THE MISSISSIPPI, THE RIVER BOURBON [NELSON], AND THE OREGAN [COLUMBIA], have their sources in the same neighbourhood…within thirty miles of each other." By the early years of the 19th century, the concept was widely used—even after the pyramidal height of land theory was eventually discarded. Allen, p. 56. For more on the pyramidal height of land idea see Allen, "Pyramidal height of Land: A Persistent Myth in the Exploration of Western Anglo-America," *International Geography,* Volume 1 (1972), 395-396.
[7] Allen, p. 44.
[8] Ibid.

It was not only the nature of the height of land comprising the western Continental Divide that was little known. The *Treaty of Paris* ending the American Revolutionary War in 1783 set about to definitively establish the boundaries of the new republic. The Second Article of the treaty attempted to clarify boundaries through the height of land system:

> from the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, viz., that angle which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of St. Croix River to the highlands; along the said highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean…[9]

Neither *The Treaty of Ghent (1814)* concluding the War of 1812 nor the arbitration of the King of the Netherlands two decades later could resolve the question of the international height of land boundary. The issue seemed to be one grounded by the challenges in determining exact location but in 1841 the question of the supposed consensus of the 'Highland'-division *language* surfaced in *The Quarterly Review*—a British journal. In the 40-page essay, the authors challenged the American position voiced by Albert Gallatin, principal US negotiator at Ghent and American ambassador to London, which placed the US border apparently beyond (i.e. further north) the Highlands separating the waters. The article's importance did not necessarily rest so much on the geopolitical argument as it did in the way in which it engaged with the language inherent in the 'Highland' idea. At the core of the interminable boundary conflict, the essay argued, was not what Gallatin had labeled "tedious detail," but rather, "innate and intrinsic complexity—the extreme difficulty of reconciling the vague and ambiguous terms of a clumsy description, to the unknown or disputed features of an unknown tract of country." The American government perceived this incongruency in different terms than their British counterparts:

> Although the British government did not adopt this new system of philology…the Americans did; and have even gone so far as to state 'that the word "Highlands" was judiciously selected, as applicable to any

[9] http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/paris.shtml (accessed May 31, 2011)

> ground, whatever might be its nature or elevation; along which a dividing line should be found to pass…highlands (sic) which divide rivers, and height of land, are synonymous…Mr. Gallatin endeavours to prove his philological position by showing, what is quite true, that a portion of the country admitted on both sides to be part of *the Highlands* had been called, in various maps and topographical writings, '*height of land,' 'height of the land,' 'land's height'*; and gives two instances of other lands in North America whence rivers flow opposite ways, being by travellers called *'high lands*.' We admit all this, but what does it prove?—only this, that one may reasonably apply the term '*height of land'* to Highlands; but by no means that you may apply the generic description of *'Highlands'* to a *'height of land:'* a mountainous region involves the idea of a *height of land*, but a height of land does not involve the necessity of a mountainous region. [original italics][10]

Where the British sought clarification of language before staking claims, the Americans had no such compunction.

The British-American contestation over terminology belied the common singular objective of crafting a sense of order out of perceived chaos. It is within this colonial context that both the height of land and the Continental Divide could be conflated into one in the name of knowledge and possession. Watersheds were ascribed capital only insofar as they furthered the continental aims of both powers—proving durable as a way of framing North American political geography which places the nation state as a *continental* body. The relatively recent establishment of environmental history, however, compels one to explore the cultural landscape of the height of land/Continental Divide from a different angle and scale. In this framework, individuals situated in specific locations produce different interpretations of a common area. Further, the physical world has greater agency in affecting these perceptions. Working from these connected paradigms, a more local and regional approach allows one to examine these

[10] *Quarterly Review*, Vol. LXVII (December 1840-March 1841), 503-41. Also see Francis Carroll, *A Good and Wise Measure: The Search for the Canadian-American Boundary, 1783-1842* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 5, 47-48.

cultural landscapes in more detail and specificity, and to analyse the interaction between colonialism, landscape, and geography.

This study takes as its starting point the idea that the imposition of a specific Rocky Mountain reading—"The Great Divide"—was the medium by which social groups expressed relative power over others through spatial practice. The route that this narrative has taken since nationhood reflects the geographic meaning invested by the Canadian state into the process of nation building at the end of the $19^{th}$ century. In the decades between 1840 and 1900, a specific landscape vision was gradually established and imposed over people who did not necessarily express a similar understanding of the importance of the height of land as a continental-wide boundary making system. The consequences of such an imposition were profound. The "Great Divide" interpretation of the Rocky Mountain height of land remained predominant through the Second World War, largely as a result of nation building and its attendant processes. The supposed universal consensus of "The Great Divide" established in the wake of this imposition began to fragment, however, as cultural and social groups from both within and outside the region began to challenge the "Great Divide" idea. Indeed, at the dawn of the 21st century, "The Great Divide" idea remains a powerful icon of the Canadian Mountain West, but is now used as an identifiable frame of reference for groups pushing their own interests in ways markedly different from earlier times.

The motivations and perceptual processes that anchor the process of establishment, imposition and acceptance of a particular landscape's prominence are discussed throughout this study. Heights of land remain significant signposts in the collective historical memory of boundary making in Canada. International, interprovincial, regional and treaty boundaries are determined, to one degree or another, through height of land abstractions. The height of land

that defines the Atlantic/Pacific/Arctic watersheds, however, is certainly one of the more evocative icons in a collection of boundary narratives that stretches from sea to sea. Height of landscapes may be accepted as universally significant spaces of representation in Canadian historical geography, but are hardly neutral spaces. The question of treaty boundary arguments, and the way heights of land have been conceptualized to rationalize power relations into a quantifiable space, are two such examples. Conceptualizing (and bounding) a space to construct a universal reality reveals a culturally-inflected way of abstracting or simplifying what is actually a much more complex and transitory ecological process.

The Rocky Mountain "Great Divide" height of land is not composed of one singular object, line or process somehow isolated or separated from others. The height of land is not necessarily composed of objects and materials easily discerned from a map or simply extrapolated at an experiential level. Indeed, the Rocky Mountain height of land contains elements as far flung as the Prairies and the foothills. This landscape is also a product of geological and atmospheric pressures. The moisture that is such an integral part of the height of land also varies in different places, depending largely on whether one is facing west or east, north or south. Finally, both the time of day and year could alter significantly the height of land ecology. Nonetheless, as a matter of course the height of land boundary system is used to freeze a landscape and parse it from all the above ecological processes. Whether one tends towards a certain landscape meaning or another, then, one is engaged in a selective intellectual exercise that privileges certain perceptions and sensations in time and space by foregrounding specific components of ecosystems as wholes—as entities or sets of things that somehow mask others. The primacy of place given to the height of land seems to pay little or no heed to the parallel 'realities' of animal migration along game trails, and vegetation change across altitudes, that

transcend spatial-temporal landscapes such as heights of land. The regenerative process created by fire is another way of conceptualizing landscapes that may not necessarily be bound by the formulaic, contrived rhythms of time and month. Since periodic human migration through these places is part of the landscape, other 'maps of the mind' constellating around different experiences and emotions may also exist.

Heights of land, then, are both geographical and landscaped. Perceiving the Rocky Mountain height of land *as cultural construct*, however, compels one to reconsider how such a landscape has been taken for granted as a matter of course in the historiography. Other common physical features—oceans, lakes, islands, peninsulas, mountain peaks, to name a few—exist as important markers, and the literature devoted to them is abundant. In the Canadian context, however, the height of land idea has been largely unexplored despite its proven durability in the nation's historical geography as a system of boundary imposition.

In keeping with the guiding argument that geography and landscape are co-constitutive, the geographical scope of this thesis is defined through a combination of culturally-specific and bioregional-watershed terms to encompass the entire northwest/southeasterly Rocky Mountain height of land, a place encompassing the U.S./Canada border through to the Yellowhead Pass and headwaters of the Athabasca River, thence turning northwesterly into the area encompassing the western boundary of Treaty 8. This series of interlocking watersheds, though one that has meant different things at different times for different people, nonetheless remains a definitive space in the human history of the Rocky Mountains.

Given that this study is not primarily revisionist, but rather ventures into relatively unexplored territory which historians have not much addressed, a survey of the existing literature focuses on where this project is going rather than where other historians have trod. One would be

remiss, however, in viewing this situation as an example of ambivalence and/or indifference towards historiography. A study of this kind must draw upon an abundance of scholarship which frames specific questions, methods and approaches. Of particular note are those works that reveal, through their general acceptance in the field, an orthodoxy that suggest new approaches are necessary. The four areas of historical scholarship discussed in this section are Borderland, Rocky Mountain, Indigenous and Theoretically-Informed literature.

Although heights of land are significant in Canadian historical geography as constituting borders, they have largely remained outside the scope of western-Canadian borderland studies. In the past decade and a half, the nature and meaning of the 49th parallel has become an entry point for revisionist history discussing the place of gender, race and class in western Canadian and United States history. With some notable exceptions,[11] the application of historical geography to borderland studies has demonstrated a general orientation framed by the twin narratives of human boundaries and policy implementation. For example, of 19 essays in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests,* only Ted Binnema, Lisa Wadewitz and Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands present essays that take into account the symbiosis of state and environment. By largely omitting environmental considerations, scholars such as David McCrady, Sheila McManus, Michael Hogue and Jeremy Adelman & Stephen Aron have chosen to privilege human history over a more integrated and ecological narrative.[12] The roots for this

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[11] Ted Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*: *A Human and Environmental History of the Northwesat Plains*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Gerhard Ens, "The Border, the Buffalo, and the Metis of Montana," in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History and the Forty-ninth Parallel*, ed. Sterling Evans. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

12 Jeremy Adelmen and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review*, 104, no. 3 (June 1999), 814-841. Michel Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-1885," in *One West/Two Myths: A Comparative Reader,* eds. Carol Higham and Robert Thacker (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004). Michel Hogue, "Crossing the Line: Race, Nationality, and the Deportation of the 'Canadian' Crees in the Canada-U.S. Borderlands, 1890-1900," in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History and the Forty-ninth Parallel*, ed. Sterling Evans. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

imbalance reflect the continuing preponderance of authority that the north-south axis of the 49th parallel implies. For example, *The Line Which Separates*,[13] Sheila McManus' study of the construction of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands, is an important contribution to the contingencies of race and gender in the construction of both nations' borders. Nevertheless, the (re)interpretation of the western Canadian and US history through a north/south axis seems to be an ornamental corrective to the east-west axis that came with the frontier thesis. This geographical approach leaves little room for alternative versions of 'the lay of the land' felt in the valleys, mountain ranges, rivers and settlements. Most importantly, the borderlands approach is still wrapped up in the conventional practice of privileging the integrity of contiguous nation state boundaries over internal ones.

In some instances, anti-models held some promise as correctives to the east-west/north south discourse, indicative of the frontier-to-borderlands thesis transformation. In a 1999 publication, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron argued rather strenuously that "as colonial borderlands gave way to national borders, fluid and "inclusive" intercultural frontiers yielded to hardened and more "exclusive" hierarchies." Adelman and Aron wanted to correct a situation whereby "too often, students of borderlands neglect the power politics of territorial hegemony…we seek to disentangle frontiers from borderlands to rescue the virtues of each construct." By reconfiguring (but not abandoning) both frontier and borderland interpretations, Adelman and Aron were inadvertently exposing the limitations of the binding dualism that marked Eurocentric linear discourse (north/south-east/west) as well as the predominance of the

David McCrady, *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. John Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen, "Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays," (Response to Adelman and Aron) *American Historical Review*, 104, no. 4 (October 1999).

[13] Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005).

spatial over the lived experience of place. In any case, reconfiguring borderland and frontier interpretations is, above all, an example of "old wine in new bottles." Eurocentric-inflected linear interpretations, much like Eurocentric-inflected linear thinking, are grounded by a relatively strict chronology and causation, a form of thinking framed by subject/object logic with little concern for impediments (alternatives?) to the trajectories of orderly progression or disorderly decay. Geographical perception is privileged over landscape intuition. Challenging both borderland *and* frontier interpretations is one of the intended results of this study.

This project argues for the expansion of North America borderland studies to include those that do not currently conform to the transnational regions: Inter-Provincial and Trans-Treaty boundaries are two such examples. The Rocky Mountain height of land is not simply the North American segment of the mountainous ridge bisecting watersheds that drain into the Pacific from those that flow into the Atlantic. The height of land is also an ecological commons, a place where water remains outside the scope of commodification but downstream is increasingly subject to market control.[14] As *place*, the water, rock and vegetation have come to be represented by cartographic, photographic and material imagery; a political and social zone of interaction, integration, accommodation and resistance. "The Great Divide" landscape reflects questions of power as much as it reveals how modern society configures such a landscape. How the inclusion/exclusion bifurcation has been perpetrated through the process of imposing the Rocky Mountain "Great Divide" height of land is a significant component of this study.

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[14]Mark Fiege, "Private Property and the Ecological Common in the American West," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J. B. Jackson*, ed. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 219-31, 343-46; Ann Vileisis, *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands* (Washington: Island Press, 1997), 5-6.

On a more prosaic level, virtually no literature on the iconography of the Rocky Mountain height of land has been written in several decades,[15] a rather odd lacuna given the immense wealth of documentation; relevant written, oral and material sources exist throughout the history of the human experience in the mountains. Within the Rocky Mountains proper, most environmental histories focus on the cultural construction of wilderness with its accompanying programs of dislocation, commodification and species eradication (and protection). This literature has demonstrated beyond a doubt the problematic and complex nature of the so-called 'wilderness debate.' Nevertheless, with a couple notable exceptions,[16] a history of cultural landscape perception in the mountains has been noticeably absent. Literature on the Great Divide *idea,* meanwhile, has been largely subsumed by general Rocky Mountain histories and its attendant themes. Indeed, several works that carry "The Great Divide" title are misleading given that there is little, if any, discussion of the etymology of the idea itself. Other books suggestive of the "Backbone of the World" metaphor are strictly hiking and/or photo books with little by way of textual narrative.[17] Employing such ideas as thematic framing devices, whether geographical or landscape oriented, are important ways of acknowledging not just how one perceived the height of land, but the cultural influences that imposed (or challenged) the idea, and the embodied experiences that shaped (or conformed to) such a concept. How one viewed

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[15] James N. Wallace, *The Passes of the Rocky Mountains Along the Alberta Boundary* (Calgary: Calgary Historical Society, 1927). For more on overland trails and encounters in colonial United States see Philip Levy, *Fellow Travelers: Indians and Europeans Contesting the Early American Trail (*Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007) and Michael Tate, *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trails (*Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

[16] Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-1870* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Ian Maclaren, ed., *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007); Julie Cruikshank*, Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, & Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press: 2005); Claire Campbell*, Shaped By the West Wind: Nature & History in Georgian Bay* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Jared Farmer, *On Zions Mount: Mormons, Indians and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[17] Gary Ferguson, *The Great Divide: The Rocky Mountains in the American Mind* (New York: Norton & Company, 2004); Robert Kershaw, *Exploring the Castle: Discovering the Backbone of the World in Southern Alberta (*Vancouver: Rocky Mountain Books, 2008); Michael Robbins, *High Country Trail: Along the Great Divide* (Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society, 2001).

the land, from afar, near *and* within could be markedly different. Consequently, this project must necessarily draw upon related sources in cultural geography, anthropology and literature in order to present a more comprehensive picture.

Until quite recently, written histories of indigenous experiences that considered the nexus of cultural landscape, systems of knowledge, and the Rocky Mountain west were few. Aboriginal landscape histories, though insightful, have rarely discussed ongoing and *changing* perceptions, choosing instead to draw upon those areas of displacement as a consequence of the creation of national/provincial parks, wilderness areas, ecological zones, etc.[18] Histories about Indian Treaties have focused largely on policy.[19] Nevertheless, several shorter case studies have proven beneficial in providing intellectual direction as anti-models to the literature. Ted Binnema's paper on disjuncture between aboriginal and European mapping in the early 19th century provides important clues on the intersections of landscape and geography with their inherent multiple meanings.[20] The ethno-historical works of Calvin Martin, Hugh Brody and Paul Nadasdy have also shed light on indigenous cosmologies and territoriality.[21]

The insights offered in various theoretically grounded disciplines such as cultural geography and anthropology demonstrate what was implied at the outset of this section: The

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[18] Peter Nabokov, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); *Susan Buggey, An Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes* http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/r/pca-acl/index_e.asp; Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape & Language among the Western Apache*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

[19] Frank Tough, *As their Natural Resources Fail : Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930 (*Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996); Carter, Hildebrandt & Rider, Eds., *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (*Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Ray, Miller & Tough, Eds., *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Jill St. Germain, *Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[20] Theodore Binnema, "How Does a Map Mean? Old Swan's Map of 1801 and the Blackfoot World," in eds. Binnema, Ens & Macleod, *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John Foster* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 201-224.

[21] Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978);* Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams : Indians and the British Columbia Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981); Paul Nadasdy, *Hunters & Bureaucrats: Power. Knowledge and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon (*Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003).

necessity of an interdisciplinary approach. For example, Matthew Sparke's study of mapping and narratives of nation building is a helpful historical geography.[22] Julie Cruikshank's latest publication, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, & Social Imagination* is an important work that engages some of the issues this study addresses—the attempt to imagine and write about the interaction of First Nations, Euro-Canadians, and sentient environments.

I have oriented my dissertation around *two* general framing questions. First, I wish to discuss how local indigenous and Euro-Canadian communities experienced the Rocky Mountains during a time of transformation: economic, social, and environmental. I propose to analyze how the abstract *geographical* process of naming, classifying and inscribing physical structure(s) affected the way the land was 'felt'; that is to say, how a place affects us, the viewers – affects us not only socially or politically but also *experientially.*[23] Whether perceived as "The Continental Divide," "The Backbone of the Continent" or "The Great Divide," as *forms of representation*, the Rocky Mountain height of land geography cannot be separated from the landscape it is a part of. The phenomenologist Edward Casey argues that "the truth is that *representation is not a contingent matter, something merely secondary; it is integral to the perception of landscape itself – indeed, part of its being and essential to its manifestation.* [Original italics]."[24] As a form of representation, "The Great Divide," like any geographical representation concerning the physical world, necessarily revealed an element of political culture framed by issues of class, gender and race (among other human concerns). When experienced directly, the meanings given to these abstractions (known as *"modes of representation"*) came to

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[22] Matthew Sparke, "The Map that Roared and an Original Atlas: Canada, Cartography and the Narrative of Nation," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), 463-495.
[23] Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xvi.
[24] Ibid., xv

have a profound effect on historical memory both collectively and individually. In other words, modes of representation could also be more bodily than mental.[25]

The second framing question of this study is how the construct of the Great Divide has been used to normalize specific human organizational relations of inclusion & exclusion. This cultural project of modernity, which includes the apprehension of reality as distinct from how it appears to subjective consciousness, and the attempt to master this reality (nature),[26] is central to this study.

The height of land/Great Divide narratives analysed here sprawl across two provincial boundaries, a half-dozen national parks, several provincial parks & wilderness areas, in addition to the headwaters of several watersheds and numerous passes, some of which are national historic sites. The height of land also shares a contiguous boundary with the western limit of Treaties Seven & Eight. It also serves as a wildlife corridor and ecological space. All of these cultural boundaries are, to one degree or another, products of the physical world, and the myriad elements that comprise these places are in constant change. How the geopolitical world is shaped by this flux calls for new methods lines of inquiry. This dissertation challenges both the specialist and lay reader to re-conceptualize a particular way of creating and understanding a sense of place that has used the constituted hydrological system in general, and the binaries inherent in the division of the waters east and west specifically, towards creating consensus.

A wealth of diverse sources – commissioned reports, court records, correspondence, maps, material culture, and newspaper reports – as well as selected unpublished and published histories have been consulted to illustrate how systems of knowledge have been used to make

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[25] Ibid., xvi

[26] This understanding of the cultural project of modernity is influenced by Martin Heidegger's ideas. See Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 103-111.

'sense' of the land. Local First Nation stories found in documents, in particular those provided by the mountain Stoney at the Whyte Museum Archives and a published collection held at the University of Alberta library, were indispensable sources. In addition, travel narratives and scientific explorations have been consulted to illustrate how overland trails and mountains that shared the height of land were perceived. Select Annual Reports of the *Geological Survey of Canada* (GSC) and the Inter-*provincial Boundary Commission* (1913-1924) are fascinating examples of the application of science to create a positivistic interpretation of the height of land. Finally, overland routes—on the water in addition to the land – over time and in their entirety reveal particular understandings of place. Routes, like maps, are texts and also places of encounter.[27]

The archives at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies located at Banff, Alberta and Royal Archive of British Columbia housed in the Provincial Museum at Victoria, BC contain a vast array of published and unpublished primary sources across the spectrum. The Whyte Museum also houses a large photographic collection of passes and monuments along the height of land. These photos offer intriguing examples of how image and ceremony combined could be used to establish a normative narrative. The *Alpine Club of Canada* (ACC) sources, in particular its yearly journal, is rich in detailing the importance of the height of land and its passes. Accessing stories about the yearly "Great Divide Summer Camp" and the huts along the height of land offered the potential to pursue new lines of inquiry with respect to the narrative generated by the establishment of seasonal ritual and the permanency established by structures situated at or near "The Great Divide." ACC camps and huts were symbols not just of class-

[27] Kent C. Ryden, "Tuttle Road: Landscape as Environmental Text," in eds. Melody Graulich & Paul Crumbley, *The Search for a Common Language: Environmental Writing and Education* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 89-101; Tate, *Indians and Emigrants*; Levy, *Fellow Travelers*; and Ted Binnema, "How Does a Map Mean?"

based leisure but conveyed particular messages, framed by the notions of challenge & conquer. Indeed, much mention is made of the symbolic association between various huts in the wider context of associative landscapes. These built dwellings go beyond mere representation—however illuminating this is—and become important examples of how the human world interacts with a place-based environment. In addition, the National Parks and Luxton Family collections – both housed at the Whyte Museum – also contain sources that illustrate the cultural significance of "The Great Divide" to the state and tourist industries. These materials, when viewed through the lens of cultural history, allow historical geographers to carefully consider the interplay between landscape and human action (or inaction). Finally, the papers of The Great Divide Trail Project, also housed at the Whyte Museum, are useful for discussing how route making is both a geographical and landscape process. The Red Deer Archives were instrumental in researching the history of the Howse Pass Highway Project, an ill-fated attempt to link Red Deer with Golden, B.C. across the height of land.

The Departments of Indians Affairs (RG10) and Interior (RG15) Records were also used to examine the interaction and communications between indigenous groups and governments (not to mention inter-governmental and inter-tribal interactions as well). In particular, internal correspondence found in these records is crucial to examining discourses surrounding boundary making, trans-mountain hunting territories, and treaty making. At the Royal B.C. Museum, a large volume of documentation concerning the boundary question in Treaty 8, which centred around the confusion of what constituted the "Central Range" of the Rockies, was beneficial in facilitating the necessary comparing and contrasting of intercultural and interband conflict in the late 19$^{th}$ century which continues to this day. Provincial, federal and band statements of claim in on-going Treaty Eight litigation detail how local indigenous communities continue to interpret

mountain and watershed boundaries. These records are useful as public policy documents—a seamless and detailed record that provides an opportunity to see how the place-based world is not immune to political machination. These discussions are also immeasurable as a wedge into observing the interactions of large scale geographical and small-scale landscape sensibilities at the same place.

From the foregoing discussion it should be clear that an attempt was made to consult a broad range of sources relating to the Rocky Mountain heights of land and the Great Divide, but I should also make clear that my method of analysis has not been focused on an even-handed weighing of these sources to arrive at an empirical notion of knowledge or truth. Rather I have read and analysed selected primary sources (boundary commission reports and diaries, the Alpine Club of Canada Journal, thematically organized Department of Indian Affairs files and others) as narratives or literary texts to reveal how the concepts of the height of land and Great Divide were imposed on a geography, and how these concepts operated to normalize a particular set of power relations and construct a modern state. The best way of conceptualizing the imposition, accommodation and reconfiguring of the height of land/ Great Divide is thus to see it as "a story of stories,"—continuously subject to processes as its constituent components are in constant movement.

As such, this study argues for a *voice-as-process* approach: a moment when colonial and indigenous communities engaged in a complex negotiation of the meaning of place.[28] Concurrently, this approach offers an integrated way to come to terms with specific narratives of imposition, inclusion/exclusion and adoption that simultaneously created spaces of accommodation and resistance. Taking the height of land as a 'natural' hydro-geological place, land surveyors and cartographers constructed provincial political boundaries that were

[28] Lizbeth Bryant, *Voice as Process* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton & Cook), 2005

supposedly logical, *naturalizing* the geography in the process. Regional First Nations, however, interpreted such elemental features rather differently, drawing upon reciprocal relationships as well as oral traditions and a different reading of the land and water to transcend these boundaries. In so doing, this dissertation also transcends boundaries, attempting to fashion new narratives located in intellectual, social and environmental history. This type of study is important. Any argument that questions the hegemony of provincial boundaries in the larger context of geography and landscape also throws light on the nature of the complex relationships between First Nations communities and their federal & provincial counterparts. Further, a study of this kind challenges the reader to consider inter-tribal relations on the ground during a period of intense social and environmental change. Indeed, the sources demonstrate the complex forces at play between and across Aboriginal bands and settler societies that reveal competing claims transcending "The Great Divide" height of land narrative of the Canadian state.

This type of analysis calls for a complimentary method of organization. This thesis is organized along both thematic (synchronic) and chronological (diachronic) lines. More precisely, each chapter is presented as a case study with its own "built-in" chronology. Molding the trajectory of this idea are the somewhat intertwined processes of establishment, imposition, implementation and adoption. The consequences of these processes can be perceived in political and social terms, but there is also a measure of continuity & change in the intertwined processes of geography and landscape. Organizing the thesis along chronological and thematic lines allows for a more flexible narrative that takes into account the different interpretations of past events and places, and their multiple meanings.

The first chapter addresses the period 1891-1905 when the Canadian state began to impose its height of land perception in codifying the interprovincial boundary defined by the

height of land idea. Defining the scope of inclusion and exclusion through the alignment of this boundary with hunting territories was the medium of this codification. The Kootenay (Kootenay), Shuswap (Secwepemc) and Stoney (Nakoda) people inhabiting the valleys and foothills enveloping the height of land were affected by this course. Stoney "incursions" into Kootenay and Shuswap territory over the mountains (mainly through Elk and Kananaskis Passes) to hunt big game created a flurry of correspondence between the Federal Office of Indian Affairs at Fort Steele, B.C. and their colleague/counterparts in Regina and Ottawa. Drawing upon the parallel oral testimonies of Stoney and Kootenay leaders to Indian Affairs officials in B.C. and NWT/AB, this section details how local indigenous and Euro-Canadian communities negotiated the meaning of the height of land as part of a larger geographical and landscape discourse. Theoretically-informed issues constellating around the moral geography of place frame this chapter. By the late 1890s, the contact zones of both settler and First Nations communities along the foothills and slopes of the southern Canadian Rockies were defined largely by questions of territoriality, reciprocity and change in animal migration routes. The area bound by the foothills to the east and the Rocky Mountain Trench to the west were also common and contested grounds, both between *and among* indigenous groups and Euro-Canadian governments (federal and provincial). The height of land, as an important land mark, became a central concern as the need to define its place *as a natural boundary* would determine questions of territory. The federal government determined that the most effective method to ensuring order was to control the hunt along this line.

All parties demonstrated a concern with maintaining peace and order. During this half-decade, the height of land *partly* defined the place where overlapping Kootenay, Stoney and Shuswap territories converged with Euro-Canadian territorial discourses. This contestation

culminated in a written agreement that eschewed the imposition of any so-called *fixed* dividing line along the height of land for one that maintained the liminality and reciprocity inherent in earlier hunting grounds. Six years later, however, when the controversy returned (1901-1905), the discourse changed radically from one rooted in dialogue to that of property legislation and its associated notions of exclusivity and inclusiveness. Furthermore, the controversy took on a class and race based lens when the interests of sport hunters took hold. In addition, the revival of the notion of a fixed height of land boundary apparently defined through precise scientific topographical and hydro-geological measurement of the mountains become a flash point of resistance as the Stoney continued to use the passes to follow game into British Columbia. Consequently, several visions seemed to both overlap and *blend* into one another. This case study demonstrates the confusions that can arise when an abstract geographical idea is enmeshed with landscape visions and imposed on others.

The next chapter is a study of the motives and survey methodologies of the Alberta-B.C. Inter-Provincial Boundary Commission between the 49th parallel and the 120th meridian (1913-1924). In a crucial way, the Commission was the means by which the impositions (through hunting regulations) of the height of land idea in the 1890s were carried through to implementation in the twin processes of knowledge acquisition and cartography. The mandate of the Commission was based on the idea that the "Great Divide" height of land was merely in need of being 'revealed' in order to legitimize it as a bordered (i.e. interprovincial) landscape. Three published volumes (with accompanying maps) detail how the Commission approached and carried out its work. By way of case study, this chapter discusses the Commission's work on several of the major passes that traversed the height of land, including the intersection of the 120th parallel and the height of land—the spot where the interprovincial boundary takes leave of

the height of land and continues north along the parallel. A close, theoretically-informed reading of the Commission's work demonstrates the complex interplay between the disembodied orientation of textually based geographical work and the embodied aspect of experientially-inflected work in the field. The monuments and maps crafted by the Commission served to inscribe the land as *naturalized* places but it was the task of the Commission itself to erect these markers. This chapter shows that the Commission's work was a study in both geographical and landscape imaginations.

The Interprovincial Boundary Commission work was implemented at the same time alpine tourism blossomed as a social and class structured means of distinction. The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) was an integral part of the movement that ensured a level of acquiesance to the 'civilized' structured urban experience when engaging with the unruly wilderness. Literature is rich in discussing the motivational factors surrounding the ACC, its organization and early years as a mountaineering club. This chapter explores two important components of the ACC and its symbiotic relationship with the "Great Divide" height of land as place—the annual summer camps and huts. Yearly "Great Divide" summer camps between 1906 and 1920 were, with few exceptions, situated astride or in close proximity to passes that traversed the height of land. The summer camps were invested with immense importance, on account of its location and 'staging ground' for climbing expeditions further afield. These gatherings were both symbolic and experiential where the mores and expectations of 'civilization' were expected to be recreated in 'wilderness.' The ACC camps and huts, as geographically conceived places, were extensions of class and social appropriation over naturalized areas. These places were also highly symbolic (and as normalized places, formulaic) located astride the continental height of land.

The symbolic easily leapt from the material-physical to the conceptual and rhetorical. The following chapter traces the importance of "The Great Divide" in collective historical memory – in photos, literature, movies as well national historic sites and tourist spots—as an indispensable component to the consumption of such a landscape. The adoption of the Great Divide as a 'naturalized' place in the early years of the 20th century had become serious business. Scientific applications towards learning the constituted hydrological processes of North America, and the place of the transcontinental height of land in such a process, were gradually elaborated upon to include the interests of state capitalism. Images of empire, nation and God accompanied the Canadian Pacific Railway, and later, Banff-Windermere Highway, when these respective projects crossed the transcontinental height of land. Much effort (and capital) was put into conveying the significance of "The Great Divide" as one crossed over and through it. What remained unclear, however, was how various individuals and communities, as tourists and captain of industry, as well as those outside the realms of industrial capital & government, would experience and perceive these same images. Adoption of the height of land idea did not necessarily imply a common perception of the hierarchy of such a place—already established to different degrees through legislation, cultural consumption or appropriation of indigenous voice—even if there was a level of acquiesance through normalization. Local First Nations, immigrants, industrial workers, and wildlife all had different ways and means of negotiating such places. Post-World War II depictions of "The Great Divide" demonstrated a much more complicated relationship people had with their environments and each other. Writers like Howard O'Hagan and Sid Marty, as well as visual artists like Harold Town, tapped in to this discussion with profound and provocative works.

The seemingly different (in motivation) but similar (in result) story of the post-War ill-fated Howse Pass Highway Proposal and Great Divide Trail Project (GDTP) is the basis of discussion for the next chapter. (Re) connecting to places through route making was an increasingly popular method of historical commemoration—regardless of motivation or method. In foregrounding the height of land into their respective visions, project boosters hoped for a seamless transition from concept to construction but quickly realized that a landscape of this kind evoked emotion. The movement to establish additional height of land crossings, regardless of method, seemed to illustrate the challenges that arise when the construction and *consumption of* either an economic arterial or recreational/leisure route whose primary purpose is to serve the interests of a narrow cross-section of Canadian society are transferred from conception to realization. A very different height of land-framed route like the Fireweed Trail in Kootenay National Park provides a different window into the ways in which such landscapes take on different meanings when they become re-defined.

The final chapter could easily have been the first in its interchangeability of geography and landscape; the height of land idea continues to confound aboriginal/state relations to this day. The controversy surrounding what defines the central range/height of land of the Rockies, and how this abstraction created more confusion than clarity in the interpretation of the boundary of Treaty 8, is the focus of the final section. Deliberations over what constituted the appropriate limits of Treaty 8 territory and the 'natural' boundaries between the groups in Treaty 8, continue to be complex matters with respect to the implementation and interpretation of the treaty. This section will illustrate the confusion over watersheds, divides and boundaries, and how these questions were not trivial matters. Questions of land, knowledge and power with respect to boundary making in Treaty Eight have already been explored. Nevertheless, a discussion of how

interpretations of Treaty Eight continue to be conflicted suggests that the search for a new narrative of mountain-water landscape continues today. The past, present and future of Treaty Eight also speaks to the questions of naming, classifying and inscribing physical geographical features—only different in degrees from the height of land debates in the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris.

The overall goal of this study is to demonstrate the complexities & contingencies of prioritizing places and the trajectories that follow in the transition from imposition to adoption. Ultimately, this study challenges readers to consider the consequences of grafting culturally-specific anthropocentric world views on to geophysical spaces. This project also considers the rhetoric of language: When applied as a metaphor describing the irreversible differences (and binding dualisms) between and among genders, religions, cultures, political ideologies, economic systems, etc., the 'Great Divide' idea has the power to become a convenient and potentially destructive self-fulfilling prophecy. As place, however, such blanket descriptors are rarely self-evident for long. The same geographical-landscape discourse should apply to the ways in which we describe apparently incorrigible human relations.

# CHAPTER ONE

## “ON THIS SIDE OF THE WATERSHED”: THE MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF INDIGENOUS & EURO-CANADIAN HUNTING LANDSCAPES IN THE EAST KOOTENAYS, 1891-1905.

The North Saskatchewan River Crossing interpretive walk, located on the Icefields Parkway just north of the spot where the continental river begins its long, meandering journey east towards Edmonton, Saskatoon and, eventually, the Nelson River Basin on to Hudson Bay, continues to be a place of intersecting journeys, commerce, and stories. Replete with paths, picnic tables and privies, the North Saskatchewan River Heritage site allows the visitor to learn the history of this place through colourful interpretive narrative displays and a commemorative plaque, with the intercontinental height of land and Howse Pass prominent in the background. “The Crossing” is a pleasant and instructive National Park stop.

The roadside attraction is also a thinly veiled contested place. Indeed, until 2009, the predominant narrative one took out of this place—based on significantly different plaques since replaced—was a simplified story of intercultural contact between fur traders and First Nations. The contemporary narrative depicted in the murals, comprised of three separate murals of text and image, however, is much more complex and nuanced. Replacing the fur trade-indigenous encounter are separate poster boards, one each for the Kootenay, Peigan & Stoney. Each mural tells the story of the importance of this place for each of the three groups in its local language, as well as French and English. Further, each mural contains a shaded map depicting the area that each group associated as its territory. There should be little argument as to the merits of importance to the historical record that these new murals provide. Nevertheless, there remains an undeniable ‘optic’ of place: First, it is clear through the visual and textual presentations that not only did each of the three indigenous groups who travelled through these lands identify

different areas as their territory but, more importantly, none of them were remotely bounded by the transcontinental height of land. Yet each of the current murals continue to depict this landscape as a fixed political boundary—not just between provinces and National Parks but one that framed the indigenous landscape. In other words, the transcontinental Rocky Mountain height of land is overlain upon each of the three murals and in exactly the same position. This apparently benign oversight would be relatively innocuous, if it not for the fact that each of the three indigenous murals *omits* the boundaries of the other two aboriginal groups who passed through these areas (and often overlapped each other). The only common boundary for each mural is the interprovincial-height of land boundary. The transcontinental height of land—and what it means as a political and cultural icon, "The Great Divide"—remains a privileged geographical place.

Stoney, Kootenay and Shuswap intermountain cultural landscapes changed significantly between the 18th and the late 19th centuries. Nevertheless, there continued to be a greater sharing of similar places as sites of meaning than seemed apparent. The transcontinental height of land was not necessarily one of them; at least it did not necessarily stand out from the others. This momentary period of inchoate, fluid boundaries did not last long following Confederation. Different legal environments fostered by the imposition of political boundaries, changed the dynamic in the final decade of the 19th century. The height of land may have been largely irrelevant to indigenous groups except that it coincided with the interprovincial political boundary. What followed, in turn, were issues of contestation related to already complex culturally-inflected Aboriginal perspectives of space—all of whom, without exception, were in conflict with the legally ordered political demarcations of the Canadian state. For Euro-Canadian government officials, making meaning from the myriad mountain chains and river

valleys encompassing the Canadian Rocky watersheds in the late 19th and early 20th century was largely a practice in the mutually accommodating scientific and political practices of knowledge and territorial acquisition. Practitioners of science, conservation, preservation, and commoditization of natural resources could best serve their geographical interests through the pursuit of locating, identifying and quantifying specific mountain passes and valleys along several headwaters that straddled the transcontinental height of land. The narrative representation of these endeavors would shape the way the local landscape was experienced by indigenous and Euro-Canadian peoples thereafter.

One of the most significant nexus of human interactions with a place is the way people obtain nourishment (in particular protein) from the nonhuman world. Hunting became one of the earliest and most significant practices to undergo profound change in the northwest as a consequence of displacement brought about by the ecologically-based demise of certain animal species like the bison, and the subsequent rise in practices of cultural imposition. Ecological distress that compels people to radically alter how they acquire their food sources can lead to anger and confusion, almost certainly displayed through a series of incremental steps that might culminate in violence. In certain places and at certain times, however, these conditions can lead to an agreement, one forged by a weary tension but held together by those same conditions. The Stoney-Kootenay/Shuswap hunting dispute (1891-1905) in the East Kootenays illuminates the extent to which local indigenous groups and their Euro-Canadian counterparts worked together to effect durable change, and how easily such an arrangement unraveled.

The late 19th century Canadian mountain west was hardly a place where the state could impose an iron fist to reinforce legislation established in the cities of the East and West. Limiting the hunting practices of a group, however, could be achieved effectively if geographical

boundaries could be established that were both logical and easy to enforce through the privileging of a particular landscape vision. Once established, local groups could then use these boundaries to (re)fashion their own landscape narratives that reflected a different set of circumstances on the ground, one neither situated wholly in the period of time before this imposition, nor one that disregarded the present circumstances in their entirety. Nevertheless, acts of transgression like these were consequences of the interplay of imposition and accommodation.

Territorial hunting disputes may be socio-political in nature but they are given shape through their geographical-landscaped referents. The ‘land’ is not simply an abstract concept. How boundary narratives were brought to bear upon hunting practices, altering the way all parties viewed the transcontinental height of land watershed as a place in the process is the guiding contextual theme for this chapter. This chapter argues that the particular linear North West/South East linear axis introduced and imposed by Euro-Canadians in the shape of the transcontinental height of land orientation was originally challenged by aboriginal groups who used these places in different ways. Local indigenous groups that relied on alternative linear perceptions were bound to express opposition to any unilaterally imposed (and fixed) jurisdiction, especially when used to trump the fluctuating territoriality established through time and custom. The ultimate prevalence of the height of land boundary imposition can be traced to its coupling with the legal regime established in the area. Resolving an inter-tribal hunting conflict was as much a question of reconfiguring the parameters (and meanings) of the contested space itself.

The geographical scale and relative isolation created a curious situation. Federal Indian Agents from both sides of the boundary were the main discussants, leaving little room for

correspondence from provincial counterparts. The British Columbia voice, at least as it applied to aboriginal groups in the East Kootenays, still did exist for the most part in the 1890s. Intercommunication between federal Indian agents in Fort Steele (administrative capital of the Kootenay region) and the provincial capital would prove to be compromised by the same conditions restricting correspondence between Victoria and Ottawa (or Regina and Calgary for that matter). How the respective federal Indian offices in the province and territorial governments interpreted and simultaneously contested aboriginal hunting grounds, provincial boundaries and Treaty boundaries along the height of land revealed the anxieties of a young state grappling with the uncertainties of a boundary making process in a region with one of the prime 'players' not in attendance.

When interpreted through the overt lens of intercultural relations (as well as the more nuanced discourse of intracultural/familial relations in the case of indigenous groups) in conjunction with the administrative/bureaucratic wrangling in the case of a singular federal agency that had to speak for Indians on both sides of the boundary, one is presented with a complex intertwined narrative of imposition, resistance and accommodation. Though federal Indian agents on both sides of the administrative boundary may have claimed to speak for "their" Indians, written documentation of Native oral testimony revealed that local indigenous groups were also speaking, and responding in different ways to their so-called Euro-Canadian overseers—as well as to other local indigenous bands. A close study of sources reveals the fluidity across and through the transcontinental height of land watershed not necessarily depicted in the restrictive discourses of East/West separation that such a landscape informally known as "The Great Divide" represents. One means of entering into such a discussion is through learning how cultural groups took meaning out of such places.

The area that comprises Kootenay, Shuswap and Stoney territories has long been a place of mutual interaction and learning. The sentience of the land is discussed through the animate feelings of such places. In this way environmental change and social relations are understood, though the lessons imparted in indigenous stories may only be conveyed in certain circumstances. The inviolability of place in the narrations is one such example. Several Stoney stories are located in the headwaters and passes of the height of land. The height of landscape is the setting for Stoney Creation Myths and Trickster-Hero Legends, stories that could entertain and prepare the listener at the same time. The stories also anchored a people to the land.[1]

One of the recurring narratives that anchored the height of land to a Stoney sense of place was the disappearance of the elk. The story's narrative is marked by the anthropomorphic qualities of the elk and a culturally-inflected sensibility of the land:

> Long ago…there were many elk on this side of the main range. Now there are few. They were very much hunted—too much hunted they thought—and so they called a council. It was held somewhere way down the Highwood outside the hills, and to it came the Elk from all over…At the council they decided that things were getting too tough and that they had better move away from their old range and find a new country. So they came up the Highwood, a great army of elk, and they turned up a creek that leads to the Pyramid (Mc Phail Creek to Mt. McPhail). And they went, in single file, up and over to the Elk River, through Weary Creek Gap. And they never came back.[2]

This story reveals several aspects of the Stoney world view. To begin, the elk are active agents in the transformation of landscape. Culturally constructed references to social organization (council, army, single file) are used as points of reference for describing *why* and *how* there are

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[1] *The Stonies of Alberta* (Calgary: Alberta Foundation, 1983). For those stories that are set along the height of land, see "The Four Thunderers and the Great Horned River Snake" (46); "*Iktomi's* Revenge on Fox*"* (82); "*Iktomi* and Scare 'em Away, Medicine Woman" (86);"*Iktomi* and the Eagles" (104); and "*Iktomi* and the Great Cottontail Race" (130).

[2] "History of the Fording River Area," *Great Divide Trail Project*, p. 1, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Archives, Accession #2304, File #M341(1)

no more elk on the eastern slopes inhabited by the Stoney. Further, the migration is described as the movement of the body (in this case, the elk) through various places. Descriptions of ‘up, down, away from and over’ also bring the body into an intimate relationship with the land. Directions framed by the cardinal rules of the compass did not exist in the Stoney perception of place.

Determining the geographical ‘origin’ of the Kootenay speaks more to the nature of the questions being asked than the answers being sought. Ethnographic studies have illustrated an extensive and varied sense of place, always mitigated by a host of conditions including climate, landscape and food source. These studies have located the Kootenay as far east as the “Cree Country” around Battleford, Saskatchewan before the era of horse use brought them in contact with the Blackfoot; after this time, their area was shortened to an area bounded by Crowsnest Pass to the south. On the western side of the height of land, Kootenays camped regularly along the Rocky Mountain Trench, travelling through the upper Columbia and Kootenay River valleys. This narrow and deep valley was heavily wooded and long, providing a migration corridor to the Tobacco Plains straddling the US-Canadian border. The Kootenay also travelled periodically along the lower Kootenay River and through the Purcell Mountain Trench further west.[3]

This line of inquiry, always used in any ethnographic discussion of Kootenay territoriality, serves to obfuscate more than clarify.[4] Drawing conclusions on origins presupposes a specific time-space continuum where a people are simultaneously in one place (at a given time), and outside another—what is called space—at the same time. A different

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[3] Ibid.

[4] For a more precise discussion of Kootenay identity as it relates to territory, see Harry Robert Turney-High, “Ethnography of the Kutenai,” *American Anthropologist Supplement,* Vol. 43, no.2, part II (1941), 9-32. Eileen Pearkes’ study of the “extinct” Sinixt Indians in the Upper Colombia Valley demonstrates convincingly that “origins” can be located in several places, and at indeterminate times. See Eileen Pearkes, *The Geography of Memory: Recovering Stories of a Landscape's First People, (*Nelson, B.C.: Kutenai House Press, 2002).

understanding of how some peoples conceive of place is necessary. Indigenous perceptions of time and place do exist, but they are not necessarily configured in a similar way. In other words, any attempt at placing a people—or displacing—at a given moment is not a useful category of identity. The ramifications of this ontological and epistemological sensibility can be frustrating for Euro Canadian scholars. Indeed, the relative scarcity of migration myths in Kootenay *in the print tradition* could easily lead to the conclusion that the Kootenay did not 'come from' the Prairie (therefore they came from the mountains). A more tangible approach would be to learn how the Kootenay landscape was not a question of 'either/or' but *either and or*.[5]

The Kootenay landscape within the present day Canadian state envelopes the height of land without giving it any priority of place. Ethnologist Olga W. Johnson, in her comprehensive study of the Kootenay, argues that since the Kootenay were people of both the Prairies and Mountains, the Continental Divide was not so much a barrier as a point to stop for breath: "The breathlessness was from the climb, the altitude, the view, and the anticipation of a land and life in many ways a rich contrast to whichever land they had just left behind and below them."[6] Here is a description that illustrates the intermingling of the body/place/mind process; the height of land as an experiential place is a product of past, present and future. Further, the height of land actually serves as nothing more than a rhetorically instructive reference point for demonstrating just how expansive (and encompassing) the Kootenay landscape has been.

Some passes that straddled the height of land, and provided relatively easy access between the eastern slopes and Rocky Mountain Trench, were used as hunting grounds by the Kootenay and Stoney. These passes were widely used by local indigenous groups both before

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[5]For more on this discussion, see the introduction to Frank B. Linderman, *Kootenay Why Stories, 2nd Edition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
[6] Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, *Flathead and Kootenay: The Rivers, the Tribes and the Region's Traders* (Glendale, Califronia: Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1969), 58-59.

and during the earliest Euro Canadian forays into the region, although they were, for the most part, not recorded by these expeditions. Interested researchers have placed The Stoney's "Glacier Trail" over North Kananaskis Pass into the Palliser. The Kootenay, in turn, also used this pass from the west side of the height of land to hunt elk near Kananaskis Lakes.[7] Dead Pacer Horse Trail, a path the Stoneys used to make their way up to the *Nyahe-ya-nibi* (Going up into the Mountains Country), traversed Fording Pass. Another track led down the Fording River Valley to its junction with the Elk River. From here, the Black Sand Trail led back over the height of land to the Savanna Creek area of Alberta.[8] Periodic Blackfoot incursions across the height of land and into the Fording River Valley led to violent conflict.[9]

Indigenous landscapes that straddled the height of land were territorial places, and their immutability was constantly put to the test. The predominance of movement in indigenous narrative testifies to this process. The earliest attempts by Euro Canadian travelers to make sense of this inchoate landscape were markedly different. Where indigenous landscapes were sentient ones, the first attempts at marking the height of land through the geological sciences was grounded by the imperatives of objectification. Normalizing the territory of the landscape though was an integral component of this project. As part of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada, George Dawson and W.F. Tolmie's 1884 *Map Shewing [sic] the Distribution of the INDIAN TRIBES of British Columbia* replaced the inconceivable flux of landscapes of intertribal contact with a geography of cultural homogeneity. This map is marked by a clear separation of Kootenay and Stoney hunting grounds along the height of land, a delineation subsumed by the territorial/provincial boundary. This arbitrarily determined affixation is even more peculiar in light of the fact that no such separation is made with respect to Kootenay

[7] Great Divide Trail Project, 1.
[8] "History of the Fording River Area," Great Divide Trail Project, 1.
[9] Ibid.

territory along the 49th parallel. Further, by portraying the territoriality of the Stoney and Kootenay in this light, a cultural imposition was created through the substitution of fluctuating intertribal boundaries with the 'writing out' of localized transmountain routes.[10]

The history of boundary making in the colonial era illustrated a growing concern with the establishment of a territory that could be readily identifiable as the demands of industrial capitalism took hold in the interior. As early as 1858, the British Government had attempted to distinguish the eastern boundary of British Columbia (known then as New Caledonia) along the watershed between the streams that flowed into the Pacific and those that flowed into the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans.[11] Almost immediately after the Bill "to provide for the government of New Caledonia" was introduced, an amendment was proposed, extending these boundaries because it was thought that the gold found on the Fraser River was only a trifling indication of that to be found at its headwaters.[12] Consequently, the final act "to provide for the Government of British Columbia" established the eastern boundary as "the main chain of the Rocky Mountains."[13] What constituted the "main chain" was unclear. Consequently, the eastern boundary was altered in 1863, "from the boundary of the United States northwards, by the Rocky Mountains and the one hundred and twentieth meridian of west longitude."[14] The intersecting of the linear meridian with the mountains was due largely to perceived political and economic interests that the gold districts of the Peace River District provided,[15] and left the British Columbia/Rupert's Land borderlands unclear. What appeared to be a fairly firm boundary on

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[10] George Dawson and W. Fraser Tolmie, *Comparative Vocabularies of the Indian Tribes of British Columbia with a Map Illustrating Distribution*, (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1884).
[11] Norman L. Nicholson, *The Boundaries of the Canadian Confederation* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979), 50.
[12] Ibid., 51.
[13] Ibid., 51-52.
[14] Ibid., 54.
[15] Ibid., 56.

paper could hardly be implemented unless those "on the ground" perceived it as such through a normalizing process of legislation, landscape and (bodily) practice.

At the time of Confederation, inter-jurisdictional landscape perception demonstrated a concern with the presentation of a fixed boundary despite both the apparent "uncharted" nature of the height of land and a lack of sense of place that comes with armchair mapping. The most apparent manifestation of this practice was the juxtaposition of the known and the unknown, the inhabited side and the uninhabited side. Conflating the height of land—the "main chain of the Rocky Mountains"—with the watershed source, and establishing a straight line border separating province from territory was nothing more than the imposition of an imaginary landscape. Commissioned maps from both British Columbia and NWT show a clear separating line, irrespective of physiographic and hydrological realities 'on the ground.' The narrative arc of this boundary was nonetheless imposed incrementally. For example, the British Columbia Trutch Map of 1870 is remarkable for its fine details on the British Columbia side, but relatively limited geographical (i.e. scientific) detail along the height of land, and almost complete dearth of visual information for the NWT side. The inclusion of several unnamed passes along the height of land, however, was an early attempt at standardizing the continental height of land as a naturalized border. Furthermore, the narrow but unbroken band of dense coloration along the height of land was, in effect, a representation of the continental divide idea.[16] Maps generated on the Northwest (and later Albertan) side illustrate the slowly growing number of homesteads encroaching upon the headwaters (and hunting grounds) of Stoney and Kootenay hunting/trading

[16] *Map of British Columbia to the 56th Parallel, North Latitude / compiled and drawn at the Lands and Works Office, Victoria, B.C. under the direction of the Honble. J.W. Trutch, M. Inst., C.E., F.R.G.S., Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and Surveyor General; J.B. Launders, Draughtsman, Lands and Works Office, Victoria, B.C., May 9th 1870*. William C. Wonders Map Collection Database, University of Alberta.

grounds but offer no details of the British Columbia side.[17] Yet a solid, fixed line between the two jurisdictions depicting the height of land is provided on *all* maps.

Federal Indian Department officials were acutely aware of the fluid nature of the various boundaries. Further, they were cognizant of the ramifications that an imposition of landscape perception could have on the recently completed treaty negotiations and agreements. The issue of Treaty boundaries was challenged almost before the ink had even dried. In 1891 the Department of Indian Affairs responded to a report that "a number of the Kootenay Indians (non-Treaty) intend to be present at the annual payments at the Blood Reserve" (Treaty 7) by pointing out that "the [Kootenay] wish to [cross] has ...been the outcome of their intercourse with the Stoney Indians who for years have been allowed to cross the mountains and visit the Kootenay Indians periodically in British Columbia."[18] The continuous appearance of indigenous bands outside their so-called "treaty" lands represented a challenge to those individuals whose task it had been to re-locate (and by extension, dislocate) these very groups of people. Federal and provincial authorities seemed to recognize the porous nature of both treaty boundaries and physiographic constructions even as they expressed a determination to legitimize them.

The place-specific nature of these territorial encounters was usually embedded within the larger discourse of wanton destruction and overhunting. On March 13, 1891, A.W. Vowell, federal Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Victoria, wrote to Hayter Reed, Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Regina concerning the seasonal excursion by large groups of Stoney Indians along the Elk River, a large tributary of the Kootenay River, during the greater part of the

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[17] *Index to townships in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia showing the townships for which Official and Preliminary plans have been issued, March 31, 1908.* William C. Wonders Map Collection Database, University of Alberta.

[18] Handwritten letter from Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs L. Vankoughnet to the British Columbia Indian Office, (Kootenay Agency), September 30, 1891. Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

summer months and poaching on the hunting grounds of the Kootenay Indians. The Inspector alleged that while camped along this stretch of river, the Stoney were killing beaver in the most wasteful manner, breaking the dams and killing both old and young beaver. Having already exterminated the beaver & game in their own territory, Vowell argued that in a few years they would do the same in British Columbia if allowed to come over without restriction. Vowell suggested that any attempt to get the Kootenay to discontinue hunting during the breeding months would prove fruitless since "Indians who do not even belong in the Province…come over and destroy everything. During the last two summers, the Stoney Indians have almost entirely reside[d] and hunted on this side of the watershed."[19]

Vowell's letter is instructive for three reasons. First, the tone and wording of the letter with respect to the alleged wanton destruction of "beaver & game" would surely draw attention (and sympathy) from the burgeoning game hunter population slowly encroaching upon the area in lockstep with the railway. Second, the relatively local aspect to this conflict—encompassing the Elk Pass/Upper Elk Lakes environs—and the overlapping provincial/territorial jurisdictional nature of Euro-Canadian discourse throws some light on how specific places along the height of land could be used as a point of reference when constructing legitimacy. At the same time, however, Vowell was in effect wearing 'two hats' as both a Federal official speaking for the Kootenay and a defacto voice for British Columbia—when in fact there was no provincial-level official present. Finally, Vowell's reference to Stoney hunting and residing on "this side of the watershed" illustrates how the framing of a conflict through hydrological 'fact' could obscure a

[19] Handwritten letter from Visiting Federal Superintendent of Indian Affairs (British Columbia) A.W. Vowell, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hayter Reed, March 13, 1891. Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

much more complex and fluid discourse, one that transcended both provincial and treaty boundaries.

If provincial authorities expected rapid action, they were sorely mistaken. Reed responded by stating frankly that although he might act to the best of his ability in the matter, he would most surely be unable to accomplish the desired end.[20] To add further frustration to his provincial counterparts, in September 1891 Reed did promise to prevent ("if possible") the intended presence of several Kootenay Indians to cross the mountains in order to be present at the annual Treaty payments ceremony on the Blood Reserve the following month.[21]

It did not take long for authorities in Victoria to respond. Vowell immediately pointed out that the Kootenay Indians were mainly self supporting, mindful of their reliance upon hunting and fishing to a great extent for their means of subsistence. It followed therefore, that those Indians, otherwise provided for by the federal government and "not belonging to this province," should not be permitted to encroach upon the already compromised hunting grounds of the Kootenay Indians."[22] Vowell also pointed out that the Blackfoot also travelled through the territory every spring, "entirely without provisions and demanding at different places that they be supplied…producing the permit which they had received from the Agent on the other side." Vowell concluded:

> For many reasons I do not think it wise to allow or encourage any intercourse between the Indians of British Columbia and those East of the Rocky Mountains, as such association is certain to lead to more or less disquiet amongst the Indians of B.C.[23]

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[20] Handwritten letter from Hayter Reed to Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, July 23, 1891. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[21] Typed letter from Hayter Reed to Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, September 9, 1891. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[22] Written letter from A.W.Vowell to Hayter Reed, September 19, 1891. Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

[23] Ibid.

If the Kootenay Indians were relatively self-supporting, was Vowell's fear of "disquiet" largely framed by a fear of conflict between Blackfoot and Kootenay or the ramifications of an "intercourse" of association between indigenous cultures with an eye towards resisting the expansion of the Canadian state? It is difficult to say but what the Agent proposed to implement was nothing short of the immediate cessation of intermountain travel and a reconfiguration of how local indigenous groups perceived travel routes as a part of place. The restrictions that the twin processes of moral geography and linear imposition can have is evident in Vowell's reference to "Indians of British Columbia and those East of the Rocky Mountains" and the happenstance situation where (and when) the two comingle.

British Columbian pursuit of the Stoney continued a week later. Michael Phillips, another federal Indian agent based out of Fort Steele, wrote to Vowell in Victoria, arguing that "[Chief] Isadore and a number of the leading men of the Kootenay tribe came to the Office today: they complain bitterly about the Stoney Indians."[24] Phillips moral geography was expanded to include the head waters of the Kootenay River, Elk River and "all its tributaries," arguing that "all…have been occupied by the Stoney Indians and their camps:"

> [The Stoney] are simply destroying all the game in the Country. Our own Indians will in a few days (as soon as they have finished digging their potatoes) be starting out on their fall hunt, to lay in a sufficient supply of dried meat to last them from Christmas until Easter. Where are they to go? their [sic] hunting grounds have been occupied by the Stonies during the Summer, who literally exterminate the game and beaver, by killing the animals during the Summer and breeding season.[25]

To complicate matters, Phillips pointed out that a group of half breed hunters from north of Edmonton had recently arrived, intending to stay. Phillips' frames of reference perpetuated the

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[24] Typed letter from Michael Phillips to A.W. Vowell, September 30, 1891. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855 (Kootenay Agency, 1891-1907), file 80143.
[25] Ibid.

implicit moral geographies that watersheds, coupled with the linearality of the East-West binary discourse, conveniently provided when he suggested that not only should the Indian Agent explain to them that when they cross on to the "Western watershed" they are trespassing on the hunting grounds of the Kootenays, but they should also be prevented from coming over in the first place. A brief but illuminating counterpoint to the Euro-Canadian frame of reference is provided when Phillips' letter concludes with a passing reference to the altogether "none too civil" Stoney response: any serious discussion could not occur at this time and place because their Chief was "on the other side of the mountains."[26] The Stoney landscape was framed by the mountains proper, including all the ranges within and that part of the watershed it encompassed. Consequently, the mountains as seen from the plateau, as opposed to the height of land, were the linear sightlines for the Stoney.

This letter reveals a specific kind of discourse grounded in a moral geography of inclusion and exclusion and framed by notions of property. By conflating the alleged destruction of game with the idea of "trespassing" on "the hunting grounds of the Kootenay" Phillips engaged in a complex form of rhetoric where the terms of reference are themselves agents of colonialisation. The "western watershed" becomes a trope used to legitimize the arbitrary boundary between British Columbia and the Northwest Territory. Further, the use of the Christian calendar in discussing the Kootenay hunting season-"from Christmas to Easter" is an early, incomplete attempt at replacing one kind of temporal-spatial configuration with another.

[26] Throughout late 1892 and early 1893, the Indian Office at Fort Steele received letters of complaint. Also see the letter from James Grant Gordon to Phillips, December 17, 1892; letter from M. Phillips to A. Vowell, January 10, 1893. Hayter Reed insisted throughout that "it would be next to impossible to prevent the Indians going far afield hunting, and in face of the fact that if retained upon the Reserve not sufficient employment could be given them to keep out of mischief." Reed does suggest legislation "in the direction of preventing Indians from either slope of the Mountains hunting upon the other…this legislation would not be a breach of faith, as the country would lie beyond that covered by Treaty stipulations." The legislation option was quickly dropped. Memorandum written by Hayter Reed, February 27, 1893. For more on the agreement that legislation was not advisable see the letter from A. Vowell to Hayter Reed, March 20, 1893. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, no. 80143.

This was part of a larger process of socialization widely used in the industrial school structure slowly being established at the time.[27] Phillips was, however, cognizant of the fundamental importance of the summer and breeding season for local indigenous ways of life.

*Towards a Meeting*

By early 1893 both provincial and federal officials agreed that a solution to the question of hunting territories was necessary. Concurrently, however, both the provincial and territorial governments were determined to seeing through this conflict based on a specific perception of landscape—the height of land/watershed line. What remained unclear, however, was the process by which a conclusion could be reached. This issue was no small matter. At the same time it was incumbent upon the parties to effect a transformative change in how the landscape would serve as a political boundary, though the means by which this was to come about was unclear. The question was largely one of legislation versus consensus. Embedded within the ultimate resolution would be the seeds for a transformation of how the landscape was viewed.

In early March 1893, Lawrence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, suggested that in order to put an end to the movement "of Indians from either side of the Rocky Mountains into the country which they do not belong," it was most likely necessary for members of the Kootenay, Stoney, Blood, Blackfeet & Peigan Indians, to meet together with their respective agents.[28] Reed responded in the affirmative, suggesting a multiparty negotiation that would include two representatives from each band and their respective agents from both NWT and British Columbia.[29]

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[27] For more on the importance of seasonal and daily structure as a form of socialization in the educational system, see Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State, Canada West, 1836-1871* (London: Althouse Press, 1988).
[28] Written letter from L. Van Koughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs -to the Indian Department, Regina, NWT, March 7, 1893, LAC, RG10, file 80143.
[29] Typed letter from Hayter Reed to L. Vankoughnet, March 11, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, no. 80143.

Phillips was more circumspect. He believed that the concerned parties would better respect a rule made for them by the Department, and that if their agent were to inform the Stoney Indians that the watershed is the boundary of their country, they would respect the boundary, no longer openly and defiantly ignoring it.[30] Phillips seemed to believe that the height of land-as-watershed was *a priori* the boundary. Phillips did leave open the possibility of a future meeting, however, when he asked for "notice be given [to] me in time; we have only a fortnight mail service."[31] For Phillips, at the very least, watersheds were landscapes invested in meaning, zones of inclusion and exclusion that could be quantified through the state's law-making process. The Kootenay had also forayed across the mountains into the Eastern Rockies, but as he saw it, it was brought about by the repeated Stoney incursions into Kootenay territory.

On May 6, 1893, Vowell wrote to Ottawa, acknowledging Reed's recommendation but concurrently voicing the concerns of the Indian Agent in Fort Steele that legislation might be the best course of action. Vowell, however, quickly disavowed himself of this course action:

> It seems to me that if legislation prohibitory of their so interfering were to be passed, it would be a very difficult matter indeed to carry the same out, & it would be, I fear, more likely to provoke the Indians…It would also entail heavy expenditures to enforce the law. I also apprehend that some serious conflicts might occur in attempting to prevent these incursions, whereas were a mutual understanding to be arrived at amicably between the Indians concerned, it is more than probable the same would be duly observed by the parties thereto.[32]

On May 26, 1893, Vankoughnet wrote to the Honourable T.Mayne Daly, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, stating that an amicable agreement would be more likely to act as a preventative to Stoney "trespasses" upon Kootenay lands than any kind of prohibitory law enacted, "to which it would be exceedingly difficult to give effect:"

[30] Written letter from Michael Phillips to A.W. Vowell, April 13, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Written letter from A.W. Vowell to Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs Vankoughnet, May 6, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

> The country to be guarded being so extensive and the enforcement of the law likely to entail very heavy expenditure were the attempt made to prevent the incursions of the Stonys to be made by the North West Mounted Police or any other Constabulary Force.[33]

Vankoughnet proposed that two representatives, to be chosen by the Kootenay Band should meet the Stoney Indians at Morleyville or some other convenient point to be selected by the Indian Commissioner.[34] In addition, Mr. Phillips would accompany the Kootenay representatives while the Indian Commissioner from the Northwest Territories would also attend, the object being:

> solemn agreement…entered into on the part of the Stoney Indians, on the one hand, not to encroach upon the hunting grounds of the Kootenay Indians, and the Kootenay Indians, on the other hand, not to hunt in that part of the country contained on the eastern slope of the Mountains, or the territory adjacent thereto, or elsewhere in the Northwest Territories.[35]

Vowell's and VanKoughnet's correspondence reveals the motivations compelling the necessity of achieving agreement. To begin, both men understood the costs of enforcing any kind of legislative action—a common refrain in the Indian Department at the time. Further, less than ten years removed from the Northwest Rebellion, Indian agents made decisions through the lens of stability versus chaos, conformity against insurrection. Clearly "an amicable agreement" was preferred for financial, administrative and political reasons.[36] Nevertheless, it is important to place these decisions within the wider context of the moral geography of inclusion and exclusion.

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[33] Typed letter from Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs VanKoughnet to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, T. Mayne Daly, May 26, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

[36] Indian Agents also expressed a concern that any meeting between the Kootenay & Stoney at Morleyville should not occur during Treaty Payment "as it would appear to be impolitic to let any of the Indians of British Columbia e present during the payment of annuities to the Indians of the Northwest Territories as the Indians of the former province are not paid annuities by the Government." Typed letter from A.W. Vowell to Hayter Reed, June 3, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

When the Stonies crossed the watershed, were they entering Kootenay country or B.C.? Conversely, if the Kootenay were to be dissuaded from entering the NWT, were they also being turned away from Stoney country? By defining Stoney and Kootenay hunting grounds through the use of such terms as *watersheds* and (eastern) *slopes,* the so-called traditional lands of the above were invested with Euro-Canadian interests and given priority in this conflict, at the same time—as the reference to watersheds revealed—maintaining the integrity of watersheds-as-boundaries. However, the delineation of watersheds and slopes cannot be determined as "written in stone"—or water, trees, etc. for that matter. Watersheds, like slopes, are cultural configurations of material environments; no group can lay claim to the privileging of these elements without authorizing it as such through the claims to its 'natural' qualities. In this case, relying on legitimizing a particular landscape through persuasion left little room for the genuine sharing of world views since the form and function ascribed to watersheds and slopes were inflected by a particular ideology and historical experience no longer open for reinterpretation. The inclusion (and exclusion) of Stoney and Kootenay hunting parties from each other's lands was not just an act of appropriation; it was also an act of legitimation for establishing a permanent boundary between British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.[37] Hayter Reed observed:

> As the Stony Indians have always been hunters and have ranged the Mountains for many years past, extending their roaming further and further afield, I feel confident that no direction we might give in that particular would prevent their continuing the crossing of the Mountains in the country of other Indians.[38]

[37] For more on legitimation and its counterpart, transgression, within the context of where these actions occur, see Tim Creswell, *In Place /Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[38] Typed letter from Hayter Reed to L. Vankoughnet, May 20, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

Any notion of delineating a watershed serving as a permanent boundary was wishful thinking. Such recognition of the potential complications stemming from mutual encroachments—not to mention the inability to enforce any such legislation—suggests the land was both material and conceptual. The Kootenay and Stoney were well aware of the transitory nature of the intermountain landscape but to ensure territorial integrity it was not necessarily a bad thing to adopt the terminology of the state when it was hell-bent on intervening on behalf of both its "Indians" and itself.

*The First Meeting (1893): Drawing Lines in the Water*

In mid-June, Phillips informed Vowell that as soon as he had spoken to Chief Isadore, he would provide the names of the two individuals who would accompany him to Morleyville in August or at such time as the Department might name.[39] What followed demonstrates the immense difficulties any long-term solutions would have to overcome. James Campbell, a clerk with the Indian Office of the Northwest Territories, set out from Regina to Golden (B.C.), where the meeting was to take place, on September 2nd with the intention of stopping off in Banff on the 4th. The following day he crossed the watershed, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arriving he was informed that Phillips' party would not arrive for several days given a sudden change in the boat service upon which they had relied upon. Since Phillips was beyond reach of telegraphic or postal communication there remained nothing for Campbell to do but wait.[40]

Phillips arrived on the afternoon of the 9th. Immediately, Isadore, along with several companions, and speaking through a Metis translator, was invited to state his case."[41] Isadore began by disclaiming any ill feeling towards the Stoney, at the same time denying a report

[39] Written letter from Michael Phillips to A.W. Vowell, June 15, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[40] Typed letter from James Campbell to Hayter Reed, September 3, 1893, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[41] Ibid.

asserting that the latter had gone into "his country" on invitation. Isadore remarked that he was always pleased to receive a friendly visit, but expressed his displeasure that while one or two travelers were expected, others in large numbers and without his knowledge would be out slaughtering the game. According to Campbell, Isadore suggested the watershed between the Province and the Territories as "a dividing line between their respective hunting grounds." The notion of the watershed as a bounded area appeared to be adopted by the Kootenay headman.

The Stoney interpretation of landscape, on the other hand, reflected a similar acceptance of the watershed boundary, albeit with reluctance. Further, any attempt to affix a permanent boundary was not going to occur without discussion, and certainly not at the end of the legislative whip. James Rider, the Stony representative replied that although they were amenable to the proposed line of division, he believed he was speaking for all his people when he asserted that they had always understood themselves to be welcome to go and hunt in the Kootenay's country, and would not otherwise have done so if they believe they were not welcome.[42] The conference concluded with a warning from A.P. Cummins, Magistrate and Land/Mines Commissioner for the Province of British Columbia. Speaking in legalese, Cummins argued that the Kootenay, "although in their own country," were nonetheless adhering to the seasonal hunting rules set out by the province, and that if the Stoneys continued to "trespass," they would be dealt with by the full measure of the law. The Stoney representatives refused to sign the agreement, arguing that if necessary, should be done by their Head Chiefs. Campbell seemed to highlight the complexities that were a consequence of ecological and social political change when he remarked that although the Stonies so readily acquiesced in the proposed agreement, they nonetheless felt "a good deal aggrieved" at the attitude of the Kootenay, who they say, used to be warmly welcomed in the days of the buffalo to visit and hunt as they did in their country.

[42] Ibid.

That the Stoney headmen came to any agreement, Campbell surmised, was due largely to their apparent deference to the Government's wishes.[43]

The autumn 1893 agreement would fall into disarray almost immediately. The reasons for these developments were both cultural and historically contingent. To begin, the planning of the conference was done in haste, owing to the perceived immediacy of the conflict. Second, unforeseeable delays in transportation and communication led to a situation where one group was forced to wait for the other. There is little doubt this unfortunate development would weigh on the patience of the group waiting in Golden and frustrate the other group held up in arriving there. The most important reasons for the failure of the conference, however, can be located in the twin processes of indigenous decision making and the geographical abstraction of scale, a colonial project. Prioritizing the delineation of boundaries through a fixed watershed and height of land landscape, as well as creating immutable zones of inclusion and exclusion in this process—all of which conformed precisely to those zones established in the Confederation process—left little, if any, room for other views of the land. The 1893 agreement could only succeed if one vision could be imposed on all others.

Both Kootenay & Stoney spokesmen made reference to the reciprocal nature of their relationship in earlier times. Isadore's denial of "inviting" Stoney into his lands does not imply he did not want them there. On the contrary—there would have been no need to ask for one (or offer one) in a reciprocal relationship; the Stoney (as voiced by James Rider) understood this. The landscape had changed dramatically since the time of the Buffalo, and the pressing numbers of Stoney hunters in Kootenay territory was indeed a troubling issue. Nevertheless, in earlier times the Kootenay had also been welcome in Stoney lands. To infer, however, that the

[43] Ibid.

Kootenay viewed the Stoney as trespassers overlooks the more pressing concern: the demise of game. So how should one interpret the apparent willingness (in varying degrees) of both Rider and Isadore to agree that the immediate pre-Great Divide watershed—a provincial/territorial border—should also delineate their own territories? First, one must question the sincerity of the officials from provincial and territorial Indian agencies. Second, as Campbell pointed out, the sense of aggrievement that followed the meeting suggests that this was an ongoing process, not one that could be finalized over one day in such a haphazard way. Finally, it is doubtful if the "proposed line of division" meant the same thing for the different people attending. Superimposing a culturally constructed anthropocentric geography over a fluctuating and not all together transparent hydrological process may have served to obscure more than clarify, especially in the higher elevations where notions of where the height of land actually was were anything but clear.

*The Second Meeting (1895): Negotiating in a Liminal Landscape*

Given the complexities of Stoney decentralized decision making in 1893, it should come as no surprise that less than two years later, Chiefs Bear's Paw & Chiniquay were already voicing their dissatisfaction with the 1893 agreement, in particular the delimitation of hunting grounds.[44] Further, the Stoney had been anything but unanimous in accepting the 1893 agreement. The most noticeable change in the Stoney perception of landscape was demonstrated in the adoption of Euro-Canadian terms, at the same time maintaining a cultural frame of reference—Stoney chiefs were now claiming "the territory East of the summit of the first ridge

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[44] Unsigned typed letter from Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to Assistant Indian Commissioner, A.E. Forget, May 9, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

West of the watershed or main summit of the Rocky Mountains."[45] When questioned about violations of the agreement, George Crawler, "a minor Chief", and his brother Hector remarked that they entered these lands upon the invitation of the Shuswap Chief, who, as they assert, said, "This is my land now; hunt here now and when you want to."[46] Vowell also referred to the fact that the "Head Chiefs" claimed that:

> the Minor Chiefs who were selected during their absence to attend the [1893] conference and represent their interests were men who never hunted in the country concerned, and were not qualified to make an equitable arrangement, nor to bind the Band.[47]

In other words, the 1893 agreement was effectively null and void, and not just on account of the very real question of just *who* should speak for *whom*. The *way* the landscape was viewed had also changed, not the least because local Kootenay bands were not the only groups to inhabit the areas delimited by the 1893 agreement. The Shuswap had also been firmly established in the area for quite some time. If there was going to be any new agreement, it would have to include them as well.[48]

A careful textual analysis of Stoney claims—*the territory East of the summit of the first ridge West of the watershed or main summit of the Rocky Mountains*—seemed to blend indigenous and Euro-Canadian perceptions of topography, hydrology and landscape into a liminal[49] space where determining boundaries would not be so simple as drawing a line purportedly tracing the separation of watersheds at the height of land—the Great Divide

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[45] Typed letter from VanKoughnet to Reed, May 21, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[46] Typed letter from Reed to Vowell,, June 1, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Federal government proscriptions enacted in the interval also had an immediate effect. On New Year's Day 1895 new laws restricting game hunting directed specifically at the Stoney came into effect. The restriction of game hunting, as well as trapping, included all areas within the recently established Rocky Mountain National Park. See RG 10, Volume 3796, file 47441-2.
[49] Although the concept of liminality now enjoys widespread usage in academia and popular culture, the earliest references may be traced to psychological, metaphysical and anthropological sources. For the anthropological context, see Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge,1969).

landscape idea—and proceeding from there. Indeed, the predominant Euro-Canadian linear orientation of subject-object dualism inherent in an East-West division was markedly different (not to mention confusing) in this new configuration of territories determined by topography, game migrations and watercourses. The Euro-Canadian mode of landscape representation—the height of land as watershed boundary—could no longer stand on its own as an authoritative (and consensual) basis for a political solution as it had in 1893. By extension, the political-administrative boundary separating British Columbia and the Northwest Territories was only one of several overlapping landscapes.

After several months of correspondence between Ottawa, Fort Steele and Victoria during the summer of 1895, a second conference was organized, to be held in Windermere on the Upper Columbia River.[50] From the outset, this second attempt at establishing normative relations between and among indigenous and Euro-Canadian interests illustrated the multiple voices and visions that existed in and along the upper mountain watersheds. Present at the conference were the Columbia Lake Kootenay, represented by Chief Abel, Tatla, Aistanosma, Ki, and Pielle. The St. Mary's Kootenay were represented by Pielle, Adrian and Old Patrick. The Shuswap delegates were Chief Pierre Kinbasket, Alexander Kinbasket, Louis Paul and Meise. Stoney delegates were Chief John Cheneka, (Councillor) George Crawler, Hector, George Hunter and Paul Crawler. Roughly two dozen other Kootenay and Shuswap delegates were also in attendance. Euro-Canadian officials included (Chairman) A.E. Forget, R.L.T. Galbraith, Rev.

[50] Typed letter from A.W. Vowell to Hayter Reed, June 1, 1895, LAC RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written letter from L. Galbraith to A.W. Vowell, June 24, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written letter from A.W. Vowell to Hayter Reed, July 17, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written letter from A.W. Vowell to Hayter Reed, August 5, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written telegraph from A.E. Forget to Hayter Reed, August 27, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

John McDougall (Interpreter for the Stonies) and Lewis Stowekin (Interpreter for the Kootenays and Shuswaps).[51]

The only record of this meeting is an 11-page record left by A.E. Forget but this report is detailed and does allow for the voices of the attending indigenous parties to be heard. What comes across is a fascinating narrative framed not just by competing claims but an acute sense of the importance of weighing past practices with a rapidly changing reality on the ground. Further, all parties involved—especially the Kootenay—were prepared to use the common discourses of Euro-Canadian Christianity to forward their positions. In addition, temporal (in particular seasonal) and geographical considerations were approached with an eye to what had transpired and what one could expect in the near future.

Forget opened the conference by reminding all participants that the meeting had been called at the request of the Stoney, "who, rejected the 1893 agreement on the grounds that they had not been adequately represented, rendering the final product of that meeting moot.[52] Even though they had committed verbally to considering the boundary between British Columbia and the Northwest Territories (now the province of Alberta), and British Columbia as the Western limit of the Stoney hunting ground, they nevertheless declined to sign any formal agreement to that effect, as they felt they had no authority to do so.[53] With the appearance of Chief Cheneka and four delegates that appeared to have the general support of those back in Alberta, however, the prevailing opinion was that there was no reason why some final arrangement, satisfactory to all concerned, should not be arrived at.[54]

[51] Report of A.E. Forget, October 10, 1895, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

The Stoney narrative demonstrated an acute awareness of the consequences of the ecological change that had been brought to bear on the land, all the while considering past practices that had guided inter-band relations. The practice was two-fold: First, an extension of their hunting "operations…irrespective of all lines":

> They say that in the past when game was plentiful on the Eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, they never offered any objection to the Kootenay and Shuswap Indians coming, and hunting in what they might then have considered their own hunting grounds. On the other hand, they had never met with any opposition in their own hunt West of the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and year after year they had established what they consider a right to hunt in the Upper Columbia, and East Kootenay districts. During recent years, game had receded West, little being now met with East of the Summit of the Rocky Mountains. It would therefore be hard for them should they be compelled to confine their hunts in the Territories.

Chief Cheneka followed, stating that,

> as long as he could remember, and he was now an old man, the best friendly relations had ever existed between the three tribes of Indians represented at the conference; and his only wish was that nothing would occur to prevent their continuance in the future….His hopes in this regard were great, as there now existed a bond of sympathy between them in that were now all Christians.

Cheneka hoped that the government representative would propose a solution for the good of all parties, and hoped that the other delegates saw it similarly. Cheneka also spoke directly to the question of British Columbian sovereignty, pledging respect of game laws if no objection was raised to their hunting in the province. [55]

Chief Abel of the Columbia Lake Kootenays spoke next. Forget quoted directly the Chief's words:

> Two years ago they, they, the Kootenays and Shuswaps, had met the Stonies at Golden. Mr. Phillips, their agent there was with them. From him he ever since understood that the water shed of the Rocky Mountains

[55] Ibid.

> was to be the division line. Mr. Phillips said, that this was necessary, as if the Stonies were allowed to come further West, they would sweep all the game before them, and leave nothing to the Kootenays and Shuswap.[56]

They Stoney would always be welcome if they came on "friendly visits, Abel declared. The Stoney would also have no need to explain themselves if they came armed with "a couple of rifles." However, since the 1893 agreement had fallen apart, the Columbia Lake Kootenay are willing to make a new agreement, especially since both Shuswap and Stoney chiefs were in attendance. "We are willing to submit to anything the great Chief may decide, in the same manner as I want my little boy to obey me when I command him," Abel concluded.[57]

Fielle, Headman of the St. Mary's Kootenay spoke next. Fielle demonstrated a marked sensitivity concerning determining ultimate blame for the situation all three indigenous groups faced, drawing upon the historical commonalities all parties had experienced:

> Long ago there were plenty of buffaloes, and the whiteman told us a time would come when they would all disappear. That seemed incredible, they were so numerous. We therefore could not believe it, nor would the Stonies. The Whiteman, however had said the truth, the buffaloes are all gone. Then the Whiteman told us that the deers which were but a few years ago, as numerous as the flies in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, would also go, because they were being hunted at all seasons. We again disbelieved this, but that also has come to pass.

With respect to the present,

> Twice the Whiteman's word has proved true, although we disbelieved it at the time, we believe his word now, and in the fear that the rest of the game will soon be no more, we are devoting our attention to farming, and cattle raising. The game must be protected and for seven months, from Spring to Fall, we keep to our fields. What do the Stonies do, during that time? They [sic] come and hunt and kill everything before them. The Stonies say formerly you hunted on our side of the mountains, why do you object now if we come on your side? Our reason is that we are told by Whitemen, to stop the Stonies coming [to] this side, in order to preserve our game.

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

Fielle deferred to Abel, declaring that although what he said was also in his heart, he would be willing "to do anything the big Chief will advise."[58]

Tatla rose to speak next. He began by identifying himself as a regular Sunday churchgoer, a friend of the Father, and an adherent of the creation story. Tatla applied the allegory of the seven days of creation toward the seven months during which the game is to be protected (April-October):

> Now if the Stonies will imitate this example, and work in their fields the seven months during which the game is protected, everything will be well. The seven months over, let them come and hunt wherever we hunt ourselves. We will raise no objections, but the game must not be killed during the close season, by the Stonies, as they have done in the past.[59]

Patrick, Headman at St. Mary's reminded participants that when the international boundary was surveyed, and he was given the option of "going South or North of the line," he choose the latter option because he looked favourably upon the Stonies and the (northern) Whitemen. The Stonies could continue to hunt in the western mountains (i.e. British Columbia) but must no longer cross the Columbia River. He also expressed his hope that the Stoney would "also attend to their fields and cattle during the seven months close season."[60] Pierre Kinbasket, Shuswap Chief spoke next. He referred to the 1893 agreement, voicing his opinion that it had been necessary, "as the game is getting is scarce this side of the Rocky Mountains." Kinbasket echoed the Kootenay voices, remarking that he did not object to anybody, Whiteman or Stonies, hunting in these parts during the open season.[61] Charlie Kinbasket, Pierre's brother spoke eloquently:

> What my brother said is true. I know that the Stonies [sic] heart must have been sore when they heard they heard they could not hunt this side of the Rockies. They have come here to make a new arrangement and

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

> when they return home, they will feel good for we will not object to their hunting in these parts, provided they do so only in the open season.[62]

Forget concluded the days' discussion by thanking all those who participating and securing a guarantee from the Kootenays and Shuwaps that they would be willing to sign an agreement permitting the Stonies to come hunt as far westward as the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers. In return, they would be allowed the same privilege as far eastward as the Eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. This reciprocal relationship—one that seemed on the surface to entrench a long-standing understanding—would now be subject to the game laws of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. Any infringement of provincial/territorial game laws by any band or bands would be considered sufficient reason for withdrawing from the pact. The Stonies also agreed, facilitating a formal written agreement to be signed the following day, 27 September 1895.[63]

Boundary narratives were also being (re)conceptualized and (re)negotiated in the midst of environmental and cultural change. The 1895 agreement, was, above all else, a place where multiple voices and narratives framed by past, present and future meshed as one. It is easy to

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[62] Ibid.

[63] *Memorandum of Agreement made in duplicate at Windermere, District of the Kootenay, Province of British Columbia, This 27th Day of September, 1895*, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143. In his unpublished manuscript, "Truce Between the Kootenays and the Stonys," educator and advocate John Laurie offered a different interpretation of the ways in which indigenous people perceived the height of land, implying that federal government policy *compelled* Stoney hunters to cross the mountains: "From 1885-86 onwards the influx of white settlers, the building of the railway and the building of roads or trails west from Cochrane, brought the Stony Indians to the position in which they could no longer get sufficient game. The Indian Department made it a point to induce the Stonys to go out hunting as much as possible in order to save the cost of providing them with rations." Furthermore, dwindling resources brought the Stoneys over the mountains: "The Stonys were chiefly accustomed to living on mountain animals, moose, elk, and Rocky Mountain sheep. As these animals retreated before civilization so called…the business of getting enough to eat became a difficult matter for the Stonys….The Indians had to go farther and farther into the mountains to get any meat at all." Following the game created new hunting territories and different ways of attaining meat. Laurie saw the height of land transgression as a consequence of federal government imposition rather than an ongoing process of migration that did not necessarily foreground the height of land from the outset: The Stoney desire to "follow their ancient mode of living," in addition to the natural resource landscape that facilitated "the formation of the Province of Alberta and the boundary lines set between Alberta and British Columbia," put the Stony "over the ranges" and directly in the path of confrontation with the Kootenay and Shuswap." John Laurie, "Truce Between the Kootenays and the Stonys," Glenbow Library & Archives, John Lee Laurie Fonds, #M-656-22.

conclude that the Stoney had been dispossessed of their land, victims of Euro-Canadian land-grabbing, but this view misrepresents inter-band politics. By raising up the hegemony of political over natural boundaries in this discussion, however, one fails to see that *both* were in flux. The 1893 agreement, though seemingly logical as both a political and naturally bounded landscape, proved a failure because they were not understood as immutable due to the ecological transformation precipitated largely by the nonhuman world of the mountain landscape. The 1895 agreement conveyed a shared understanding of a landscape that more accurately reflected the intersection of past practices and current political realities.

*Contested Landscapes: From Intercultural Reciprocity to Provincial Legislation*

Controversy erupted again in 1900 when Stony hunting practices collided with the emerging interests of game protection associations. The turn of the century brought a new configuration of interests to the Upper Rocky Mountain watersheds. The establishment of (railway) mountain tourism in general and game hunting in particular created differing views of conservation practices and hardened the lines between indigenous and Euro-Canadian practices.[64] Disagreement between and among indigenous and Euro-Canadian agencies intensified during the early years of the 20th century as local newspapers regularly reported on the so-called extermination of game in the Rockies.[65]

In a response to the tersely written letter sent by W.S. Santo, Secretary and Treasurer of the Windermere Game Association, inquiring as to the "legality" of Stony hunting practices in

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[64] For more on game associations and the conservation ethic, see George Colpitts, *Game In the Garden* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).
[65] See LAC, RG10,Vol. 3855, file 80143.

Kootenay territory and "privileges enjoyed by Indians generally with respect to hunting during the close season,"[66] the Department of Indian Affairs replied:

> I beg to state that, while the Department is always ready to accede to the best of its ability to any reasonable request for information relative to Indian matters, it feels that it might place it in a false position to commit itself to any definite expression of opinion as to the points mentioned by you.

The federal government was sympathetic to the difficult situation that provincial authorities faced with respect to the preservation of game but also felt compelled—as self-designated guardians of the Indians—to uphold the spirit of the treaties. The federal government brought to bear the unenviable position as mediator between province and Indian as an apologia for its position. In the wording, however, was a tacit recognition of two separate competing human-animal relationships:

> Provincial authorities have, as a rule, held that Indians are subject to the provisions of provincial game ordinances….On the other hand, the Indians have always strongly claimed that they have the unrestricted right to fish and hunt over unoccupied lands, and the Department, while in full sympathy with the desire for the preservation of game, if only in the best interests of the Indians themselves, has at times felt constrained as their guardian to question the power of provinces to legislate so as to override Dominion treaty stipulations.[67]

Passage through this landscape was legitimate as a source of cultural practice and nourishment requirement. With respect to the question of aligning provincial boundaries with so-called natural ones, however, the federal government continued to perceive the hunting-for-game and hunting-for-nourishment as distinct realms: As per the 1895 agreement, the Stonies would continue to "have the privilege of hunting as far West as the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers, and the Kootenay and Shuswaps of hunting as far East as the base of the Rocky Mountains on the

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[66] Written letter written by W.S. Santo to the Minister of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, ON, August 1, 1901, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[67] Typed letter from Secretary for the Indian Commissioner for Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, David Laird, to W.S. Santo, September 11, 1901, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

Eastern slope thereof."[68] At the turn of the century landscape boundaries were still determined largely by the variations offered by the nonhuman world.

The discourse of hunting landscapes and territorial sovereignty shifted early in the 20th century from one framed by reciprocity & liminality to one of possession and fixed boundaries. The mechanism for this transformation came as a result of the centrally-imposed legislative process which stated in clearly defined terms who could hunt where, and the terms by which this was to be determined. In turn, the constant, on-going discourse of natural and political boundaries also underwent a profound shift. With this transformation came a different way of 'reading' the landscape of the 1895 Agreement. The 1895 Agreement came to be interpreted through the lens of provincial sovereignty, a political discourse that set the scene for the hegemony of the linear Great Divide landscape narrative. In September 1901 David Laird, Indian Commissioner, responded to concerns over Stoney hunting practices by juxtaposing the 1895 Agreement with the game laws of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. What is most interesting in his letter is the careful consideration of both the 1895 Agreement and provincial/territorial legislation:

> The Department's attention has been attracted to the fact that 61 Vic. Ch. 24, Sec. 12, of the British Columbia Ordinances enacts that "It shall be unlawful for Indians not residents of this Province to kill game at any time of the year." The effect of this upon the agreement referred to is obvious and would appear to afford prima facie ground for [the 1895 Agreement] annulment, but, even were this done, so long as the Territorial government refrains from retaliatory legislation against non-resident Indians hunting within the Territories, there would seem to be nothing to prevent the Kootenays and Shuswaps from encroaching on the recognized hunting grounds of the Stonies without the latter being able to avail themselves of any corresponding privilege.[69]

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.

Laird's interpretation of the politics of enforcing game laws in the face of the 1895 Agreement signaled a new approach on the question of treaties and provincial prerogative—a strategy that signaled an attempt to put an end to indigenous sovereignty. His reading also betrayed a subtle admission that enforcing such a new relationship carried many opportunities for resistance. Putting aside the very real prospect of continued territorial encroachment, Kootenay, Shuswap & Stoney hunting practices could now only occur through the strict lens of their status as provincial/territorial residents. Admitting that so long as the territorial and provincial governments did not engage in a game of "tit for tat", local indigenous groups still maintained "recognized hunting grounds" and could dispense "privileges" at their choosing, suggests that Laird understood that it was far from clear who held the higher hand. Still, any suggestion by an upper-level Federal Indian Office agent that legislation should be considered—in the process reclassifying the provisions of Treaty 7 and rendering the 1895 Agreement moot—threatened to unilaterally reconfigure the landscape towards a centralized geography of nation building. Further arguing that "confining all Indians concerned to the districts within which they would reside," would ultimately be "in the best interests of all simply codified such a process."[70]

This letter signified a different interpretation of boundaries that rejected the intertribal for the inter-provincial. Further, Laird had shifted the focus of identity and exclusion from one rooted in the region to that of *resident* or *non-resident*. Imposing the authority to interpret and implement 'natural' boundaries threatened the very spirit by which any consensual agreement (such as that completed in 1895) had been established. The medium by which this authority would be conveyed would be the law, and the enforcement of such laws would bring the political weight of both provincial and federal Indian Offices closer together.

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[70] Ibid.

On November 20, 1901, J.D. McLean, Secretary for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, acknowledged receipt of a letter from D.M. Eberts, Attorney General for British Columbia, concerning Stoney incursions into British Columbia.[71] The letter was forwarded to Laird the same day, making reference to the earlier letter sent on September 11 directing the Commissioner "to warn the Indians…of the risk they run in crossing into the Province of British Columbia for the purpose of hunting, and to do all in his power to restrain them from so doing."[72] Laird responded only five days later, pointing out that on September 11 he had written the Indian Agent at Morley, informing him of the new British Columbia law forbidding Indians of the Territories killing game on the other side of the Territorial boundary, and warning them of the risk to which they were exposed if they violated the law.[73]

In October 1902, the Northwest Mounted Police began forwarding correspondence concerning the alleged destruction of game by Stoney hunters from Kootenai Brown, the famous hunter and game "guardian". Brown's letter illustrates the misconceptions many game wardens had with respect to Stoney perceptions of land:

> I had a stormy time with the Stonies a few days ago […] they came through the pass laden with meat which they claimed to have killed in B.C. What a mistake it is to allow these vagabonds to wander around at their own sweet will, they kill more game in a week than all of the sportsmen kill in a year, they are allowed to leave their reserve or another, this last time it was to meet the Kootanais. We all know that it was meant to hunt and nothing else.[74]

After calling for the enforcement of game laws through the confinement of Indians on reserve, Brown further expresses his frustrations:

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[71] Typed letter from Secretary of the Indian Commissioner's Office, J.D. McLean to British Columbia Attorney General D.M. Eberts, November 20, 1901. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143

[72] Typed letter from Secretary of the Indian Commissioner's Office to Laird, November 20, 1901, LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

[73] Typed letter from David Laird to J. D. McLean, November 25, 1901, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143

[74] Typed letter from John George Brown, Game Guardian and Fishery Overseer, to the Northwest Mounted Police at Fort Macleod October 15, 1902. Forwarded by Hugh D.A. Davidson to the Department of Indian Affairs October 21, 1902. LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

> There are a great number of Moose come into this District quite lately, no doubt they have been druven [sic] in by the Forest fires on the coast and North last summer, a few days ago a Kootenai killed 7 on the Flatheads. It is a pity to have them slaughtered I hope you will have those Stonies sent home out of the mountains or arrested and punished. You can no doubt understand how certain parties around Morley put them up to this, there is more money in them outside than on the reserve.[75]

This letter is unique for a couple reasons. It is the first letter sent from the Northwest Territories side attesting to the "slaughter" of game in the Territories. As such, it is also an indictment of Kootenay hunting practices. Second, this letter is an example of the effects that environmental trauma—in this case fire—can have on animal movements, rendering the inviability of political boundaries moot during such times. In addition, when juxtaposed with reference to coming through the Kootenay pass "laden with meat,"[76] Brown's observation that the Stoney are "vagabonds" and wanderers becomes little more than rhetoric described as fact. The Stoney were familiar with the passes; they were also attuned to animal migration cycles. Furthermore, as Brown surmises, they had just recently met with the Kootenay. Consequently, the oft-mentioned reference to local indigenes as nomadic types served to separate the Stoney from any intimate knowledge of the places they inhabited. In turn, provincial and federal authorities could claim to have the better interests of the local environment in mind since they did have this knowledge and would enforce the laws that upheld it.

The Department of Indian Affairs continued to obfuscate and delay. In late November, 1902, Secretary James J. Campbell mused on the desirability, "if only in the ultimate interests of the Indians themselves," to consider whether the Department cannot render active assistance towards putting a stop to [big game extermination]:

> Since the Department under the provisions of Sec. 133 added to the Indian Act by Sec. 10, Cap. 29, 53 Vic, brought the Stony band on and

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

after 1st. January 1895 under operation of the Game Protection Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, and that of British Columbia forbids any Indian non-resident within the province to kill game therein, it is in a position, if so disposed, to wash its hands of all responsibility, and tell the respective Provincial Governments to enforce their own regulations.[77]

However, the cost-benefit ratio of business as usual to the twin threats of increased costs and public perception may suggest otherwise:

> The wisdom of this course seems open to question in view of the facts that the extermination of the game will deprive the Indians of an important source of food supply and that the Department cannot escape a certain amount of odium attaching to it in the public mind on account of lawless and destructive action on the part of its wards.[78]

Depriving those deemed in need of protection a vital source of protein was bad wardship, allowing the wanton destruction of wildlife was bad politics.

Between 1902-1905, Stoney action along the height of land was a recurrent topic in correspondence between the Royal Northwest Mounted Police and the Indian Commissioner. The anxiety that provincial and territorial authorities displayed suggests that boundary narratives were still in flux; only now, most of the apparent apprehension seemed to come from districts located on the upper watersheds of the *eastern* slopes. Officials almost always referred to the presence of Stoney Indians *outside* the boundaries of the Northwest Territory as opposed to *inside* British Columbia.[79] On at least one occasion, however, a letter from the Northwest Mounted Police to the Indian Commissioner refuted any widespread destruction of game on the

[77] Typed letter from James J. Campbell to the Secretary of the Office of the Indian Commission , November 28, 1902, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.
[78] Ibid. Campbell suggests that "it seems very doubtful whether these hunting expeditions during the close season are not mainly confined to a comparatively small number of the Stonies referred to in the report as Dixon's Band" Dixon was "readily distinguishable as one of the rare possessors (among Indians) of a wooden leg, so that even when his party may not be visible, their trail is readily recognizable."
[79] Written letter August 15, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

part of the Stoney or even a large presence in British Columbia.[80] Letters also illustrated the inability of authorities to determine just exactly how many Stoney were outside the boundaries of the Territories: "When the Indians are south," Indian Agent H.E. Sibbald remarked, "it is impossible for me to keep track of them."[81] Other letters expressed concern over the fear that an incidence of alcohol poisoning leading to the deaths of two Stoney hunters in Kootenay territory (Upper Elk River) might lead to open conflict.[82] Still others referred to Stoney-Kootenay interaction without any reference to hunting.[83]

*The Age of Railway Tourism and the Undoing of the 1895 Agreement*

Throughout the fall and winter of 1904-05, pressure mounted for the authorities to end Stoney hunting in Kootenay Country. On October 15, 1904 Fernie Chief Constable J.P. McMullen telegrammed Indian Agent J.F. Fleetham in Morley to inform them that they were holding five Stoneys under arrest.[84] When asked to "advise", the reply was brief but

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[80] Written letter by Northwest Mounted Police Inspector Hugh J.A. Davidson to Assistant Indian Commissioner J.H. McIllrie, July 27, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; Letter written by J.A. McGibbon August 8, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

[81] It should be noted that on many occasions, east-west orientations were replaced with north-south ones despite the fact that Stoney hunters did not –as far as can be ascertained in the documentary record—travel across the Medicine Line, yet still crossed provincial/territorial boundaries. Letter written by Indian Agent H.E. Sibbald to Laird, August 14, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, file 80143; written letter from Laird to the Department of Indian Affairs, August 15, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

[82] For more on this incident, see: typed letter from Northwest Mounted Police Superintendent P.D.H. Primrose to Northwest Mounted Police Commissioner A. Bowen Perry, July 25, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143. Also see written by Police Superintendent G.E. Sanders to Sibbald, July 30, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; Written letter by Frank Detachment Corporal J. Millar to Commanding Office, Pincher Creek, August 5, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, no.80143; typed letter written by P.C.H. Primrose Superintendent, Macleod District to Davidson, August 7, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, file 80143; written letter by Fort Steele (B.C.) Indian Agent R.L.T. Galbraith to Sibbald ,July 28, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written letter by Michael Phillips to Davidson, August 5, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; written by Corporal (Frank Detachment) J. Allan to Officer Commanding, Pincer [sic] Creek, August 5, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

[83] Typed letter from A.B. Perry to the Northwest Mounted Police Office (Ottawa), August 7, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, file 80143; Letter written August 8, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, file 80143; letter written by P.C.R. Primrose to Davidson, August 3, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol. 3855, file 80143; typed letter from Sibbald to Reed, August 14, 1903, LAC, RG10, Vol.3855, file 80143.

[84] Written telegraph from Chief Constable, (Fernie Detachment) to Indian Agent (Morely) J.F. Fleetham, LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143.

conciliatory: Indians were to be warned they would be punished if they broke the law.[85] In February 1905, A.W. Vowell called once again for an end to the "periodic incursions made by some of the "North West Indians" into the Kootenay Country for the purpose of killing game.[86] At the same time, provincial authorities recognized a new motive for the Stoney to continue similar hunting practices:

> What prompts the Indians to violate the Game Laws is the fancy prices offered by tourists and others along the line of the C.P.R. for the head & skins of the game killed, something should be done by the B.C. and Northwest Governments to stop this.[87]

It seemed as though the age of the tourist curio had begun.[88]

The discourse of exclusionary and inclusionary landscape boundaries—defined through the fixing of permanent watershed barriers along the height of land—was implemented through the prerogatives of provincial legislation. In order to frame the discussion in this way, it became imperative that the multi-lateral and reciprocal framing agreement of the previous decade be discarded. Much of the correspondence over the next two years signified a legalistic and utilitarian interpretation of territory and boundary (making) no longer grounded by an understanding of the reciprocal and fluid processes of the previous fourteen years. Yet, the rhetoric of alleged violations of Kootenay country (and by implication the Agreement) continued to serve as a trope for the consolidation of provincial sovereignty. Throughout the spring and summer of 1905, officials in B.C. argued that Stoney hunting had nullified the terms of the 1895 Stoney-Kootenay agreement because the former had violated the hunting grounds of the latter. There is no evidence, however, that the Stoney had indeed hunted beyond the limits of the 1895

[85] Ibid.
[86] Letter written by A.W. Vowell to the Secretary of The Department of Indian Affairs February 1905, LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3855, file 80143
[87] Ibid.
[88] For more on the role of the railway and its effects on hunting practices, see E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada : The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1983).

agreement. Certainly the Kootenay did not voice any objection to that effect. Indeed, in a letter titled, "Re: Stoney Indians Hunting in Kootenay District British Columbia" only scant reference is made to the Kootenay District as Kootenay *territory*. Stoney hunters merely "appear" to have hunted outside of the 1895 limits; verification of this important allegation was rendered moot as:

> in any case [the 1895 agreement] was virtually annulled by the legislation of the province of British Columbia 61 Vic. H. 24, Sec. 12 which enacted that "it shall be unlawful for Indians [sic] non-residents of this province to kill game at any time of the year. This legislation leaves the prevention of the trespass complained of in the hands of the province of British Columbia to deal with. [89]

The letter further noted the obligations of the Northeast Territories government when it pointed out that with the Order in Council (under the provisions of Sec.133 added to the Indian Act by Sect. 10, Cap. 29,53 Vic.) the Department brought the Stonies under operation of the Game Protection Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, it exhausted its powers of compulsive interference since there was no provision in the section for bringing the Stoneys under operation of game laws in force in British Columbia.[90]

The federal government continued the twin strategy of obfuscation on the one hand and deference to provincial sovereignty on the other. Through a disingenuous method of extending its discussion of parameters of sovereignty to include those areas where it did not enjoy such liberties, the territorial government attempted to construct an image of benevolence at the same time it began to disassociate itself from the 1895 agreement. The territorial government conceded that since "there is no legal warrant for confining Indians to their reserves or to any particular province…it is not apparent how [police] or game wardens can prevent the Stonies entering British Columbia territory. The federal government may have demonstrated an

[89]Written letter from James Campbell to the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, March 24, 1905, LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3855, f. 80143.
[90] Ibid.

ambivalence towards the question of provincial prerogative in the face of the Indian Act (in particular Section 133), but it left no question that that the issue of Treaty rights—and by implication the 1895 Agreement—was subsumed under the prerogatives of provincial administration. The result was a form of double speak where the federal government could claim that the provinces adhered to the terms of the treaty, at the same time signaling to indigenous communities that the federal government could not step in to guarantee those same treaty rights. Indeed, "for the protection of the Indians themselves," the federal government felt compelled to tell them that the Courts hold that they are only exempted from the operation of provincial game laws to the extent provided for in the said ordinances.[91]

Meanwhile, the terms used to discuss Stoney hunting practices were imposed largely through domestic Canadian legal concepts. Complaints concerning Stoney hunting practices would continue for the next couple years, eventually petering out by the Great War. Nonetheless, issues related to the moral geographies of the Rocky Mountains—what did the landscape mean to various groups and how did they express this?—went largely unresolved. The challenge of multiple landscapes, and how they compel people to think and act within these places, would once again take on a new, contentious dynamic with the establishment of National Parks in particular, and the wilderness idea in general.

*Conclusion*

This narrative of the Stoney-Kootenay/Shuswap hunting dispute—tracing the movement of people and game along the land—is one instance of inscribing geographical boundaries on the landscape of the Rocky Mountains. Grounding these territorial boundaries, and by extension the materials (both living and otherwise) therein through geometrical applications, however, is only

[91] Ibid.

one such way among many. The height of land approach to creating a continental divide landscape may be perceived as a 'natural' landscape but only if one comes to understand this interpretation was culturally specific, mitigated by political and economic expediency, which entailed a moral geographical process of both inclusion and exclusion. Watersheds are, to one degree or another, useful human creations. Establishing fixed *sides* to a watershed speaks to the cultural construction of boundary narratives, and mitigates the complexity of the bioregional hydrological process.

The Stoney-Kootenay/Shuswap hunting dispute of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a consequence of ecological trauma, was marked by engagement among a multiplicity of aboriginal groups and settler governments. What lay at the heart of the conflict was the issue of boundaries. The height of land boundary narrative was one of many competing landscapes that included ranges and valleys. This dispute also revealed how conflicted government claims to speak for both aboriginal peoples and fledgling settler societies obfuscated the situation on the ground; the same situation was felt among local indigenous bands. The result was a fluid and complex series of circumstances that called for the (re)conceptualization of geographies and landscapes. Today, the Continental Divide makes for an easily identifiable poster board frame of reference for the automobile tourist but only at the expense of misinterpreting and/or writing out the boundaries depicted on the *other* panels. In 1905, the prerogatives of provincial jurisdiction and game hunting interests called for the minimization of intermingling landscape perceptions, and imposition of a singular "naturalized" landscape enforceable from a distance and codified through law. What yet remained was an effective way of implementing (and normalizing) this hierarchy of place through the twin complimentary practices of cartographical science and map making art.

# CHAPTER TWO
# MAKING PASSES:
# THE HEIGHT OF LAND & MAPPING THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE (1913-1924)

In the second chapter of the first of its three-volume *Report*, A.O. Wheeler, British Columbia representative to *The Commission Appointed to Delimit the Boundary between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia* reflected on the twin challenges of making meaning and constructing a specific narrative in the process of transforming chaotic landscape forms into the orderly array of maps:

> It is an interesting process: landscapes seen from the dominating height of a peak show a chaos of mountains, snowfields, icefalls, forested valleys, streams and lakes—here, there, everywhere. Often from an exceptional height the irregularity and immensity of the overlook, flecked with snow and partly swathed in clouds, resembles a vast, boundless ocean in a state of turmoil. In the mapping room, this chaotic condition soon resolves itself into orderly array: fragmentary mountain ranges, valleys and streams fit together, isolated peaks assume their proper locations, and what was previously a collection of views, chiefly ups and downs, has become an instructive and accurate map showing the various topographical features as a co-ordinate whole, their extent, trend, and altitude, in addition to general geographical information, conveying many meanings of geological interest to those who have the understanding.[1]

Like other cartographers of the North American West, Wheeler was an example of what author Reif Larsen called a "conqueror in the most basic sense of the word," who, in the process of transferring the vast unknown continent "piece by piece in the great machine of the known, of the mapped, the witnessed"—was also dragging the height of land "out of the mythological and into the realm of empirical science."[2] Wheeler's cartographic work was a method of individual imagination as well as a form of geopolitically informed implementation. Assessing how Wheeler experienced this landscape *in the field*, and whether he perceived it as "chaotic" as an embodied experience, is less clear.

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[1] *Report of the Commission Appointed to Delimit the Boundary between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia* (Ottawa: Office of the Surveyor General, 1917), 16.

[2] Reif Larsen, *The Seleted Works of T.S. Spivet* (Toronto: Hamish Hamilton, 2009), 16

Space-based geographical perception and the place oriented sensibilities of landscape can be part and parcel of the same processes but their symbiotic influences are not necessarily symmetrical. Wheeler's intellectual observations of the experiential-surveying-mapping process provided a window into the imaginative process that is a fundamental part of how one perceives the material elements that comprise one's view. The individual's experience of place is a product of several influences, including (but not limited to) the social and cultural background that one brings to it. At a certain level, however, the bodily interaction with environment mitigates the cultural *a priori* inheritance. Where (and how) one ultimately translates this experience, in turn conditions the next person's negotiations with the same place. Experiencing a place from "the dominating height of a peak" carried specific cultural subtexts at the turn of the century: Peaks were perceived as objects of desire. The apparent progressive transformation of a landscape defined by disarray into a "coordinated whole" could only be achieved far from the place it purportedly represented, and only through the application of technology on to a much different (and smaller) scale. Finally, in rendering known the *unknown,* one was also laying claim to possessing the knowledge that made such a landscape possible. Wheeler, through the apparently *natural* act of rearranging, distinguishing and categorizing the landscape, was also unconsciously implementing the singular height of land idea on a continental and inter-provincial scale.[3]

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[3] Comparing the topographic/cartographic methodology of measuring the height of land with the geological approach reveals a markedly different hierarchy of place. Indeed, in a series of surveys commencing two decades earlier and finishing at the end of the century, the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) under Alfred R.C. Selwyn, G.M. Dawson and R.C. McConnell, made little, if any, reference to the interprovincial boundary as the height of land. That the GSC did not identify it as such should not come as a surprise when making reference to the "geology" sections of their reports but was more spurious when concepts in the "physical geography" descriptions of the same area were restricted to references to "transverse watersheds" and "headwaters"—terms still in wide use describing the Rocky Mountain height of land in late 19th century Canada. See Alfred R.C. Selwyn and G.M. Dawson, *Descriptive Sketch of the Physical Geography and Geology of Canada* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1884) and R.G. McConnell, *Report on the Geological Structure of a Proportion of the Rocky Mountains: Accompanied by a section Measured Near the 51st Parallel* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1887).

Between the 1890s and 1930s a near-obsession with the Rocky Mountain transcontinental height of land among tourists, surveyors and politicians extended far beyond the place itself. Indeed, the height of land became a central part of the larger Western Canadian nation-building narrative, expressed through the image of "The Continental Divide" and "The Great Divide." The motives for this infatuation were numerous but all were, at source, an expression of a particular set of values and assumptions at the heart of territorial expansion and the settlement project. Continuing along the path of imposing a natural and 'naturalized' landscape, the implementation of an interprovincial boundary onto the height of land (the Alberta-British Columbia border) simultaneously became the final large-scale mapping project in the sub-Arctic Canadian west and an exercise in imagination and symbolism. To deny the embodied aspect of this landscape, however, is to sell short the continuing importance of engaging with unique places such as heights of land beyond the merely representational.

This chapter pursues the argument that heights of land had cultural value for more than one particular group at a given time, yet were still locations for the implementation of a specific configuration and meaning of that idea. How one used a system of nomenclature to categorize was instrumental in this implementation. The ways in which the landscape is described, and the lines drawn to express that on a scientific map, can reveal this relation of power. Perceiving the transcontinental height of land as both a hydrological-topographical landscape and a political boundary could be effectively implemented through a systematic process of (re)locating (and rewriting) nodes —*mountain passes*—as a series of 'connecting dots' that would literally meet the height of land at right angles over a 600 kilometre stretch from the 49$^{th}$ parallel to the 120$^{th}$ meridian. The transcribing of these intersections onto maps was essential to the construction of an authorized *and naturalized* landscape. Mapping passes, from at least as far back as the early

18$^{th}$ century, and in particular those that offered imagined economic opportunity and political capital, were integral to connecting the aforementioned dots. Further, the legitimization of a precise Northwest/Southeast linear boundary, intersected at various points by a series of intersecting points, implied an order very much grounded by the space/place dualism framing Cartesian logic. Located within these spaces were as yet the *un*known lands, implying those lands outside the grid *known*. Finally, the way the Boundary Commission arranged the narrative—three volumes discussing fieldwork in chronological order and a separate "stand-alone" volume containing cartographic images of these experiences—facilitated an epistemological knowledge of place that may have glossed over the contingencies that arise in implementing a specific perception of landscape. A close reading of the official Reports *and* the unpublished journals of one of the Commission members suggests a much more complex and conflicted process than the dispassionate prose provided in the Report narrative alone; one that contained its share of the everyday human drama that comes with working in a challenging environment. A more complete picture emerges when one has an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the personal and technical challenges in the field—the "warts and all" anecdotals left out of the published Reports—in conjunction with the more prosaic writing that anchors the scientific.

The categories of analysis for this chapter center on language and meaning. Through an analysis of selected sections of the *Official Report of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission*—passages discussing the motives, mandates and methodology of the Commission; descriptive narratives of field work on selected passes; and the inscription process—the transcontinental height of land geographical implementation process is revealed. Despite their relative isolation and distance from populated centres, the Commission members were far from alone. The fluctuation of the seasons, not to mention the logistics of the field work, kept open

common lines of transportation and communication favoured by the fledgling tourist industry. This public mapping service, then, so closely aligned with the tourist industry, brought the object of the endeavor—"The Great Divide"—into their mutual "backyard." The science of mapping the height of land was never far removed from the consumption of it. Unpublished field notes could periodically reveal experiences, however, very much removed from the dry details of the *Reports*. Together, one can gain further comparative understanding of how the height of land idea, in its eventual adoption as "The Great Divide," was both a natural and naturalized landscape—a place both material in its existence and conceptual in how it was labeled.

*PASSING PASSES: REIMAGINING ALPINE ASSOCIATIVE LANDSCAPES*

Identifying what defines a mountain pass appears, at first glance, a straight forward dispassionate scientific project. It seems hard to imagine, however, conceptualizing a mountain pass separate from its human presence. In this respect, mountain passes are largely defined through the interrelationships of form (nature) and function (culture). Despite what seems to be a persuasive understanding that mountain passes are part of the material geographical world and the imagination one that is brought to human landscapes, the historical literature has, with few exceptions, demonstrated a marked ambivalence when it comes to addressing *passes as places.*[4] Perhaps the dearth of literature on passes is more a reflection of Euro-Canadian hierarchies of place within a mountain environment context, one that places the peaks and adjacent frozen surfaces that comprise the Cryosphere at the top and, a step behind (and below), mountain valleys (with another grudging nod to the settlements there) but has proven to be undecided concerning those spaces in between--*liminal zones.* Further, whereas peaks are both cultural

[4] Irene Spry, "Routes Through The Rockies," *Beaver*, Vol. 294, (Autumn 1963), 26-39. Ian Maclaren's *Mapper of Mountains: P. Bridgland in the Canadian Rockies* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press), provides a glimpse into the life and work of the Dominion Land Surveyor and topographer. Bridgland mapped a large part of the Main Range of the Rockies between 1903 and 1907, and later along the height of land at various Alpine Club of Canada Summer Camps in the Crowsnest Pass region.

constructions (i.e. places to "conquer") and embodied places (rock, wind, air and body precariously enmeshed), passes are poor cousins—halfway points, shoulders. Given that hunters, traders, adventurers and their families have spent centuries travelling through these places in search of their destination, whether vertical or horizontal, the relative ambivalence of the passes in the mountain literature is curious.

Heights of land are given expression by the passes that bisect it; the passes themselves are associative landscapes. In her nomenclature of landscapes, historian Claire Campbell identifies associative landscapes as part of a trilogy of ways of experiencing the land:

> Vernacular landscapes are usually working landscapes that evolve organically over time, often in rural areas. Designed landscapes are ordered arrangements such as the formal gardens created for example, aristocratic Baroque estates. Ethnographic or associative landscapes possess cultural or heritage value for a particular group. Any place, though can exist as more than one type simultaneously.[5]

One of the ways heights of land are invested with associative cultural value is in how people ascribe meaning as they move through them. Social anthropologist Tim Ingold has demonstrated the intimate connection between lines, and the surfaces on which they are drawn. Ingold has responded to those that argue that linearity is strictly a product of the Western colonial process—implying in the process that "those who see linearity in non-Western cultures are either mildly ethnocentric at best, and at worst as amounting to collusion in the project of colonial occupation whereby the West has ruled its lines over the rest of the world"—by asking rhetorically how places could exist if people did not come and go.[6] Distinguishing lines as either threads or traces, Ingold argues that "it is along paths that people, too, grow into knowledge of the world around them, and describe this world in the stories they tell":

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[5] Claire Campbell, *Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 14.
[6] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History (New York: Routledge, 2003)*, 2-3

> Colonialism, then, is not the imposition of linearity upon a non-linear world, but the imposition of one kind of line on another. It proceeds first by converting the paths along which life is lived into boundaries in which it is contained, and then by joining up these now enclosed communities, each confined to one spot, into vertically integrated assemblies. Living along is one thing; joining up is quite another.[7]

Mapping the northwesterly-southeasterly height of land—through a series of intersections with east-west mountain passes, bookended by latitude & longitude—is one such example of the imposition of the line that "joins up" over the line that moves "along."[8]

*SHIFTING ROCKS: MOTIVE, MANDATE, METHODOLOGY*

An associative landscape is grounded as a cultural creation, so may quickly become a matter of imposition and implementation as it mimics the configurations of a country's social relations—which may 'wax and wane' over time. In stark contrast to the international boundary along the 49th parallel, the early articulators of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary seemed to be bound by the twin processes of political expediency *and* the appearances of a natural landscape, framed by a straight line topography in conjunction with the standardization of space (and time) through the scientific method. Determining the boundary, however, was still largely a process of *landscape perception* since the arbiters of such a line were influenced not just by their periodic lack of proximity to the actual boundary previously established, but their absolute location to the height of land. Indeed, fixing the Rocky Mountains *proper* as a unified line of height betrayed a line of sight not just distant but also vertical.

The boundary between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia were defined by Sections 7 and 8 of the Imperial Act 29 and 30 Victoria, Chapter 67:

> 7. Until the Union, British Columbia shall comprise all such territories, within the Dominion of her Majesty, as are bounded to the south by the

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

> territories of the United States of America, to the west by the Pacific Ocean and the frontier of the Russian territories in North America, to the north by the Sixtieth Parallel of North Latitude, *and to the East from the Boundary of the United States Northwards by the Rocky Mountains and the One hundred and twentieth Meridian of West Longitude* (emphasis added).[9]

Further confounding the boundary making process was how to incorporate the exact position of the watershed traverse (division)—the height of land—within the landscape. With respect to that part comprising the Rocky Mountains area intersecting the 49th latitude and 120th meridian, the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands determined that:

> Between the International Boundary and the 120th degree of longitude, the Interprovincial Boundary is the line dividing the waters flowing into the Pacific Ocean from those flowing elsewhere. This line may cross several times the meridian of 120 [degrees] longitude. Should this be the case, it is proposed that the Interprovincial Boundary follow the watershed line from the International Boundary to the most northerly crossing of the meridian and thence follow the meridian to the 60th degree of latitude. The watershed line being a natural feature is preferable to the meridian as a boundary and there are as many chances that the proposal, if agreed to, shall be in favour of one Province and of the other.[10]

The Surveyor General perceived the watershed line as a more "natural feature" for a boundary than the meridian, on account that the former was unruly since it crossed the latter several times. The watershed as a potential boundary line was also seen as a pragmatic decision since it would no doubt find favour among provincial and federal governments. Still, the 120th meridian was the measure by which the division line was labeled "natural." There seemed further to be another set of contingencies that compelled governments to conflate the 'natural' with the 'convenience' of the "watershed line."

> It will be seen that the Interprovincial Boundary, from the International Boundary to the most northerly crossing of the 120th meridian of west

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[9] *Report of the Commission Appointed to Delimit the Boundary Between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia*, Volume I. (Ottawa: Office of the Surveyor General, 1917), 1.
[10] Ibid.,1-2.

> longitude, exists as a natural topographical feature, namely: the crest or watershed of the Rocky Mountains. Its precise delimitation, therefore, was not a matter of urgent necessity for many years after the Act was passed, but various causes arose, and grew in importance year by year, which made such delimitation advisable and even necessary.[11]

These causes were rooted firmly in the ground, and brought to the surface questions of property and privilege.

The discovery of coal deposits at widely separated points along the boundary, and extending over large areas on either side of it, had brought the issue of provincial interests to the attention of the Crown (which maintained propriety over natural resources). The Crown could lease these areas either in the right of the Dominion of Canada or the Province of British Columbia. The Crown had taken the position that any previous surveying—whether in the service of the Dominion or the Province—had been merely provisional since the watershed (now identified as the boundary) was nowhere "so well defined" on the ground as one may claim it is. Further, any surveying completed in the wider passes had not only proven inaccurate but overlapped in some places.[12] Still other causes for concern included the growing value of the immense forest reserves on both sides of the main range, as well as the growing need for information concerning the various lines of communication across the range from one province to the other as settlement approached the summit on either side. By extension, knowledge of transport routes other than those already surveyed for railways (i.e. wagon roads and pack trails) were also cited as important considerations for a more precise boundary.[13]

Those clamoring for transport routes through the passes represented the class interests of a largely urban group. This group was more interested in the iconography and consumption of the "Great Divide" height of land than any commodities that could be produced out or from it.

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

The nascent birth of the National Park system came in lockstep with the wilderness tourism industry. Both public and private interests were significant factors in implementing a permanent interprovincial boundary defined by the height of land. Indeed, in looking back on a decade of survey work, the Commission recognized its role as an agent for the promotion of the Mountain Parks for the tourist trade was not just a process of creating a commodity but an experiment in landscape production as well:

> Until very recently the people of Canada have, on the whole, been inclined to view our wonderful parks without much enthusiasm; as a long term investment which might possibly be valuable some day in the future as the only possible use to which some millions of acres of mountainous country could be put, in view of their otherwise useless character; in fact the National Parks have been regarded as an ornate but unproductive background for the wide prairies with their more obvious wealth of natural resources.[14]

This passage was remarkable for its interpretation of regional landscapes that, while on the surface, came across as natural places, were in fact evaluated solely through their human use values. The Commission interpreted its mandate partly as one that must successfully contribute to the transformation of the height of land into a "useful" landscape through the National Parks system; a place that could finally stand on its own as a separate but equal commodity to its Prairie neighbour.[15]

Commissioners viewed their work, at least in hindsight, as a vital part of that challenge. Indeed, the Commission argued that its work had stimulated future interest in the Parks through the transformation of the landscape into a more human-friendly one. For example, by surveying "the majestic peaks of the great chain" that formed the Rocky Mountain summit, future surveys

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[14] *Report, Volume III*, 84.

[15] For more on the "useful land" interpretation see R. C. Brown, "The Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural Resource and National Park Policy in Canada, 1887-1914," in eds. J.G. Nelson & R. Scace, *The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow* (University of Calgary, 1968). For more on the intersection of tourism and Parks see Leslie Bella, *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987) and Pearl Ann Reichwein, *Beyond the Visionary Mountains: The Alpine Club of Canada and the Canadian National Park Idea, 1906 to 1969* (Ottawa: Ph.D. Dissertation, 1995).

were now possible. Further, the mapping of travel routes constituted a permanent record which welcomed further investigation of "some of the most difficult and interesting parts" of the mountain range.[16]

According to the Commission, scientific application was the means by which the prevailing commercial, aesthetics and nation building interests could be achieved:

> It was realized that while the summit of the Rocky Mountains, established by law as the Boundary, constituted one of the world's most stupendous interprovincial barriers, there was very little scientific information as to its exact location. In the railway passes and at a few other points the position of the summit had been established, but for hundreds of miles the backbone of the Continent was shown existing on maps as a dotted line whose curves have in some cases been shown by the Commission's work to be more graceful than accurate.[17]

This passage, though written at the end of the Rocky Mountain portion of the Commission's mandate, is remarkable for illustrating the contrast in values and perceptions at the heart of the boundary making process. The lingering liminality of the landscape, despite claims to the contrary, is also revealed. Hyperbole aside, the Commission expressed the necessity of constructing an 'unknown' in order for the 'known' to be normalized. Further, the subtle reference to railway passes as places of certitude reveal the economic motivations behind this knowledge.

The necessity of micromanaging the interprovincial boundary arose in the wake of a constellation of social relations marked by immigration, settlement, natural resource commoditization and tourism. A naturalize*d* topographical feature marked by the overlapping of the height of land as a watershed marker served as a "provisional" boundary only insofar as there was little concern with what was there and who had an interest in laying claim to it. Suddenly, the inherent fluidity of the watershed was no longer acceptable. Indeed, previous interprovincial

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[16] *Report*, *Volume III*, 84.
[17] Ibid.

boundary demarcations that put aside fluid delineations of the border were seen as a shortsighted failure that needed to be addressed as soon as possible. It is under these circumstances that the mapping of the height of land should be seen as a vehicle for the normalization of a form of self-disciplinary surveillance.[18] Ascertaining what "The Great Divide" landscape represented, and how it could be employed as a socio-spatial narrative, becomes evident when viewed through the survey and mapping process of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission, a task that only "the geographer's point of view" could accomplish.[19]

This unique and universal vision had the attention of the two provincial governments and the federal government as well. After a meeting between the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands and the Surveyor General of British Columbia in April 1912, mutual Dominion and Provincial Orders-in-Council were made and approved for the creation of "A Commission to delimit the Boundary between the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia." From the beginning, the power and responsibilities of the three-person Interprovincial Boundary Commission were also tripartite in nature, reflecting a need to share the costs to be sure, but also one that signified a provincial and national mandate. By mutual consent of the heads of the Land Survey Departments of both provincial governments and their federal counterpart, it was arranged that the work of the Commission be carried on under the direct supervision of the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands. Richard William Cautley represented the Province of Alberta, Arthur O. Wheeler worked for British Columbia, and J.N. Wallace served as the Dominion Land Surveyor.

[18] The concept of "self-disciplinary surveillance" is borrowed from the neo-Foucauldian model of the panoptic gaze, in particular the idea that "visuality is a trap." Topographical and cartographical practice falls under this rubric. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Penguin, 1977).
[19] *Report, Volume I*, 3.

The interpretation of the boundary, much like the mandate of the Commission, was to be determined largely through prescriptive practices which were at the very least more amenable to experiential knowledge than those regulations that directed what not to do. There were four sections. Some room was provided for 'on the spot' decision making on the ground "but only in response to an inability to successfully apply the stated guidelines to a specific task." The space between conception and practice provide a glimpse into the negotiations between materiality and mind that is inherent in any landscape construction. The first section, titled "Instructions" included 17 items in total. The first four 'instructions' were concerned solely with the necessity of implementing a 'naturalized' landscape—in this case, the hydrological system watershed—through manipulating in advance, if necessary, what one expected to find. For example, after explicitly instructing the Commission to privilege the watershed line over the 120th meridian and to ensure that basins straddling the watershed were divided evenly, it was further instructed that:

> 3. Should any place be found where water originally flowing to one side has been artificially diverted to the other side, the boundary shall be defined as if the stream had never been diverted and were still flowing in its original channel.[20]

It remains unclear as to the means by which the survey would determine a place where water had been "artificially diverted." Further, this directive suggested a rejection of alternative human and nonhuman approaches to land and water interaction. Did this instruction imply the rejection of indigenous engineering? Did this prescription extend to the activities of beavers or those processes created by land or rock slides? These instructions or directives convey a set of anthropocentric attitudes and values whose roots nonetheless rely on some measure of willful imagination.

[20] Ibid., p. 8

The next prescription offered an opportunity for the mediation of alternative ways of experiencing the landscape through the survey process:

> 4. Where the watershed line is sharp and well defined, it shall be adopted, but where the land is flat or rolling and where there might be some doubt as to its position, it shall be defined by a series of straight lines running given distances on stated bearings in the general direction of the sinuous line of watershed and monuments shall be established at the points of deflection. [21]

In other words, in the field the watershed line, a twisting path, need not be the arbiter of the boundary but still the final product—the map—must show it does. Understanding how the "sharp and well defined" alongside "flat and rolling" were not so much oppositional as inverse of each other would be written out of the map. The surveyors embodied experiences along the way would help them to make sense of a supple landscape but the implementation mandate of the Commission left no room for writing in depth about it in the *Official Reports*.

*BREAKING UP & BUILDING DOWN: TRANSCRIBING THE PASSES*

Implementing the interprovincial height of land boundary involved more than just the relatively universal practice of line drawing. Inscribing right angles from the height of land watershed traverse was mandatory in the durability of a permanent naturalized landscape. Consequently, priorities were given to surveying specific passes—"the portions of the boundary requiring first attention"—spread out over approximately 1000 kilometres in a northwest-southeast axis. In determining these passes the Interprovincial Boundary Commission was also revealing what some of the qualities were that made these passes associative landscapes. Section #5 illustrates a particular hierarchy of passes which may seem products of collective historical memory but, upon closer reading, also reveals the geopolitical motivations for the prioritizing of these places from the outset:

[21] Ibid.

(a) The Crowsnest Pass, owing to the proximity of mining properties.
(b) The Vermilion Pass, owing to the construction of the motor road from Banff to Windermere
(c) The Howse Pass, owing to the proximity of timber claims
(d) The Kicking Horse Pass, Simpson Pass and White Man Pass, owing to their lying within or adjacent to populated areas…
(e) The Athabaska Pass which may possibly become a railway route
(f) The S. Kootenay, the N. Kootenay, N. Fork and Kananaskis Passes.
(g) The Moose Pass, which may become of importance as a feasible route to the North via the Smoky River
(h) The Robson Pass, which is of no importance, except as one of the most striking scenic centres of the entire mountain region[22]

Describing Robson Pass in such an odd, disjunctured, and perhaps ironic way actually makes clear what exactly qualified for the Commission when put together with the rest of the list. The status of Robson Pass as both a place "of no importance" and "one of the most striking scenic centres of the entire mountain region" speaks to the different ways mountains—and passes in particular—were valued as 'useful lands' at the turn of the century. Indeed, Robson Pass may have been too inaccessible to exploit as a resource but its potential value as an aesthetic location along another important (and fledgling) railway line was too important to neglect. Priorities were given to Crowsnest, Vermilion and Howse Passes due not to their aesthetic promise but to their anticipated values as places of resource extraction and spaces of commodity flows & consumption.

Each of these passes had long been, to one degree or another, important routes only now the terms of exploitation were more acute. Amendments called for the establishment of the boundary "in any passes of small extent which may be found to be immediately adjacent to [the height of land], and not separated by any high mountains from the passes already specified" provided they did not result in any "undue delay" of the Boundary Survey."[23] The Boundary

[22] Ibid., 8-9.
[23] Ibid., 10.

Survey would implement its work through the prioritization of places and the subsequent linking of these passes with other lesser known, and hence less economically viable ones.

Survey work involved a conceptual (re)placement of the passes from the watershed, sundering the ecological character of the landscape. This approach, rooted in scientific method, was expected to be rigorous and accurate given the property and possession motives. The spatial scale and perception of landscape would undergo geographical transformation as a requirement for its transcription on to paper. At odds with this directive, however, were the means by which those on the ground would have to (re)conceptualize their approaches to this methodology. Technical assumptions could no longer have explicit privilege over experience when that body of knowledge was taken to the field. The assumption of an external material reality would be challenged from the outset with negotiating practice and the "frequently obscure:"

> Since the watershed is sinuous and, in the passes, a frequently obscure line it is not possible to establish its actual position by placing monuments at various points along its length, and it is therefore necessary to establish the Boundary as a series of straight lines which approximate the true position of the watershed. Thus the survey of the Boundary in the various passes…shall as nearly as possible coincide with the actual line of watershed, or shall at least equalize the areas cut off by such straight lines on either side of the watershed.[24]

The "actual line" of watershed was hardly a line at all, at least not one that wasn't "obscure;" coming close would have to suffice. Detecting the "true position" of the watershed—assuming there was one—could be rendered moot, however, merely by drawing a boundary somewhere near it. Thus the boundary becomes a series of innumerable "arbitrary" designations and just another "ordinary line survey." The power to implement such a line would ultimately be established through the materials inscribed on the land.

[24] Ibid., 10.

After a brief discussion on the extension of the straight line boundary in passes to the timberline on either side of the pass, as well as the varied ground conditions that challenged cutting out trail lines, the report broadly classified the character of each watershed/pass junction as being either "determinate" or "indeterminate." Determinate landscapes were those places that displayed a specific and defined set of "limits."[25] Indeterminate watersheds, on the other hand, were "more varied in character", and their "lack of definition" due to several causes, including:

1. Marsh or muskeg land in which the flow of drainage is not perceptible
2. Places where the water of a stream, a lake or a glacier divides and flows on one side towards the Pacific Ocean and on the other side towards the Arctic Ocean
3. Land-locked areas which have no direct surface drainage.
4. Broad mountain sides, which are, to all intents and purposes, inclined planes without clearly marked or continuous indications of drainage, and on which very slight variations in inclination would deflect the drainage one way or the other.
5. Broken ground in which the surface is hummicky or cut up by numerous small ridges into a succession of irregular depressions without outlet. This kind of surface drains subterraneously, so that it is impossible to determine where the watershed is from surface indications.[26]

Each of the above scenarios was broad enough in terms so as to ensure that in the event of an encountered scenario, measures would be instantly taken in accordance with the instructions. In distinguishing these passes as "indeterminate" landscapes, however, the Commission was tacitly suggesting that the boundary (watershed) did not necessarily define the elements therein (the water). The transcription of these undefined places on to the map would serve to mask these irregularities, and monuments (such as those at Kicking Horse Pass and Vermillion Pass) at others would serve as effective mediums of knowledge construction, historical commemoration

[25] Ibid., 11.
[26] Ibid., 12.

and inter-provincial boundary implementation. One could not traverse these passes without being aware of a bordered landscape whose premier qualities were seemingly invisible.

*From Kicking Horse to Palliser By Way of Robson: Mapping the Passes, Connecting Dots*

Over the course of a decade, the Interprovincial Boundary Commission worked towards the implementation of a boundary narrative legitimized by a particular landscape vision. Throughout its mandate, the Commission negotiated the conventions of abstract geographical methodology with the necessary improvisations that came as a consequence of working (and living) in unbounded places. The Commission intended to map the passes by 'connecting dots'—but in fashioning a narrative of this kind *on paper*, what got lost in the process were the idiosyncrasies of each *pass as place*. The passes lost their ecological qualities through a series of prescribed lines and colours.

Volumes I-III detailed the survey and topographical work commenced in spring 1913 and completed in autumn 1924. Although the general narrative was chronological, the temporal-spatial trajectory presented in the *Report* traveled a different route. The height of land was measured in accordance with seasonal and environmental conditions, resulting in a rather different linear *process*--one that presented differently when on paper. Early (and late) snowpack, in addition to periodic fire and supply line depletions, inhibited the Commission from working along the height of land in a singular direction. In general, the volumes attempted to balance the experiential methodologies of field work within a formulaic, conventional framework. The final product was a fascinating and instructive glimpse into the world of the scientist/author/authority working and living along the height of land. Within each chronological section a detailed description of surveys undertaken that year followed an

introductory "description of operations." Separate sub-sections for individual passes were connected by brief descriptions of overland migration between places. The importance of connecting past, present and future was evident in the brief description of history and origin of each pass as well as its topography and inscription of boundary lines & land survey connectors. Twenty-one passes in total were mapped between 1913 and 1916.

Passages on topographical and boundary lines demonstrated the challenges of reconciling prescribed methodology and experience into a seamless narrative. From the outset, the work of the Commission would be affected by a host of environmental conditions that could only be imperfectly captured through field work. Furthermore, the hierarchy of the passes was part of a larger discourse of landscape change and industrial capital. Keeping in mind the instructions set forth by the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands, the Commission's decision to begin field work at Kicking Horse Pass was spurious for a couple reasons. First, the access offered by rail allowed for the relative ease of transport. Second, the Commission noted that the ease of measuring the Pass' slopes was in no small part due to the largely denuded landscape that came as a byproduct of railway construction and maintenance. At the same time, an absence of "green timber" and lumber, offered, in return, a readily available supply of material for the concrete monuments necessary for inscribing the landscape.[27] From the outset, survey work was influenced by environmental conditions (i.e. fires and landslides) that were, in return, products to some degree of industrial capital. The processes and outcomes of the survey work, then, were already mediated by those very conditions that precipitated the work in the first place. The surveyors did not work unmolested from the 'outside,' whatever form that may be.

*Connecting the Dots I: From Kicking Horse Pass to Vermillion Pass*

[27] Ibid., 27.

The first pass to be measured was also the first traversed by rail. The crew came face to face with an unanticipated landscape:

> At the summit an artificial diversion has been made of the water of the glacier stream, which originally flowed wholly to the east. This diversion has been arranged by the Canadian Pacific Railway by the construction of two concrete channels, one curving to the east and the other to the west. An artistic rustic sign marked "The Great Divide" completes a realistic presentation of the division of the waters.[28]

Aesthetic sensibilities were already at work mediating (and naturalizing) the transcontinental height of land the moment the train traversed the watershed. In the world of making passes and dividing waters, it was possible to be "an artificial diversion" and "realistic presentation at the same time." The Kicking Horse Pass section of the height of land was hardly a "pristine wilderness" area at the time.

The concise vocabulary in the crew's scientific description of the pass is what one would expect from professional surveyors considering these landscapes as present and future sites of communication and commerce: Detailing the reduction in the grade from 4.8% to 2.16% is significant and definite. In other sections, however, the narrative becomes more imagined than descriptive, especially as one neared the pass:

> The watershed is the dividing line between the headwaters of a small stream which, rising in a glacier to the south between the shoulders of Popes Peak and Mt. Niblock, turns easterly close to the summit of the pass, and the headwaters of Kicking Horse River, which rise close to the summit and flow westerly, via Summit Lake, to Sink Lake. From the latter there is no surface flow, its drainage appearing in springs near Wapta Lake. [29]

The spatial scale also changed as one approached the height of land. A need to make sense of the local landscape took hold, but not at the expense of a larger continent-wide narrative. The importance of tracing a line from the height of land to a distant point took precedence. For

[28] Ibid., 30.
[29] Ibid., 28.

example, in determining the principal source of the Kicking Horse River—Cataract Brook which drained out from Lake O'Hara—the Commission linked its flow westerly to Columbia River, joining at Golden some 45 miles farther west. From this seemingly localized water course, the Commission proceeded to a more generalized observation that on the western side of the height of land, water flowing from the Kicking Horse Pass to the Pacific Ocean passed through these two rivers only, while to the east the water flowed through many different streams before reaching Hudson Bay.[30] In presenting this picture of these watersheds, the Commission was also unconsciously constructing a specific linear narrative of nation framed by hydrology. From the "small glacier stream" sourced at the pass, a discursive straight line runs through Bath Creek to Bow River, South & North Saskatchewan Rivers and onwards to the Nelson River system and Hudson Bay. This seemingly unbroken linear flow took the height of land literally at the *head* of the landscape in the narrative. The pass had become a place neither solely material nor cultural.

In their description of the watershed line between the summit of Kicking Horse Pass to the summit of Vermillion Pass (approximately 30 kms.) the surveyors wove aesthetic landscape descriptions into the more prosaic narratives associated with the cartographic idea. For example, the surveyors provided a visual interpretation of the watershed line.

> The watershed lies along the crest of a serrated ridge forming the apex of the range and rising in numerous high and more or less isolated peaks of very varied form. There are three distinctly marked groups in this ridge: Abbot Pass, Wenkchemna Pass and Boom Lake Pass. The area it dominates on both sides may justly be classified as a climax of Rocky Mountain scenery and is a most popular tourist resort.[31]

This passage was an attempt to conflate and couple the romantic-infused *sublime* with the more utilitarian and quantifiable properties of the *beautiful* landscape necessary for promoting it in the service of the nascent tourist industry. In some cases, the sublime character of the passes

[30] Ibid., 30.
[31] Ibid., 32-33.

transmitted a measure of mortality. For example, the crew discussed the Victoria and Lefroy Glaciers ("Lakes in the Clouds") as the location of Lake Louise, a place where "the Canadian Pacific Railway has built and operates a magnificent chateau to which thousands of tourists come during the summer." At the head of the Lake, and on the height of land, Abbot Pass was identified as a "Death Trap" owing to the fact that avalanches constantly swept it from side to side. Such descriptions seemed inconsequential for an authorized report and more tangential to promoting the usefulness of such places as tourist commodities. Consequently, the pass could only be crossed by mountaineers—and they were increasing in numbers as mountaineering gained in popularity for people with the means to do so. Paradise Valley, for example, was noted as "famous for [its] scenic beauty and Wenkchemna Pass as "a mountaineer's pass."[32]

*Connecting Dots II: From Vermillion Pass to Simpson Pass*

The methodical process of nodal line making continued in field work between Vermillion and Simpson Passes. Vermillion Pass was noted in the *Report* as "the first pass southeast of Kicking Horse Pass suitable for a main line of travel across the range. It is distant from it nineteen miles in direct distance and is seven miles southwest of Castle Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway."[33] The Commission noted that six miles southwest of the pass were mineral springs of which iron oxide is a large component. The area was of historical interest due to its location as a rendezvous spot for indigenous groups who used the ochre located there to gather material for war paint "and other decorative purposes." The extensive remains of old teepee poles in the area offered material evidence of its previous (and quite possibly continuous) use.[34] As both a material source and ritualized landscape, the ochre beds of the Vermillion River were

[32] Ibid., 33.
[33] Ibid., 35.
[34] Ibid., 35.

clearly an important place for various indigenous groups passing through-- important enough to be referenced in the Reports.

For the survey crew, the Vermillion Pass landscape was one node of several extending along the height of land in a southerly direction. Nevertheless, this pass held special significance owing to the fact that the British Columbia, Alberta and Dominion Governments, with the cooperation of the Canadian Pacific Railway, had recently undertaken the project of constructing an automobile-worthy road from Banff to Windermere. The western terminus of the road would intersect with the main trunk road connecting the Golden CPR stop with Fort Steele on the Kootenay River. On the B.C. side, the Banff-Windermere work had proceeded in both directions, from Windermere north and from Vermillion Pass south. On the Alberta side, the road up the Bow Valley was almost complete, and serviceable for travel from Bow River Crossing to the summit of the pass.[35] Surveying the Vermillion Pass section of the height of land would also aid in completing an enclosed bi-provincial motor vehicle loop.

The Commission's work must necessarily be seen through the optics of national narrative building and economic imperative, however, the comprehensive scope of the surveying work is lost if one restricts interpretation to this characterization alone. The Commission viewed *all* passes along the height of land as tangible places of intersection in the greater construction of the interprovincial boundary. It was one thing for the Commission to delineate the boundaries of those passes that carried significant historical memory and contemporary economic opportunity. The task of bringing *into line* those passes in the shadows, however, could be both (more) physically demanding and conceptually challenging. The conditions the surveying party regularly faced are illuminated in these moments, of which there were many. For example,

[35] Ibid., 36.

between Vermillion and Simpson Passes—a distance of 14 miles directly but 26 miles along the height of land—lay the Mt. Ball group, "a series of high peaks and ridges." Two minor passes, Ball Pass and Redearth Pass, divided the mountain group into three distinct sections. About 1.5 miles southwest of Redearth Pass lay a third small pass, but owing to its location above timber line and steep grade, could only be approached on foot.[36]

The minor passes served as nodes between the major shoulders. On numerous occasions, however, descriptions of the line between these lesser nodes took on a life of their own. A certain degree of creative tension entered into the narrative:

> On leaving Vermilion Pass summit the watershed line ascends to the crest of the north shoulder of Storm Mt. and follows the ridge in a roughly semi-circular curve around the north and east perimeter of a rock-walled amphitheatre containing two little glacial lakes tributary to Vermilion River. It then, in a nearly south direction, ascends to the summit of the bold, isolated peak of Storm Mt. At the eastern base of the mountain, on the Alberta side, lie the Twin Lakes, charming little tarns of a brilliant blue, well stocked with trout. The same direction is continued to the camera station, Storm Ridge S., when the line swings southwest on an erratic course to the spur…then, turning at nearly a right angle, it follows the crest to the summit of Mt. Ball, 10825 ft.[37]

Passages such as the above are numerous throughout the *Report.* Semi-circular curves and erratic courses, *on the surface,* would seem to be antithetical to the practice of linking up with camera stations and maintaining right angles. Of course, this description of the line-making process between passes suitably demonstrates that right angles are *nearly* right. Further, the surveyor could be excused from time to time for injecting his own personal impressions of the landscape. What the Commission narrative suggests, however, is that multiple linear interpretations within landscapes existed, especially in places where the collective historical

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 40.

memory of a cultural group was limited to its own. An absence of any apparent physical trace did not imply that the physical traces had always been absent.

*Connecting Dots III: Yellowhead Pass*

Commission work at Yellowhead Pass was framed by an understanding of its place in Canadian history. In setting the historical context, the Commission remarked on its fate as both a fledgling CPR route and, earlier, potential main route of fur trade travel. In neither case, the Report noted, was the pass predominant. On the other hand, the Commission remarked that "The Yellowhead" was crossed by two other transcontinental lines of the Canadian National Railways. Further, although not generally in use by the voyageurs as a main route of travel, it was utilized by their immediate successor to get from the Athabaska main route to the headwaters of the Fraser River, only to be abandoned due to the difficulties one faced navigating the stream. Indeed, mounting casualties had rendered the route unusable.[38] The Commission also identified The Yellowhead as Leather Pass on account of the supplies of dressed moose and caribou skins that were brought over it to outlying posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. Further, the movement of non-human actors through the pass was concurrent with human migrations:

> Reference has been made to it as Jasper House Pass, and Cowdung Pass, the latter name originating likely from the fact that stragglers from the vast buffalo herds roaming the prairies in those early days worked their way up from the Athabaska valley and over the summit to the lake on the other side, which was originally known by that name.[39]

The Commission description of Yellowhead Pass was a colorful and animate history of an unbounded place; a pass that continued to change in the eyes of those who used it.

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[38] *Report, Part II,* 19.
[39] Ibid.

In describing its topography and characteristics, the Commission was limited to framing the Yellowhead landscape in a grid-like manner, placing the pass in a general east and west direction against the watershed which "crosses [the pass] on a very erratic course from southeast to northwest:"[40]

> [Eastward], starting at Miette River, proceeding to the Athabaska River northeasterly to its namesake lake, then downstream to Great Slave Lake by way of Slave River. From Great Slave Lake, Mackenzie River, the great waterway of the north, flows northwesterly to the Arctic Ocean. [Westward], the water from Yellowhead Pass divide is tributary to Fraser River, the south fork of which flows northwesterly for some two hundred and fifty miles, when it describes a swift curve, and flowing south dome five hundred miles farther, enters the Pacific Ocean not far from the city of New Westminster.[41]

This description continued the formulaic presentation of the major passes as watershed sources with a common beginning and far-flung end, encompassing a large area of territory normalized through the natural process of water flow.

Detailed field-work descriptions of Yellowhead Pass revealed a landscape setting already intimately connected to other regions by rail and the hierarchy of place that comes with comparing and contrasting. For example, Commission cartographic mappings of Yellowhead Pass were undertaken within constant sight of CNR lines. The Commission commented that at the pass summit, the Canadian National Railway lines, which were on opposite sides of the approaching valleys in either direction, converged to within 110 feet of one another, the north road-bed being ten feet higher than that to the south.[42] The pass was also less than aesthetically pleasing:

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[40] Ibid., 20.
[41] Ibid., 20-21.
[42] Ibid.

> Yellowhead Pass, at the crossing of the watershed, is not of striking appearance, because it is a wide, low pass and the hills in the immediate vicinity are of a very secondary character, whereas the really fine mountains on either side are at such a considerable distance as to be invisible from it.[43]

The unfavourable description of the Yellowhead Pass landscape speaks more to what a culture considers to be aesthetically valuable than what the Pass meant as a site of history. The surveyor's hierarchy of landscape seemed to value vertical sightlines over other less imposing forms. Although it is unclear to what reference the labeling of hills as "secondary in character" implies—are the hills in and of themselves unimpressive compared to others or are they lower in height as compared to mountains?—what seemed to trouble the Commission most was the *inability to see the mountains from the pass.* Again, one may question the validity of this statement since accompanying photos seem to suggest that the mountains *are* visible, at least from the summit. In any case, the insertion of this description in a section that is otherwise framed by the twin dispassionate narratives of measurement and linear water flow suggests that each pass situated on the height of land was, by virtue of its location-- and weighted down by the other passes along the height of land--already endowed with the twin characteristics of the sublime and beautiful. When one (or both) was missing, the pass was somehow less natural—even more when compared to other passes described in detail. Commission members from time to time allowed for landscape vision to enter into geographical discourse.

*Circles in the Stream: Athabaska Pass & Committee Punch Bowl*

Some passes were more receptive as nexus of geographical abstraction and landscape practice. The associative landscape essence was more apparent in these places, largely through acts of omission rather than inclusion. In its introduction to field work in the Athabasca Pass

[43] Ibid.

area, the Commission recognized the profound importance of inscription in the narratives of the *British North American* fur trade:

> The Athabaska Pass summit is the crossing of the Continental Divide used by the North West and Hudson's Bay Fur Trading Companies when travelling to and from their headquarters at Fort Edmonton and the Columbia River trading and hunting grounds. Undoubtedly many parties of hunters and voyageurs must have passed over it but, strange to relate, very little sign of the travel of those early days is left and, outside of a few ancient blazes, the trail has been almost obliterated by time.[44]

The physical traces of this landscape inscription may have been rendered invisible with the passage of time but through the tacit recognition of its human history, the collective historical memory of the place remained visible. This impression is created through the implication of its peculiarity as a place frozen in time. Arguing that such a place may have had a story to tell, but now lay dormant waiting to be uncovered, privileges the permanency of physical inscription over other ways of rendering meaning to a place.[45] Further, affixing the temporal as a cause for the near extermination of the trail obscures from consideration the ecological flux that constantly occurs in such places, and cannot be 'measured' in segments of finite time. The Athabaska Pass landscape was a place constantly in transformation, and to lay claim to it by virtue of its vernacular, or built environment was no more or less important than other ways of making meaning out of and from a place.

In keeping with the major passes measured elsewhere along the height of land, the "topography and characteristics" section went into great detail discussing the general orientation of the pass—"a little east of north and west of south"—and its orientation where it bisected the watershed line: "west of north and east of south."[46] Descriptions of the east and west

[44] *Report, Volume II*, 93.
[45] Ibid., 93-95.
[46] Ibid., 96.

approaches are formulaic in their linearity but the striking description of the unique characteristics of the pass itself demonstrated that the inherent characteristics that conditioned how the pass was viewed could be significantly different than how it would eventually be mapped as part of the larger interprovincial boundary. At a certain point, both literally and metaphorically, imagination would mark the way the landscape was delineated:

> Directly at the summit of the pass are three little mountain tarns. The centre one, which is on the watershed, is known as the Committee Punch Bowl, according to White's Place Names in the Southern Rockies; "presumably a reference to the governing committee of the North West Company who are reputed to have frequently celebrated with the assistance of the fishing bowl." This tarn sends its waters both north and south, the two others draining respectively to the Arctic and Pacific Oceans.[47]

Here was a place that both conformed to *and* defied the narrative of a bi-linear separation of the waters from a single spot. The Committee Punch Bowl was, ipso facto, the watershed line. The position (and number) of the accompanying tarns allowed for a simple process of elimination whereby each one of the outside tarns could then be designated a place on either side of the height of land. The immediate direction of water flow leaving the centre tarn, however, went in a north-south direction. What remains unclear in the narrative was whether the waters leaving the centre tarn at right angles to the others actually changed direction, to converge with the others at a specific place. The centre tarn, though on the watershed, was not necessarily a part of it. The Committee Punch Bowl—and the pass in general—is now a National Historic Site, a landscape inscribed into historical memory yet one that nonetheless posed an interesting challenge to the idea that passes are identified through their intersection with the bi-linear composition of continental watersheds.

[47] Ibid., 96-97.

The Commission recognized the unique characteristics of the pass and its challenges to the assumptions that underwrote the mapping process. In deference to the imperative of symmetry, however, the Commission determined that the middle tarn did indeed flow in two different directions. In a rare transition to the second person, the Commission—or, more precisely, "your Commissioners"—identified the pass as "the best example…of a mountain pass of which the actual summit is a small lake, with a visible flow towards the Arctic and Pacific Oceans:"

> Before definitely deciding to treat Committee Punch Bowl as a summit lake, and therefore the key to watershed determination, your Commissioners examined it together, very carefully and found: first, a small but perfectly obvious stream flowing from its northerly end into Alberta: secondly, a small flow into British Columbia from its southerly end. This latter flow was much obstructed by the ancient rockfall, referred to above, but was quite perceptible.[48]

There was little question that the Committee Punch Bowl, straddling the height of land, flowed in at least two directions; its "perfectly obvious" position seemed merely to confirm this. The Commission also demonstrated an implied recognition of the transient and fluid nature of the landscape itself—and the imaginative process that was an inseparable part of it:

> Your Commissioners particularly desire to put themselves clearly on record in regard to the above facts, because it seems probable that the conditions found by them in July, 1921, may easily be found quite otherwise by subsequent visitors to the pass, for the following reasons: The northerly bank of the Committee Punch Bowl, towards Alberta, is, for the most of its distance, a well-defined bank, several feet above water level, with one small break in it, over which the outflowing stream falls six feet in a distance of twelve feet: consequently, a very slight dam at the above point would divert all the water of Committee Punch Bowl into British Columbia, whereas twenty minutes work with a mattock at the same point would divert it all into Alberta. Moreover, the whole of Committee Punch Bowl is at all times subject to the action of rockfalls from McGillivray Ridge.[49]

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[48] Ibid., 118-119.
[49] Ibid.

The Committee Punch Bowl description illustrates the complexities when attempting to firmly implement a fixed political boundary based at least partially on a shifting landscape—in this case the *waters* that comprised the watershed. The opportunity to manipulate the 'natural' in order to simplify was not only an option but a rather feasible one at that. The Committee Punch Bowl was indeed a unique process of geomorphology and hydrology. It was also a place where the past brushed up against the present and future. In constructing this narrative, however, the passage revealed the sentient nature of the land and the prospects of future human and nonhuman agency. Geopolitical boundaries were only as fixed as the living world that it was comprised of. Diverting the waters—and hence, altering the natural landscape—was strictly a theoretical proposition, but one that was not entirely outside the realm of the possible. Indeed, the technology was easily at hand and at little cost time-wise. The Commission's anxiety over its work compelled it to suggest that what it was doing was not written in stone, much less on paper.

*Connecting Dots at the 120$^{th}$ Meridian*

Identifying the 'signposts' of associative landscapes are no more apparent than in those places that comprise the outer limits of such places—but are more accurately *interfaces*. At these spots, boundaries are constructed and negotiated before implemented. In Volume III of the Commission Report, the question of where the measurement of the interprovincial watershed boundary must end was addressed. Referring back to Part I of the first volume, the Commission reiterated Sections 7 and 8 of the Imperial Act, 29 and 30 Victoria, Chapter 67 which had already established the 120$^{th}$ meridian as the interprovincial boundary. Legislation had taken into account the fact that the watershed dividing line crossed the 120$^{th}$ at numerous points. Nevertheless, the legislation pointed out that "the watershed line being a natural feature is

preferable to the meridian as a boundary and there are as many chances that the proposal, if agreed to, shall be in favour of one Province as of the other."[50]

The Commission privileged the naturalized watershed line over the scientific meridian in its narrative, but in the process revealed that *both* were necessary in establishing a boundary. Viewed in this light, it is apparent that geomorphological/hydrological and longitudinal perceptions were not just necessary in the construction of a bounded territory—they were necessary to the construction of a specific surface landscape. The 120th meridian was as much vertical as it was longitudinal; likewise the height of land became horizontal as well as vertical. Where the height of land ended and where the 120th meridian started—or vice-versa for that matter—was fundamental to an attempt to create a seamless, fixed territory. The necessity of 'linking up' speaks back to the inherent need to create order out of disorder for the purposes of mapmaking, interprovincial boundary making and the Dominion Land Survey. The assumption that all parties involved would agree to this measure suggests the transcontinental height of land-watershed implementation process was complete by the time of the Commission.

The urgent necessity for the survey of the 120th meridian arose from a number of more or less distinct considerations:[51]

> In the first place the valuable character of the land adjoining the 120th meridian on the south side of Peace River attracted a large number of settlers to what is known as Pouce-Coupe district. The greater part of this settlement is within the boundaries of Peace River Block,[52] which is subdivided as a normal extension of the Dominion Lands System. But there were a number of settlers who desired to take up land adjoining the 120th meridian in British Columbia territory. In order to deal with such

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[50] *Report*, *Parts IIIA-B*, 83.
[51] Ibid., 85.
[52] "Peace River Block comprises 3,500,000 acres of land granted to the Dominion Government by the British Columbia Government in lieu of lands alienated by the British Columbia Government in the 20-mile railway belt along the Canadian Pacific Railway. British Columbia retains the right of administration within the Block, and also to gold and silver. Land, oil, coal and all non-precious minerals are vested in the Dominion Government. Along the 120th meridian, the Block extends from the north boundary oft township 76 to the north boundary of township 88." *Report*, p. 85, fn.1

> applications a provisional boundary line had been run by the British Columbia Government, which , however, was thought to be a quarter of a mile too far west.

In addition, both the Dominion and British Columbia governments desired to extend subdivision surveys up to the Boundary—from east and west respectively. Further, it was also considered necessary that the 120th meridian should be run south to its intersection with the summit of the Rocky Mountains, in order to determine the point at which the Boundary ceased to follow the summit. Finally, it was desired to establish the Boundary across Peace River—"that most noble artery of Northland traffic"—and the unsurveyed country to the north of it, with a view to the proper administration by the adjoining Provinces of their respective laws.[53] Survey of the 120th meridian began in 1918 under the leadership of Cautley. With the exception of the 1921 season, work continued apace yearly until 1924.

*The 1924 Season: Intersection Mountain*

The 1924 season was particularly busy, with surveys of important passes at Robson, Sheep & Miette ( in addition to Phillips Pass in the Crowsnest region) augmenting the work to be done completing the 120th meridian surveys to the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The Commission described the differences in landscape by contrasting the difficulties of establishing straight line surveys in the larger passes to the south with those of the transition area between the height of land and the 120th meridian. The hierarchies of place value based on the efficiency of task completion are revealing:

> The survey of any straight line through really mountainous country is a most unusual proceeding, and involves considerable difficulty. [There are many mountain areas in the Rockies which are so rugged in character that of all the infinite number of potential straight lines which might be laid down only an insignificant number could, in fact, be surveyed at all.]

[53] Ibid.

> Fortunately, the mountains along the 120th meridian are, for the most part, of a secondary character and presented no insuperable difficulties.[54]

It seemed as though a landscape's value could be determined largely through ease of movement and measurement of a place.

The point where the 120th meridian met the height of land was clearly a symbolic spot. As a naturalized place, it was where the height of land and the political boundary parted ways. The 120th meridian also represented the completion of the intermountain phase of the Commission's mandate. Nevertheless, what would appear to represent the culmination of the boundary making process along the height of land was not a simple matter of bisecting angles and completing the final dot. The Commission described the intersection of the 120th meridian with the height of land as a place literally hanging on the edge of a precipitous escarpment forming the face of the aptly-named Intersection Mountain. Again deferring to the second person, the Commission pointed out Monument #56—"a spot which is shown on every atlas of Canada"—as the place which "your Commissioners" had been striving to achieve for years. Despite what should have been a prominent position, the monument was actually quite inconspicuous. The reason for this less than profound moment was due to the north-south orientation that the ridge presented, with various lateral ledges which cut off the view from any point situated in close proximity to the boundary.[55] In other words, the artistic 'moment' of a place that came to represent a profound *pivotal* landscape in the work of the Alberta-British Columbia Boundary Commission had fallen short of expectation. What had been represented on paper as a significant landmark did not come across the same way when one encountered that narrative on the land. Such places were meant to be places of awe and beauty, and the rare

[54] Ibid., 124.
[55] Ibid., 128.

instance when the work crew felt 'let down' does come across in this section. Still, this spot had already been transcribed, and hence authorized, as the intersecting point on atlases across the country—the primary purpose of the Commission's work.

*INSCRIBING THE LAND: MAP CONSTRUCTION, ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION*

Transferring landscape experience to a coherent geographical narrative was part of the naturalized landscape process. The organization and presentation of these images, when considered as part of the larger boundary making process, revealed the considered attempt to fashion the landscape as one that could indeed represent reality. The maps define the height of land in overwhelmingly Euro-centric terms.

As stated at the outset, the mandate given to the Commission was to survey the Boundary *from the geographer's point of view*. Further, these maps were to "correct" existing maps issued by the various departments of the Governments."[56] More specifically, the previous surface line, a dotted one, was to be replaced by a solid line.

> These maps show the Boundary as a dotted line, which, in the absence of sufficient surveys, is necessarily incorrect at many points; how great the errors are will not be known until the whole survey has been completed, but it is safe to say that it will be found to exceed three miles at some points.

Conflating a dotted line with incorrect measurements not only represented the rejection of a previous particular aesthetic convention of mapping but more importantly revealed a particular set of values and assumptions at the heart of the Euro-Canadian mapping project. This observation was part of a larger cultural milieu, one that seemed to stretch into the 20th century. The continental divide—and the passes that were necessary for its creation—was also a geographical feature that needed to be (re)created as the values and assumptions of early 20th

[56] *Report*, *Vol. I*, 3.

century Canadian society changed. Replacing the dotted with the solid line was not a strictly aesthetic choice. The Commission considered the organization of the maps within the context of implementing a normative narrative through numbers, letters and overlapping imagery. The maps were organized in numeric fashion, commencing at the international boundary and in a northwesterly direction.

*The Unpublished Journals of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission*

The first volume of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission's *Report* was widely acclaimed as an important contribution to the surveying and mapping of the Canadian Rockies. The *Geographical Journal* lauded the "well executed maps" and choice of colours for the contours, bodies of water, roads & trails and boundaries.[57] The *Report's* scientific prose may not have come across in the same way that the literary non-fiction of contemporary fellow travelers had provided but its mandate was specific and different. The idiosyncrasies of the explorer/writer struggling to make sense of a challenging environment could only come to the surface as a result of personal experience—and little room was put aside in the *Reports* for writing of this nature.

Unpublished journals from the 1916-17 survey seasons revealed a different narrative borne out of what were indeed trying circumstances. The journal was written by A.S. Thompson, one of the Commission members. The 3-volume journal was similar to the *Report* with respect to its temporal-spatial incongruities. Journal entries were grouped by day and itemized by events and the time they occurred. The geographical (i.e. latitude, longitude and altitude) position was noted in a heading for each daily entry. These notes—daily entries written

[57] E.A. Reeves, "Boundary Between Alberta and British Columbia, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 54, no. 6 (December 1919), 381.

nightly then annotated in red ink several years later—were instructive in peeling away the dispassionate tone which marked the published version, replacing these images with a more vernacular one. On the whole, the journals provided alternative and at times entertaining stories. The anecdotal entries also provided an illuminating counter-narrative to the antiseptic reporting provided by the *Report.* Although the time lag between the event and narrative could be several days, the difference was significantly shorter in duration than the *Report*. The journal is most useful as a way of illustrating both the mundane and the irregular that accompanied Commission members on a daily basis. The journal also brought to life some of the omissions of the Report, in particular: Traces of human and nonhuman uses of minor passes on the height of land; brief references to routes that did not necessarily converge upon the height of land proper; periodic encounters with Game wardens and local trappers; and brief glimpses of encounters with the living landscape.

The journals do more than the *Report* to present the height of land environment as an associative landscape. Given the mandate and audience this is not a surprise. One of the recurrent themes discussed only sparingly in the *Report* but developed further throughout the journals was the evidence of previous (and periodic) human and nonhuman use of the passes. In some instances these places served the same needs of the Commission than it did for others who passed along the routes earlier. On August 23, 1916, as supplies were running low, three members broke camps, loaded horses and headed south for Kananaskis Pass to resupply. While following what appeared to be little more than a game trail ("We knew of no one who had travelled this route"), the group quickly realized that at one time it had probably been used by the "Prairie Indians"; Stoneys engaged in their "annual trek" seemed to have knowledge of these

routes through the mountains."[58] At other times, the Commission inadvertently noted that some trails were actually part of smaller hunting trails that were possibly intertribal routes. On July 6, 1916, while doing survey work on the Elk River (Riverside West), which included (re)naming several mountains and rivers in recognition of the Italian war effort, Wheeler and Thompson encountered a trail that seemed to show signs of earlier use as both a Stoney and Kootenay hunting route to the Palliser and Kootenay Rivers:

> It follows a wide valley…to the junction of Cadorna and Abruzzi creeks, continuing up the latter, passing south of Mt. Abruzzi—then westerly over a height of land to the White River…"
> Further downstream the trail joins the Palliser River Trail, "an old established route uses by the Kootenays" which continued to the Kootenay River.[59]

At Elk Pass (Riverside East), empty sardine tins, visible pack trails and crudely made cairns were just the latest evidence that the human imprint had long been established. In spite of the work they were doing, this place was hardly untouched by the living world. Indeed, its location as a place of unusually high metallic content in the strata also made it a "lightning rod."

The Commission's *Report* was limited to discussions around the height of land. Omitted from the official record, however, were descriptions of routes that weaved in and out of the landscape. These entries illustrate the convergence of cultures and collective historical memories at various sites. A journal entry on August 5, 1917 from Graveyard Flats on the North Saskatchewan River provided an opportunity for the crew to learn that several indigenous trails comprised part of the landscape. The commission noted that these trails existed for the purposes of securing food sources and were thus both game trails and hunting routes:

> We were now travelling about centre stream on the bars, continually crossing shallow channels towards a rock bluff that lay on the North side

[58] Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Add.MSS.733 (August 23, 1916).
[59] Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Add.MSS.733 (July 6, 1916).

> of the confluence. Here we found a trail in the timber on the west bank of the North Fork, climbed a steep hill, and then gradually dropped to River Flats in the North Fork. There is another trail that follows up a stream which flows into the N. Fork from the N.E., opposite the mouth of the Alexandra, that leads up to a high Pass between Mt. Wilson & Mt. Coleman. Known as Sunset Pass, and to Pinto Lake, eventually to the Cline. This is an old Indian route.

Sunset Pass is not an interprovincial place, and the descent down to Pinto Lake and hence along the Cline River is actually part of a longer (and much used) fur trade route connecting Jasper House with the Kootenay Plains. This route was of no consequence to the *Report* but was noted in the journal.[60]

Commission contact with individuals travelling through the height of land, though rarely discussed in the *Report*, warrants much discussion in the journals. These moments of encounter could lead to stressful instances. An entry on June 12, 1916 detailed a confrontation between Mr. Mumford, Inspector of Fisheries, and the survey crew when the conservation official confronted the crew gutting fish in a cabin. Controversy erupted concerning ownership and use of the cabin. Sharp words were exchanged—"language known to pack horses"— and the inspector ("a hostile man") "stomped around the cabin". No one among the survey said anything, "playing their poker [hands] well". Eventually the officer left the cabin and movement returned to normal. Thomson remarked that "like so many Rangers of their day they are inclined to jump at authority fully when opportunity comes their way. He did not know that we had obtained permission to use the shack before leaving Banff. It was not his shack."[61]

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid. On the night of August 7, 1920, Jasper Park Wardens were alerted to a fire at the Athabaska River Gorge allegedly started by the survey crew. After assisting in putting out the fire, the crew turned themselves in to the Warden: "We proceeded over to the Government Building to interview Colonel Rogers & to break the news. As we trod the gravel approach up to the front door, we debated a $200 fine—or the remainder of the season in jail. Greeted with a cheery handshake—we told our story. The interview was warm & friendly. Did we put out the fire? Yes! A pat on the back—a gentlemanly dismissal. The Colonel had a fine personality." On September 7, the crew was forced to break into another trapper's cabin when supplies ran low. This event was not written into the journal

This entry is instructive on a couple counts. First, the Commission did not work in a vacuum as one may assume from the published volumes. Second, as a consequence of the larger human presence, confrontations of this kind were not uncommon. Enforcing the law in the backcountry was not just a matter of doing one's job. The Commission may have demonstrated a marked ambivalence towards the legitimacy of Park Ranger authority but the setting for such contestations would not be determined by words alone. Social relations in the National Parks were being determined in contested places such as the cabin. Built landscapes were not just dwellings-in-place; they could also be contested sites. Indeed, the illegal poaching of fish in the National Park may have been the original motive for the confrontation but the journal entry is silent on that issue.

Encounters could also lead to discourses of competition, sometimes amicable at other times tempestuous. On August 19, 1917, while doing survey work at the Mt. Fitzwilliam Amphitheatre, located along the height of land at the headwaters of the Fraser, the crew came upon an elderly gentleman whose claims of physical endurance and apparent 'old world' traditions were put to the test:

> We left main camp about 10 a.m. for a 10-day fly camp up in to the amphitheatre behind Mt. Fitzwilliam. McNamara who told us he had at one time cut a trail up into the basin joined our party to show us the way…we were lucky to have him with us, otherwise there would have been some delay. The old chap brought along his Hudson Bay axe. As an old squatter living alone he lived much in the past. He gave us the impression that we moderns were not good bushmen. We were not capable of 30 mile a day trips. Nor had we the endurance they had. We arrived at our new camp under the Western slopes of Mt.Fitzwilliam about 2 p.m…Sad to relate the poor old chap was pretty well all in by the time we had camp out up. He had a pretty rough time keeping up with

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until two weeks later, as a result of a snap blizzard. Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Add.MSS.733 (July 6, 1916).

> the moderns. Nor had he used the good old Hudson Bay Axe much. In fact, at the 1800' foot level above the lake, he was an also-ran.[62]

The juxtaposition of the modern with the "bushmen" and equating solo living with living "in the past" is intriguing. What (or who) was the source of this impression—in other words did McNamara boast or did Thompson gather such an impression through a combination of both men's uneasiness in the company of the other? Thompson's voice seems quaint, almost condescending in his passing reference to McNamara's proclivity for living "in the past" but it is unclear as to who had initiated this discourse. Attitudes and accompanying values constellating around age and character seemed to be carried from 'civilization' into the 'wilderness.'

Sometimes, encountering earlier inscriptions on the land could trigger unpleasant memories. On September 16, 1916, at Assiniboine Pass, Thomson came across a simple cairn constructed by mountaineers Konrad Cain & H.O. Hind. This encounter prompted Thomson to reflect upon an unpleasant meeting at the ACC Club House at Banff. During breakfast, and in the presence of other members, the "off handed and haughty" Hind challenged the nature of Thomson's (and Cautley's) work. Hind informed Thomson that they should not be considered mountaineers—"merely cragsmen"—since they were not choosing the most difficult routes in the field. Thomson retorted, pointing out to Hind that there were obvious reasons for choosing the "easy routes"—after all, the work they did on the summits necessitated from four to six hours. Now that Thomson & crew had encountered a cairn on the very ridge that Hind had left his name for posterity, he could only come to the logical conclusion that Hind was also a cragsmen.

Places could trigger memories, molding how one experienced these landscapes in return. Thomson's recollection of an unpleasant encounter conditioned how he experienced the Pass.

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[62] Ibid.

His bitterness (and moment of irony) weighed down upon him. If one takes a step back from the complexities of memory/emotion/experience, and considers the landscape-geography interplay that frame moments such as these, one notes that the location for this argument (the Banff Club House) was far enough removed from the height of land to illustrate that the height of land was an abstraction. Yet both men had an intimate experience with the height of land as evidenced by the convergence of past and present at Assiniboine Pass. Though there is no reference in this anecdote, one may easily come to the conclusion that these heated exchanges of words were being conducted while poring over *maps* (among other things).

Other categories of analysis could offer insights. How one interacted with the nonhuman animal world could demonstrate how surveyors interacted with the landscape. The official records of the Commission are once again quiet but sporadic journal entries are more descriptive. On September 17, 1919, while surveying at Columbia West (elev. 9412'), the Surveyor's noted:

> Event: Whilst reading my round of Azimuths…I was suddenly shaken off balance by what seemed a sudden gust of wind from out of the blue. Fortunate indeed to regain my balance…the awakening had come as a complete surprise that almost developed into a shock. As I was set up at the edge of a steep wall that ended 500' below on a glacier, from out of the blue, and without any warning from A.O.W. or Walter, an eagle had soared down for a strike, brushed so close that it threw me forward. [The eagle] continuing on down in its flight to the basin below, then soared upward in the blue and out of sight in the direction of King Edward Why the bird did not strike I shall never know but had it done so, I feel convinced I would have gone over the cliff—down, down, down.[63]

Profound moments of human-nonhuman encounters such as these were rare, or at least—with some exception—as they were discussed in the Official Reports and field diaries. The absence of these moments should not imply that these moments were absent, only that the forum for these narratives did not allow for such stories. These stories would be revealed in the journals of the Alpine Club of Canada.

[63] Ibid.

*CONCLUSION*

The journal entry for August 20, 1916 is curt yet evocative: "We were now standing knee deep in divided waters."[64] This statement—made at the Committee Punch Bowl—illustrates how the embodied sensibilities of experiencing place could embrace the geography of collective historical memory and produce something meaningful yet also not altogether scientifically (and quantitatively) accurate. After all, the actual spot where they were standing was not in the process of dividing any more than it was converging. There was little, if any, geometric movement in that spot. As an embodied experience, however, the Committee Punch Bowl was forever a sensuous place inseparable from its symbolic representation—an instructive example of when geographical abstraction and landscape sensibilities intertwine.

A strong case can be made that implementing a political boundary over what would seem to be a naturally occurring geological and hydrological process was necessary as a convenient mapping method. Nevertheless, this apparent *naturalizing* process carried within it a specific attempt at constructing a socio-spatial narrative framed by the imperatives of political expediency, economic assessment and ethnocentric assumption. The perspective of experience, meanwhile, mitigated the so called empirical, objective nature of cartography and mapping.

The survey and mapping work of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission is illustrative of how an associative landscape is both a product of cultural values, as well as an influence on the means with which one constructs this perception. The previous boundary had already been predicated, and imposed through the curtailment of indigenous hunting practices, on the idea of a single, unbroken transcontinental height of land separation of waters. Consequently, the way in

[64] Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Add.MSS.733.

which the boundary was implemented had already been framed by a particular hierarchy of place. Further, the work of the Commission helped to 'fill in the gaps' of a rapidly dwindling tabula rasa of Western Canadian geography. Nevertheless, associative landscapes are, themselves, shifting and transformative entities.

Drawing upon Tim Ingold's "logic of inversion", Kenneth Olwig has argued that "the pathways along which life is lived are turned into boundaries within which it is enclosed….life is reduced to an internal quality of things that occupy the world but do not, strictly speaking, inhabit it."[65] Making meaning out of the transcontinental unbroken height of land—the geographical construction of what became known as "The Great Divide"—is indeed a process of the externalizing of one's own cultural values onto the land. In return, the landscape experience *in the field* compels one to come to terms with the shortcomings, fallacies and inconsistencies of this particular mode of geographical representation. Though not necessarily novel in *how* it went about its work, the mandate of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission to further construct and implement a territorial vision through the manipulation of what was a unique landscape put it in a position of power. Delineating the Alberta-British Columbia border was essential, and the atlas the means by which this process was to be consolidated. The Commission needed over a decade to fashion the transformation of a liminal landscape of shifting territories and inchoate boundaries into a place of fixed coordinates and bounded spaces. Given the temper of the times, it is tempting to view this example of early twentieth century colonial appropriation as just another hegemonic process that brokered little or no resistance. Judging the Commission's work in this light, however, fails to take into consideration the possibility that at its lowest common denominator, the work being done along the height of land was the work of a very small and

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[65] Kenneth Olwig, "Performing on the Landscape Versus Doing Landscape: Preambulatory Practice, Sight & The Sense of Belonging," in eds. Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 83.

dedicated group of men; fellow scientists and travelers who were well aware of the near-futility of constructing a landscape vision that would not necessarily mean the same to bureaucrats, politicians and captains of industry in the far flung provincial and federal capitals as it would to the indigenous bands and peripatetic souls travelling through. The last large-scale geographical surveying and mapping project of western Canada may have indeed contributed to nation building and industrialization writ large but ascribing privileged space status to the transcontinental height of land was necessary first for creating the facilitating conditions. It remained to be seen how the normalization of such a landscape would be achieved in wider practice.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE TRANSCONTINETAL HEIGHT OF LAND & THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA, 1906-1939

At the same time the Interprovincial Boundary Commission was carrying on its work, the passes along the transcontinental height of land were swiftly becoming places of leisure, aesthetic wonder and conquest. If the Interprovincial Boundary Commission's transparent approach to naturalizing (and nationalizing) the height of land as an associative landscape was grounded in a largely dispassionate scientific exercise, expressed through the survey and rationalized through the Cartesian methodology of cartography, the Alpine Club of Canada's (ACC) ritualized sense of place was much more opaque. Simultaneous perceptions of the height of land as a geographical space of conquest and romanticism—an apologia of national unity and privileged space of consumption—as well as a more acute sense of the interpenetration of environment and body lend credence to the argument that a place could hold a myriad of simultaneous meaning; contingent upon how one perceived such a place was a range of factors such as class, gender, age and mode of movement.[1]

This chapter further discusses the geography and landscape of the transcontinental height of land and what it meant for those travelling across, along and over it. It argues that the mountain passes that straddled the intercontinental (and interprovincial) height of land could become simultaneous sites of landscape possession as well as integrated embodied experiences *in place*. They became places of intertwining geography and landscape as a result of their association as summer camp meeting grounds for the Alpine Club of Canada. The symbolic

[1]This chapter defines the space to place process in the broadest sense. That is, the process of establishing an area as uninhabited (space), and then proceeding to "fill in" this area (place) through (but not limited to) cartography and ritual.

significance of these gatherings, and their accompanying (temporary) built landscapes came to serve as spatial settings for the expressed service of loyalty to God, empire and nation.

The Alpine Club of Canada mouthpiece, the *Alpine Journal*, is a particularly instructive way into this simultaneity of possession and embodiment. The *Alpine Journal* is a yearly publication published by the Club and distributed to regional chapters across the country. From its inception (1907), the *Journal* has adhered to a roughly similar format. Each volume is divided into several 'sections'—Mountaineering; Scientific; Miscellaneous; In Memoriam, Alpine Clubs; Reviews; and Official Sections. Photos of human and natural interests are dispersed throughout each volume. Members were encouraged to contribute (the statement of non-responsibility on the part of the Publishing Committee for "statements made or terms used by the contributors" was located at the bottom of the volume's Table of Contents).

The *Journal* is a useful source for a study of how alpinists' relationship to the height of land was inflected by social relations (and vice versa). Some of the alpinists contributing to the ACC were also scientists working for the Interprovincial Boundary Commission. Arthur O. Wheeler and R.W. Cautley were involved in the writing of both the *Interprovincial Boundary Commission Report* and the *ACC Journal*.[2] Both men also wrote extensively on the passes along the continental height of land. A close reading of the *Journal* essays suggests that the intertwined processes of scientific method and embodiment in place, already hinted at in A.S. Thompson's field notes, are given further credence in the *Journal* writings.

Contributors also regularly discussed their impressions as they moved between their summer camps and environs. These passages proved to be more than just an accompanying voice to the standard dry officious tone of the yearly "Official Section." The tone of these entries changed over time. In the years when the yearly summer camps were located on or

[2] For more on the biography of Wheeler and Cautley, see chapter two.

astride the height of land—almost every year between 1906 and 1929—there was a great deal of attention paid towards where the Camp was located and how one experienced these places. These experiences of place never occurred in complete isolation from its social significance as a place astride "The Great Divide."

Locating the experience of place in the contexts of leisure and tourism is a relatively recent development. The unifying idea that binds these practices together is the practice of embodiment (in place). David Crouch argues that place has always been important in thinking about leisure and tourism. Indeed, when we consider popular practice and "lay knowledge," the processes of leisure and tourism emerge. The leisure/tourist encounter never unfolds in a vacuum. Interpersonal contacts, imaginations, ideas, and metaphors of place/nature/city confront the individual's memories of people and places in other parts of one's life.[3] The key aspect of this *non-representational* geographical approach is a strong interest in the subject and what people make out of their lives." At the intersection where the above conditions meet is where scholars are now attuned:

> In this there is a development of social constructionist theory that argues the significance of everyday activities and practices, in constructing meaning and value…. There is a revived comprehension of embodiment that is concerned with the body as the subject of practice rather than only as the object of practice or of policy. These dimensions are being focused in the work of geographers as a means of returning to human activity and in the form of 'non-representational geography'. This emerges in part from a concern over the emphasis on text and on signs detached from everyday life that has tended to penetrate social sciences and the humanities in the last two decades.[4]

Place becomes "the material of popular culture which is worked, reworked and negotiated….something through which and with which lives are lived and identity and myth

[3] David Crouch, "Places Around Us: Embodied Lay Geographies in Leisure and Tourism," *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 19 (2000), 63-76.
[4] Ibid., 63-64.

made."[5] Negotiating material and metaphorical places through the mediating influences of embodied experience *and* cultural practice is one means of understanding the ACC interpretation of the transcontinental height of land. A comparison of the Interprovincial Boundary Commission Reports with the ACC Journal essays, however, introduces a relational component that post-colonial interpretations have not addressed—the ways in which the colonial project, at any given time, could hold conflicted meanings to those same people implicated in the process. Who the audience was and how it was delivered also mattered. [6]

### *"A Most Excellent Specimen of Mountain Map Work:" Boundary Commission Fieldwork as Depicted in the Alpine Club of Canada Journal*

The work of the Alberta-British Columbia Interprovincial Boundary Commission was a product of the political economic necessities of the time. Further, the Commission's work was perceived as a logical extension of a rationalization and normalization process of landscape construction that had its roots in the Dominion Survey work. When viewed in this context, the Commission work was an unqualified success. There was no better forum by which the Commission's work could be exalted (and justified) than through the Alpine Club of Canada and its journal. Indeed, by virtue of its shared membership and common conventions, the Commission and the ACC were 'natural' partners in the construction of a new height of land vision, a narrative with the nation and its boundaries at its heart. The height of land was in the process of being naturalized as an interprovincial border—the Alberta/British Columbia

[5] Ibid.

[6] Jeffery McCarthy calls the mountaineering literary genre "a conflicted site for symbolic configurations of human interaction with the environment." McCarthy argues that "some climbing narratives show the possibility of approaching wilderness via the epistemological category of place instead of space." Drawing upon the ideas of the phenomenologist Edward Casey, McCarthy argues that since the Renaissance place continues to play second fiddle to space. In the "web of the universe," place has been pigeonholed into the parameters of space. The move to lay a grid of space over all landscape, Casey argues, obscures the unique interconnection between human beings and their settings." Jeffrey McCarthy, "A Theory of Place in North American Mountaineering," *Philosophy & Geography,* Vol. 5, no.2 (2002), 180.

boundary—and the Great Divide iconography was quickly becoming the manifestation of this landscape. The people given the task to define it were both public servants and private club members. Their descriptions of the passes that defined the transcontinental height of land illustrated this convergence between science and embodiment.

The closely interconnected interests of the Alpine Club & The Interprovincial Boundary Commission have already been discussed with respect to the nuances of tourism apparent throughout the latter's published *Reports*. In return, the Alpine's *Journal* also provided a forum for the members of the Commission to write of their experiences in a less scientifically rigid format. Consequently, between 1919-1922, periodic passages discussing the passes of the Continental Divide evoke rather different images—at once both less technical and more descriptive. More importantly, the descriptions illustrated in the *Journal* evoked a landscape open for exploration. The result is a piece of literary environmental writing that not only reflected the interests of the alpinist but provided a more sensual and experiential tone from those generated in the Report.

The first reference to the Interprovincial Boundary Commission was in the 1919 edition of the *Alpine Journal* which carried a brief editorial review of the Report's first volume. The dispassionate writing closely mirrored the tone of its object. The editorial piece demonstrated a strictly utilitarian reading of the report, a landscape perception framed by the subject/object dualism. Through the "courtesy" of the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands, the report mused, the "most useful publication" was acquired by the Club House library.[7] Written largely in a standard review format, the establishment and functions of the Commission were briefly discussed, followed by the technological applications necessary for the triangulation method—

[7] Alpine Club of Canada, *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 10 (1919), 103. Also see E.A. Reeves, "Boundary Between Alberta and British Columbia," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 54, no. 6 (Dec. 1919), 381-382.

phototopography, monument construction—used in the field. The reviewer did point out, however, that "the average Alpinist will probably not go into this as carefully as he will the descriptive matter following in chapters three to six."[8]

The reviewer's discussion of the atlas illustrated the strictly Cartesian interpretation of the Commission' work:

> The Atlas will be of greatest utility as a work of reference for the tourist intending to explore any of the areas shown. Altitudes of all principal features are given and many previously unnamed peaks now have a designation, the significance of which will always be recalled in centuries to come. I refer to such names as Mt. Foch, Mt. Sir Douglas, Mt. French, Mt. Jellicoe, Mt. Currie, Mt. Beatty, Mt. Joffre.[9]

This section revealed several strands of the subject/object dualism; references to exploration; hierarchies of landscape "features;" the inferences taken from "previously unnamed peaks; and a concern with legacy are all examples of a landscape separated by and from the human experience. At arm's (and body) length removed from the landscape, the tone of the review reinforced the scientific side of the possession project.

Cautley and Wheeler also contributed periodically to the Journal. Among several topics, both wrote long-form narrative passages on the height of land passes. Their writings reveal a certain level of creative tension between their roles as employees in the service of the state and members of a private association. Their interpretations of the component places that comprised the height of land were reflections of, and responses to, their work as Commission members. They also provided a glimpse of the way in which science and embodiment co-mingled at the height of land.

[8] *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 10, 104.
[9] Ibid., 105.

Cautley's "Characteristics of Passes in the Canadian Rockies" appeared first in the 1922 edition, the first essay included in that years' 'Scientific Section.' The scope & tone of this eight-page article reflected this inclusion. Cautley's landscape is one situated externally from his position in it. Though at times painted with a broad brush, the article is a rather technical piece, one that both reflected a specific vision of what a pass was and its position as a corrective to other interpretations of such places:

> As most of the readers of the Journal are aware, a mountain "pass" is any practicable route of travel through a range of mountains form one watershed area into another, of which the highest point, whence the respective watershed areas take their course, is the summit of the pass. It follows that the term "pass" in mountaineering applies to all that portion of any route through mountains which lies between points near the foot of the mountains to be traversed, or points along the route between which the pass is so constricted to as to afford only one practicable route of travel…In the minds of a great many people who are not particularly interested in mountain lore the term "pass" merely applies to the summit of the summit of a pass, but this is, of course, a misconception.[10]

Cautley reminded his readers, especially the "outsiders in mountaineering," that in contrast to the "ordinarily well-informed person [who] very generally only recognizes the existence of such passes as have been adopted, or suggested as railway routes," there were "a great number of passes through the Rockies:

> To those who have any personal knowledge of the mountains at all, the conception of the Rockies as a continuous wall of rock extending for a thousand miles with only five of six gaps through it must seem inconceivably stupid, but as the writer held some such ill-defined view before entering on mountain work, and as he is naturally loath to assume that he has a monopoly of stupidity, it may be stated that not only is there a great variety of big and little passes through the Rockies, but there are at least four passes of considerably lower altitude than Kicking Horse Pass, which was the first to be adopted as a railway pass in Canada and to receive world-wide recognition.[11]

[10] *Alpine Journa*l, Vol. 12 (1922), 155.
[11] Ibid., 156.

Cautley follows this introduction with a brief discussion on the various components that comprise the "appearance" of a pass, namely streams, U-shaped troughs, and timber lines.

Cautley's particular concern with timber lines and its constituent parts reveals the tensions that come with a strictly scientific/technical narrative approach to the passes of the Divide. Through the first half of his article, Cautley writes about such issues as the relative location of various mountain timber species and scrub lines. The second half of his essay, however, a description of several major passes along the Divide, provides a glimpse of a man embedded in the landscape, allowing for some poetic license at the same time struggling for some detachment so central to the Commission Reports. For example, in approaching a strictly subject-object discussion that comes with the question of a tree's circumference and its relative chances of being struck with lightning, Cautley describes the following occurrence:

> In July, 1916, while I was camped in the pretty little meadow on the Alberta side of Whiteman Pass, a lone spruce tree twenty feet from my tent was struck by lightning, just after dark. Immediately the whole top burst into flames, brilliantly illuminating the tent, but the rain came down in sheets a few minutes afterwards and put it out. Before we left the pass no one but a very acute observer would have noticed that the tree had ever been struck. On that occasion the writer and his assistant, who were the only two occupants of the tent, experienced a tingling sensation in the lips.[12]

Cautley's anecdote erases the invisible line between observer and observed. Although the subject of the passage concerned the measurement of a tree's girth in relation to its susceptibility to lightning, Cautley becomes part of the object of study. No doubt the experience of witnessing the complete conflagration of a tree, followed quickly by torrential rain, is a unique experience. However, when Cautley writes of the low-level of electrical current coursing through his tent, he

[12] Ibid., 158.

becomes, in essence, part of that which he had been studying from afar. He is neither outsider nor insider. He is part of place.

Cautley reserves the second half of his essay to describing selected passes. Even in these brief descriptions, one gathers an embodied interpretation of landscape and sense of place wrestling with political frames of reference so representative of the Commission papers. For example, after providing the obligatory latitude and altitude descriptions, Cautley describes North Kananaskis Pass. His description is a blend of the desolate with the resilient, a place where the land accommodates life, however minute it may be in the landscape:

> It is a bleak, rocky saddle-back only 300 to 400 feet in width and there is a little lake on the Alberta side which is less than one hundred feet from the summit, and only about twelve feet below it. The writer visited this pass on the 4th of July, 1916, the last six miles having been travelled on snowshoes over snow estimated to be from three to fifteen feet deep. The lake was still frozen, but there was an open hole about twelve feet in diameter near the centre which was occupied by a small and solitary duck.[13]

The exact location of the pass headwaters, so central to the scientific construction of the naturalized Great Divide narrative, is also reconsidered when a pass is viewed as a particular place. Fortress Pass was one such place. Not only was there no evidence of a fixed watershed source, there actually seemed to be a co-mingling of waters from both sides of the Divide. In other words, there was no separation of the waters and hence, no intersecting line that could be framed by water. As a geographical abstraction, it defied convention:

> Considered technically, form the point of view of watershed determination, Fortress Pass, latitude 52° 23' 30", is the most extraordinary of all the main divide passes so far dealt with….The flat has a constant and uniform grade from the river towards the lake equal to the grade of the river itself, the water-level of the lake being about nine feet below that of the river….The situation is truly remarkable and there

[13] Ibid., 159.

> can be no doubt that seepage from the river to the lake actually takes place at all high times of high water in the river.[14]

It is within this context that Cautley follows by cautioning the reader that the best way to make sense of the landscape is to be a part of it but even then there are limitations to what can be learned:

> in dealing with passes of the main divide…at first sight it would seem to be a simple matter to travel up a stream to its headwaters, and having climbed, to the summit of the pass at its head, to identify the pass as being on the main divide, but a little reflection will prove that this is not only difficult but generally impossible, in the absence of previous knowledge or a great deal of further laborious exploration.[15]

The modern traveler, Cautley points out, continues to "be dependent on the knowledge handed down to us by previous explorers."[16]

Six years later, A.O. Wheeler contributed a 26-page essay to the *Journal*. "The Passes of the Great Divide" illustrated how Wheeler's position as both public servant and alpinist (in the service of the ACC) could create a constant shifting between the geographical and the landscape which framed the ways in which he made meaning out of what he experienced. From the outset, Wheeler's approach to that what physically, and more fundamentally, scientifically, defined a mountain pass was not quite clear. Wheeler remarked that "the Great Divide, or continental watershed, is an *imaginary line* following the division of the waters flowing east or north to the Atlantic or Arctic Oceans, and west to the Pacific Ocean. It lies along the crest of the Main Range of the Rocky Mountains. [emphasis added]"[17] Wheeler perceived no incongruency between the physical-material world of mountains and rivers with the abstract systems-oriented world of the human mind.

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[14] Ibid., 161-62.
[15] Ibid., 162.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 150.

“For purposes of discussion,” Wheeler remarked, passes may be divided into three classes—the first two clearly marked by previous and ongoing human activity:

> (1) Low, broad valleys, forested or burned over, through which railways and main roads run;
>
> (2) Valleys leading to heights of land, for the most part above timberline and frequented crossed by pony trails; and
>
> (3) Crests or ridges between mountain peaks, essentially mountaineering passes, and technically referred to as *cols*, often snow-clad but not necessarily so.[18]

Wheeler further decentred the scientific interpretation of the transcontinental height of land by arguing that the predominant means of “visualizing” a pass by its “height of land or summit” is misleading since “in reality a pass may be many miles in length and includes the valleys leading to and from such height of land, which valleys may have tributaries leading to other passes.”[19]

Nevertheless, Wheeler began his essay by offering the results of his work in the capacity of public servant. There were, he remarked, 48 passes over the Great Divide traversed by railways, roads or pony trails. Of those, 23 had been surveyed in detail and the boundary established at their summits by concrete monuments set at the intersection of lines following general course of the watershed.[20] In addition, Wheeler separated the passes into three groups. Though categorized in descending order, the corresponding ‘class’ number did not necessarily convey a lesser or greater meaning. Indeed, there was a sensual aspect to the description generally absent in the *Reports*. For example, Class 2, “rising above timber line, is of greatest

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[18] Ibid. Wheeler goes into greater detail for each class.

[19] Ibid., 150.

[20] Wheeler was magnanimous in his respect for Cautley, the man responsible for inscribing the land, and reminded his readers that to get to the peak one must traverse the pass—a place that had worth and carried political weight: “Doubtless many of our members have seen these monuments at the summits of passes when starting their climbs, as for instance at Tonquin Pass where the 1926 annual camp was held. Only passes of present or future economic importance have been so marked. This part of the work, which has been carried to a high standard of precision was done by Mr. W. Cautley, D.L.S., the Commissioner representing the Dominion Government and the Province of Alberta, whose interests in the survey were identical.” Quoted in Ibid.,153.

and most vivid interest." The reasons for this distinction were many: "Open park-like country, wide stretches of alpine meadow, known as alplands…Clumps of umbrella-like spruce trees…exuding a highly aromatic perfume…crystal streams flow at frequent intervals…brilliant hues of alpine flowers which seem to gain brilliancy as they gain in altitude." It was also a place of Rocky Mountain fauna, at least those that were desirable.[21] These images imparted a romantic sensibility of nature, one nonetheless inflected by a collective cultural perception of landscape. Wheeler described the Class 2 pass in the following way:

> Those who have camped at timber line in these enchanted spots have seen and enjoyed their uncommon and bizarre effects, have seen the sun sink behind the great rock masses and watched their summits become bathed in glories of gold and rose and purple until, gradually fading, they blend with shadows of night hues of cold grey; and then the stars come out and one draws closer to the blazing fire for a last pipe in a silence broken only by the roar of a distant avalanche or the fall of rocks from the heights above. It is a magic land and one feels the thrall of the great hills at no other time and place.[22]

All three classes were clearly anthropocentric divisions. Consequently, the romantic sensibilities that tended to perpetuate the subject/object dualism of modernity were not wholly absent. Embedded within each category, however, was a complex sense of place that brought the worlds of the camper and the "great hills' together around the fire. At these spots, there is indeed an interpenetration of mind, body and environment, at least temporarily.

The remainder of Wheeler's essay was concerned with individual passes and the major characteristics of each. Unlike the *Report*, whose format allowed for very little discussion of the characteristics of the landscape that made each pass unique, the *Journal* narrative provided a different *format* for description. In some fundamental respects, there was a unity to the narrative that reflected the subject/object dualism inherent in the exploration/mapping process which was

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[21] Ibid., 150-51. For more on the history of wolves on the Great Divide, see Karen Jones, *Wolf Mountains: A History of Wolves Along The Great Divide* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002).
[22] Ibid., 151.

so central to the Commission mandate; for example, a strict south-north sequential linear narrative and an emphasis on exact measurements—of altitude and pass distances in particular—through the scientific method.

In other respects, however, Wheeler's essay offered a much more embodied approach to landscape perception. It is in these passages where one appreciates Wheeler's "double vision"—as both scientist/public servant and alpinist/artist. The ways in which Wheeler conveyed a perception of landscape that differed were: the writer's reconfiguration of space reflective of what constituted a mountain pass landscape; the interaction with the nonhuman world—flora, fauna and the elements—in these places, and the use of the traveler narrative. In varying degrees, all three of these methods were evident at the same time.

First, the scope of the pass landscape was expanded beyond the scientific—which only dealt with what could be seen along the surface—to include the mountains, lakes, rivers and valleys. For example, Wheeler describes Akamina Pass, "originally known as Boundary Pass but changed to Akamina (an Indian word 'high bench pass')":

> The South wall of the pass is a bold, rock escarpment, presenting a series of very striking semi-circular amphitheatres, enclosing a number of charming mountain lakes, Cameron Lake, Forum Lake and Wall Lake, the two last being very aptly named, for the horizontal strata forming these two cirques give the impression of tiers of seats in an old Roman stadium.[23]

On some occasions, passes were seen as a part of a larger place, a landscape created out of a creative collaboration of imagination and history. For example, Ptolemy Pass, the most southerly pass of the Crowsnest Pass system was named on account of the Hellenic phase of ancient Egyptian civilization. Wheeler likened the mountain that dwarfed the pass to the "bust of a sleeping mummy." Wheeler placed some demand on the imaginative patience of the viewer

[23] Ibid., 153.

since this resemblance could only be revealed "if the accompanying illustration is turned half way round to the left."[24]

Other passes defied the scientific and political conventions that framed the boundary making process, leaving the men in the field to draw their own boundaries. Phillipps Pass, the most northerly one of the Crowsnest system, had no visible outlet to the tarn at its summit. Consequently, the conventional means by which one was able to determine the delimitation of the watershed did not apply. The Dominion and Alberta Commissioners determined that drainage from the tarn was subterranean and flowed by means of a stream from a cave downstream to Crowsnest Lake, which was situated on the western, or lower ridge. Since the British Columbia Commissioner argued that the line of watershed could only be determined by surface indications, rendering the western ridge interpretation moot, the eastern ridge of the pass—the Alberta side—must be the location of the watershed boundary. A stalemate ensued, and after various suggestions (including one where aniline dye would be placed into the tarn and where it exited from the cave would determine the watershed), the problem was eventually solved several year later by placing the boundary line across the centre of the tarn, giving each province half of the disputed area.[25]

Another way by which Wheeler conveyed a perception of landscape that differed from the *Report* was the way in which the surrounding environment took on a romantic hue. In describing Tornado Pass (7096 ft.) Wheeler noted:

> Tornado Mountain, 10,169 feet in altitude, rises directly above the summit on the east side in towering precipices. Similar precipices rise to the crest of a lower unnamed peak on the west side. Between the walls of this giant gateway the aspect is truly alpine. The south approach is particularly attractive; meadow-like, flower-clad glades, in which flow

[24] Ibid., 155.
[25] Ibid., 156-57.

> little crystal streams, interspersed with open belts of graceful spruce and larch trees charm the eye…the general effect is awe-inspiring[26]

A description like this had no place in the *Report*. Nevertheless, the limits of embodiment expressed through the separation of the observer and the observed were apparent in Wheeler's reference to the eye-mind interpretation of landscape and sublime emotion, a kind of romanticism.

A sense of place is acquired when the texture of memory and experience are interwoven. Wheeler's description of the Pass environ demonstrated an attempt to convey a sense of place when he blended both what the pass represented and his experiences therein. For example, the Tornado Pass landscape is both a product of earlier explorations and the climactic conditions of that particular day:

> Tornado Mountain is the loftiest summit of the High Rock Range. It has been locally known as Gould Dome and is undoubtedly the peak upon which Capt. T. Blakiston of the Palliser Expedition conferred the name. The name, however, has been changed by the Geographic Board of Canada to Tornado Mountain and Gould Dome transferred elsewhere.[27]

This transferral is entirely appropriate, however, given the experiences of the Commission along the pass:

> The present name is certainly appropriate for it is a storm centre. On the occasions of two ascents the party had narrow escapes. On the first occasion a cloud burst, accompanied by sheets of hail caused the mountains to run wild. I had never seen anything like it before…Observation and photographic work completed, we had just started the descent when a roar was heard far below and a dense cloud gradually rose until we found ourselves in a fierce hail storm. We crouched at the base of a rock cliff while hailstones as large as marbles pelted our almost bare backs. Fortunately I had a rucksack on mine.[28]

[26] Ibid., 158.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Wheeler and company descended "amidst whizzing rocks" to a ledge where they were able to take stock of their situation. The constant and relentless transition of sound and light, triggered by a massive fluctuation in the climate, gave Wheeler pause for thought: "It was a first experience of a mountain running wild and an apt illustration of the mighty forces at work in these desolate places."[29] Of course, Tornado Pass was only desolate insofar as one chose to place oneself outside the landscape. In this sense, Wheeler continued to illustrate a creative tension between his perception of the landscape as embodied place and the subject-object dualism underwriting the modernity project.

The Commission returned to Tornado Mountain the following day. Within a few hours, a fierce electric storm had enveloped them. One sure way of experiencing the embodiement of place is through the transmission of energy from one element to another *through* the human body:

> "Boys, I said, "here is where we get off the top." We descended some thirty feet to a shelf and crouched down. In a few moments the peak was the centre of a fierce electrical storm. A bolt struck within forty feet of where we crouched and sent rock fragments in to the air…One of the assistants, sitting on the shale, suddenly leaped up, clapped his hands behind and exclaimed, "Oh Lord!" It was easy to know what happened for the whole top of the mountains had been charged with electricity and each one received a shock from contact. Crash followed crash and at each lightning stroke a severe shock was felt. It seemed that some, if not all, of the party would be killed.[30]

As quickly as it came on, however, it left leaving Wheeler in amazement. "Doubtless many have an experienced an electrical storm, when the cloud is close, directly overhead; now imagine the feeling if in the very centre of the cloud, with concussions going on all around!"[31]

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 159.
[31] Ibid.

The transmission of energy from sky to ground did not just pass through the human body. Closely related to descriptions of lightning storms was the common occurrence of tree fires; conflagrations that also served as a useful polemic. At White Man Pass, Wheeler described such an encounter:

> When camped here, marking the boundary across the summit, Mr. Cautley had a most interesting experience: a fierce thunder storm, accompanied by a deluge of rain was in progress. He and his assistant had taken refuge in their tent. Suddenly came a vivid flash of lightning, instantly followed by a roar and blinding glare close by. Leaping out, they saw that a dry spruce tree within fifty feet had been struck by lightning and was seething skyward in a pillar of flame. It was very shortly extinguished by the torrents of rain, but it furnished a striking example of the way in which forest fires are started through natural causes. To one who travels much in the mountains it is a wonder how such fires have occurred in most unlikely places for human travel, and there is little room for doubt that lightning has been the agency. Indeed, while on the top of mountains, I have seen two such fires start from that cause.[32]

At other times, Wheeler drew upon memories of landscapes far removed to paint metaphors of liminal landscapes, places of both sea and sky. At Elk Pass, Wheeler remarked that being above "a belt of clouds which blotted out the lower landscape…gave the appearance of an expanse of ocean bound by a bold, mountainous coastline, against which the clouds broke like waves upon a rocky shores [sic]." Capes and headlands stood out; islands rose from the mysterious depths; bays and inlets opened to unknown interiors; and the shifting clouds gave this spectral inland sea the impression of movement and reality."[33]

The ACC Journal format demonstrably allowed Wheeler to present stories that were considered either unnecessary or irrelevant for the Commission Reports. What these descriptions lacked with respect to their gravitas as places of national meaning, however, they

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[32] Ibid.,163.
[33] Ibid.,160.

recouped with their intimate details of the embodied experience. Sometimes these stories also demonstrated the significant importance of otherwise mundane material objects. Such an example occurred at Bush Pass, located between Howse and Thompson Passes; an otherwise "quite unimportant" place "yet…one that is most deeply engraved on the writer's memory." After completing boundary survey work at the top of 10,380 foot Coronation Mountain, the party proceeded to descend along "a route both difficult and dangerous." The party member carrying the rucksack that contained a small satchel in which the survey field book was enclosed took off his pack and prepared to send it down the rope separately from his person. Having secured the sack to the rope, he proceeded to place the pack on a narrow ledge. Immediately after releasing the sack to the rope, the pack slipped off the rope, hit the ledge and bounded down the mountain and out of sight. The party searched for days but without recovering it:

> For two days, in pouring rain, every possible spot was searched without result. Only one conclusion was probable: Bounding off the ledge, the rucksack must have fallen into a narrow gully with a steep incline. Across the mouth of this gully flowed a mass of ice with a large hole directly opposite to it. It could only be supposed that the rucksack had rolled down the gully and into the hole. Mr. Campbell lowered a weighted rope for one hundred and fifty feet through the hole and found that the steep incline continued beyond that distance. There was no possible way of ascertaining where the rucksack had gone to, and, owing to the loss, much work had to be done over again, as the instrumental readings giving direction to the photographs taken at a number of stations, several most difficult of access, had been lost with the field-book.[34]

Cautley and Wheeler worked under exceptional circumstances. Still, the inclusion of such stories in the ACC *Journal* and the omissions of these moments from the *Reports* is an instructive example of how these men were not only cognizant of the audiences that they were writing for but how their own embodied experiences would be conditioned by their different capacities and motivations. As scientists, Cautley

[34] Ibid., 170.

and Wheeler were public men writing authorized narratives. As alpinists they were private club members penning personal accounts. In both situations, they were in positions of influence.

*"A Picturesque and Convenient Grouping:" ACC Summer Camps On The Height of Land*

Where Cautley and Wheeler wrote form the twin perspectives of scientist and alpinist, which imparted a sense of both the scientific and embodied, The Alpine Club of Canada Summer Camps were entirely of the latter.[35] The ACC was in the business of tourism, and part of that enterprise included its role as a gatekeeper between what it perceived as the corrupting influences of cultivated civilization and the innocence of the primitive that was the wilderness. In asserting this division, the rhetoric was highly combative, even militaristic. In an effort to "popularize mountaineering" but "not vulgarize nor degrade it", the Alpine Club pledged to "defend" it against the "intrusion" of steam and electricity and all the "vandalisms" of this "luxurious, utilitarian age." In their words, they sought to keep the wooded passes and valleys and alplands of the wilderness free form the "grind" of commerce. People had a right to access to the "remote places of safest retreat" from the "fever and the fret" of the market place and the "beaten tracts of life."[36] Some of the seemingly less intrusive instruments of the civilized life, however, were acceptable. The Club also pledged "to support the picturesque and wholly enjoyable transit to the mountain-places by pack-horse and saddle, and to promote the too much

[35] The objects of the Club were stated in the first *Alpine Journal (1907)*. Five priorities were identified. This list is instructive in providing a glimpse into how the Club viewed its obligations in the light of the times. The five items signified a specific culturally constructed trajectory of 'exploration to preservation': The first item on the list was "the promotion of scientific study and the exploration of Canadian alpine and glacial regions." The next objective was the "cultivation of Art in relation to mountain scenery." The education of Canadians to an appreciation of their mountain heritage and the encouragement of "the mountain craft," and the opening of new regions as a "national playground" were the next priorities. Completing the list was "the preservation of natural beauties" of the mountain places and of the flora and fauna in their habitat and "the interchange of ideas with other Alpine organizations." See Elizabeth Parker, "The Alpine Club of Canada," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (1907), 3.
[36] Ibid., 5.

neglected exercise of walking. Your true lover of Nature is also a man of the unfamiliar roads and forest trails."

The highlight of the mountaineering season was undoubtedly the annual trek to a place adjacent to but a measurable distance from rail or motor routes. The camps served an important function as outlined in article 14 of the ACC Constitution:

> A summer camp in some suitable part of the mountain regions shall be organized in each year for the purpose of enabling Graduating members to qualify for Active membership, and the members generally to meet together for study and climbing in the alpine districts of Canada.[37]

During the first two decades, that "suitable part" was invariably the Rocky Mountain height of land. A host of considerations influenced the primacy of the height of land. First, Arthur Wheeler was closely involved with both the Interprovincial Boundary Commission and the ACC (as co-founder and President). Second, the location of the camps was not just a place of romantic encounter; social relations would be (re) made through the physical layout of the camps. Following from this environment, the height of land and the camps were synonymous as places of possession. The objective in the placement of summer camps was to instill in the visitor an impression of "the picturesque and convenient grouping of …the well ordered camp."[38]

The first Alpine Club Camp (1906) was located at Yoho Pass. An extended article discussed how the "invaders of the hills"—over 100 participants "carrying 40 tents and all necessary equipment and provisions"—climbed over 1000 vertical feet to arrive at the summit of Yoho Pass. The description of the campsite suggested a process of work, rework and negotiation, a dialogue of humanity and the physical environment. Frank Yeigh's, the "Alpine Club's War Correspondent,"[39] described the procession of campers along the path as "mountain

[37] "Constitution," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (1907), 181.
[38] "Report of the 1911 (Sherbrooke Lake Meadows) Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 4 (1912), 144.
[39] Ibid., 47.

invaders." This aptly-named group was anything but a haphazard group of motley fellow travelers. Indeed, Yeigh lavishes praise upon the "strong union of forces" that included government, railway companies and private initiatives. This "unity of action" was brought about not out of any selfish motive, but "in a spirit of patriotism."[40] Approaching the camp spot beyond Emerald Lake was "a case of fun and work combined, and fun and work make a fine team when well mated."[41]

The Yoho pass site was an amalgam of social convention set amidst a naturalizing landscape. The outcome of such a 'clash' of civilization and wilderness transformed both:

> You remember it, do you not, fellow camper? the [sic] white canvas homes for a brief day amid avenues of greenery, under a blue sky, with grey old Wapta and Michael's mount standing sentinel, three thousand feet higher still. You remember, do you not?—as if we could ever forget—the incomparable scene beside the incomparable Yoho lake, holding its translucent waters all the emerald and amethyst shades in nature's color box. You recall the welcoming camp fire of huge dimensions.

Impressions of the 'natural' landscape are inflected by anthropocentric frames of reference—tents, campfires, sentinels.

The pass was also a place where conventions still mattered—and every effort would be made to recreate those that were deemed most important. Spatial hierarchies still mattered, perhaps even more so as campers looked for signposts of civilization in the bush:

> The Camp, made gay with banners and flags and bunting of many colors, was divided into three sections: Residence Park, Official Square, and the horse paddock. The arrangements were perfect to a detail…The dining tent accommodated one hundred, where meals were served from early morn till late night. A bulletin board kept the members acquainted with the daily programmes. In the centre of the Square the big fire burned unceasingly, brightening up for the evening hours, when it was

[40] Ibid., 48-49.
[41] Ibid., 50.

> surrounded by as many fire worshippers as there were occupants of tents, where were heard more Demosthenian eloquence and oratory, more jokes and quips and antique chestnuts, and more accomplished entertainers than ever gathered on a mountain summit before.[42]

The priorities spelled out in the 'ACC manifesto' seemed to be translated rather loosely when it came down to the nitty-gritty reality of living in wilderness. Blurring the boundary between wilderness and civilization on the height of land seemed to be more the rule than the exception.

*Location, Location: The ACC 'Summer Camps'*

One of the ways of assessing just how enmeshed the geography and landscape of the height of land were in the summer camps is to closely read *how* the settings were depicted. Between 1906 and 1924, virtually every summer camp was located at or near the height of land (due largely to its relative accessibility for mountaineering). In some years, the camps were held *on* the height of land. Three particularly instructive ways of approaching how the epistemology of place was constructed are the transplantation of gendered spaces; ritualized places; and the inter subjectivity of dwelling and environment.

*Gendered Spaces*

Yeigh's "invaders of the mountains" metaphor was more the rule than the exception, especially in the years preceding and during The Great War (1914-1918). The 1909 Lake O'Hara (Meadows) Camp was an odd amalgam of conventionality & experimentation. Counted among the former was the attention given to gendered space. These delineations conformed to the streams cutting across the meadow which "made the arrangement of the camps very easy:"

> At the upper end lay a tiny pond, around which, in a wide crescent, were pitched, with military precision, the bell tents of the gentlemen's

[42] Ibid., 51.

> quarters. The pond was used for performing necessary ablutions and was nicknamed by the lady members "Adonis Pool." To the south across a belt of trees lay an open glade, carpeted with heather and nicely sheltered. Here, in a symmetrical line, were pitched the tents of the ladies' quarters, with those for the lady guests in a little nook at the end of the row.[43]

The gentlemen's and ladies "quarters" at Vermillion Pass Camps (1912) were also separated by two streams, both of which met just down from there on their way to the Pacific.[44]

The martial metaphors, in conjunction with the religious symbolism attached to the pond convey the predominant motifs of God and Empire in the years immediately preceding the Great War. The geometrical exactitude of the ladies' tents, coupled with a slightly nuanced vulnerability left by the lush ground vegetation and protective cover of trees, would have created a landscape that was familiar (in a sense) in the city. And any concerns over keeping intact female virtue were easily allayed: "Could a lady go there all alone? Yes, or a young girl either, and be just as safe as in her home at Brighton or Toronto."[45]

*Ritualized Places*

Yearly rituals were a unifying characteristic of all summer camps. In addition to the mountaineering 'exam' (which used the camp as a staging ground), the two major rituals were The Camp Fire and Annual Meeting (including President's Address). These two events (especially the Annual Meeting) were discussed in detail in the yearly camp reports. Eventually, they were merged. The landscape created by this convergence of social convention and aesthetic sensibility was important in creating and affirming the Club's identity (as stipulated in its Charter).

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[43] "Report of 1909 Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 2 (1910), 211.
[44] Reverend J.J. Robinson, "Vermillion Pass Camps, 1912," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 5 (1913),105.
[45] Ibid., 106.

Annual meetings were, in the interests of brevity, casual affairs. Nevertheless, they were important forums for the perpetuation of social relations both in and out of camp and throughout the year; Club executive terms were framed by time *and* place. In other words, the (re)election or (re)affirmation of a candidate occurred at Camp (i.e. meeting) but transcended the imaginary wilderness/civilization dichotomy. Further, these gatherings facilitated exchanges of pleasantries between alpine clubs both within Canada and beyond. The meeting was also a place where other voices could be 'heard:' "letters of regret" of absence were read. By 1909, the Annual Meeting was conducted as part of a comprehensive week of programming centered around the camp fire.[46]

The camp fire was a centripetal force for the duration of camp. The fire's location was also a place of unity through ritual. These ceremonies sometimes revealed the racial attitudes of the time: In 1911 the camp fire was the location for an "Indian War Dance Ceremony" (it does not appear that this ritual was a yearly custom).[47] The fire's symbolism was noted—The Report of the 1909 summer camp at Lake O'Hara labeled the camp fire "the altar of worship:"

> [The fire] is lighted on the evening of the opening day and is not allowed to go out while the Camp lasts. During the day it smoulders, but when the graduating and other climbs are over, when the various expeditions have returned, when the evening meal has given full satisfaction and the sun is sinking behind the snow-clad giants in the west, then the camp-fire flares up and is soon a glowing centre of genial warmth and good fellowship. Seated around it in a wide circle may be found the entire population….[48]

The 1912 Report (Vermillion Pass), labeling it "the great fire circle", discussed the place as "the altar of worship of the Camp, its fetish."[49] As a place of reverence, the camp fire became a

[46]*Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 2 (1910), 216.
[47] Report of the 1911 (Sherbrooke Lake Meadows) Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 4 (1912), 144
[48] "Report of the 1909 Camp," Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol. 2 (1910), 213.
[49] "Report of 1912 Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 5 (1913), 131.

distillation of the emblematic inherent in the material and the nonrepresentational that is the spiritual. The annual Sunday service at the camp fire was one such example.

Periodic descriptions (and accompanying photos) of Sunday services portrayed a landscape of romanticism and spirituality, in the service of state and religion:

> On Sunday morning, service was held around the camp fire, at which the Rev. J.J. Robinson, formerly Dean of Belfast, officiated. The Dean's sermon was undoubtedly inspired by the magnificent surroundings of snow-clad peak, towering precipice, rushing torrent, and forested valley. Standing at an impromptu pulpit, draped with the Union Jack, in simple, picturesque [sic] language he carried his hearers to the heights and placed them closely in touch with the wonders of creation in these mountains and forests, and reverently dwelt upon the omnipotence of the Great Creator of all things.[50]

At other times, men of the cloth could evoke more prosaic impressions. A letter written by Rev. W.A.B. Coolidge, "an American by birth and English by association" (and read at the 1909 Campfire) stated that he was "flattered" in imagining that anything he could write would be of any "value" as to the Canadian Rockies; it was time someone "gathered together the threads of previous explorations in the Canadian Rockies so as to show what still remains to be done, and to make known the claims of the fine mountain scenery which exists in the whole area."[51] Coolidge's tone eschewed romantic sensibilities for the competitive approach to mountaineering.

*Dwelling & Environment: The Vermillion Pass Camp (1912)*

Great care was taken in building a camp site that reflected the conventions that city life dictated. The height of land became an occupied place where only the centre was considered for discussion and the actual watershed itself subsumed by human convention. Detailed

[50] Ibid., 132. Also see "Report of Mt. Robson Camp (1913)," *Canadian Alpine Journal* , Vol. 6 (1915), 257.
[51] "Report of 1909 Camp," 214.

Description of the 1912 Vermillion Pass Camp by P.A. Wallace uncovered a series of overlapping boundaries that mimicked the spatial configurations of urban life:

> The downtown section of the camp was an attractive one, for it contained the civic centre, or dining tent, and other municipal offices. The camp was a great city in miniature, with a newspaper, post office, police register, lost and found department, and city council. The council met every night about a huge bonfire.[52]

Later, Wallace describes mock trials, “rollicking chorus of ‘Patrick Hooligan’s Mule” and “useful institutions about camp” such as The Lost and Found Department where “you could get there almost anything you wanted if you waited long enough.” The daily intransigence of “the human alarm clock”, A.O. Wheeler, was another matter—it “could not be set for a wrong hour, whether by accident or guile; it could not be shoved out of hearing under one’s pillow; and it could not be silenced by the insertion of a match in the works. Once it struck, you were doomed to “Sleep no more: Wheeler doth murder sleep.”[53]

Challenge and spectacle were also on display in camp. The “CAWSWAY”, a wooden plank thrown down across a shallow pit in the middle of camp served several functions, among them: a means of providing “transport facilities”; a first-stage testing place where “campers first go their nerve or lost it;” and a place for aspiring alpinists to assert their place in the pecking order.[54] Situated conspicuously in the centre of camp was another place where “the powers that constructed the camp arranged yet another test to weed out the non-climbers and to develop the gymnastic abilities of the others”:

> Under a huge canopy in the centre of the camp were arranged a series of tables, and by the tables were horizontal bars in place of chairs. The object of meals was to encourage those under training to balance themselves on the bars—the idea being that if one person could be taught

[52] P.A. W. Wallace, “Vermillion Impressions,” *Canadian Alpine Journal* , Vol. 5 (1913), p. 109-110.
[53] Ibid., p. 111.
[54] Ibid., p. 111-112.

> to balance themselves on a log for breakfast, there would be no difficulty in teaching him to balance on a knife arête for his life.[55]

Under the trope of preparedness for a 'real-life situation,' aspiring neophytes would undergo initiation *in camp* determining the social standing of the individual before she had even embarked on her climbing 'exam.'

The official Report of the 1912 Camps was explicitly detailed, describing a place where social construction and practice converged to create a lived experience that was neither strictly urban nor rustic:

> The dining canopy and official square, consisting of director's quarter's, secretary's quarters, committee tent, press tent, tea tent, and cooks' quarters, was pitched in an open glade form which fallen logs an forest debris had been carefully removed.

The interplay between material culture and the environment was also evident in the general context of the human social-spatial landscape and the naturally occurring environment:

> The square occupied the centre of an island surrounded by two branches of the headwaters of Vermillion River. Immediately outside the square, on the right looking downstream, was the fire circle, where each evening the campers gathered in force and spent the hours between supper and bedtime in song and story and many other kinds of entertainment.

In conflating "right" with "downstream" there is a brief hint at an embodied engagement with place, and the juxtaposition of the implied permanency of the square *as occupied* with its encirclement by the Vermillion headwaters hints at an interfacing landscape.

*CONCLUSION*

The mountain passes that straddled the height of land could become simultaneous sites of cartographic possession as well as integrated non-representational embodied experiences. The

[55] Ibid., p. 112.

passes straddling the height of land became places of geography and landscape as a result of their association as summer camp meeting grounds for the Alpine Club of Canada. These gatherings and their accompanying temporary built landscapes served as spatial settings in the service of loyalty to God, Empire and Nation at the same time that they came from and comprised a part of the human-environment place world.

The ACC placed significant value on individual achievement; the peaks became the venue for such rituals of accomplishment. The passes of the transcontinental height of land may have been significantly lower in altitude but were arguably similar in social significance and meaning. These passes were the selected sites of the early ACC "Great Divide Summer Camps," and were consequently invested in social meaning. The passes along the height of land were landscapes that could be shaped by the relations forged through Class, gender and, at times, race—all of whom were products of social relations that existed, in a sense, downstream. The peaks may have been the object of individual consumption but the passes were landscapes of collective control.

In ritualizing the annual summer camps along the height of land, The ACC carried on the symbolic hierarchy of place established simultaneously with the Boundary Commission. Still, there was an intimate embodied experience at the height of land, one that registered with a large number of camp participants as well as those wearing two hats as scientists and alpinists. Experiencing the separation of waters at the (apparent) source could not be simply explained away as a colonial imposition wrapped in a romantic urge. In this respect, then, the height of land idea—as opposed to the specific "Great Divide" descriptor—remained an evocative notion that seemed to pull at the human proclivity to rely on systems to make sense of the world around her.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

## FROM WATERSHED TO "THE GREAT DIVIDE:" THE RHETORIC OF NATION BUILDING AND ITS ALTERITY

A 1971 article in *The Globe and Mail* discussing the popularity of skiing in the Rocky Mountains conflated the geophysical with the psychological:

> The Great Divide in the Canadian Rockies sends rivers in diverse directions….The Divide has become a symbol, perhaps, of the Canadian schizophrenia: an assumption that easterners and westerners will never see things quite the same way.[1]

The fact that "The Great Divide" imagery could be invoked by (arguably) Canada's only national newspaper well into the second half of the 20th century suggests that the term still carried significant meaning—only now the frame of reference had changed from the 'separated-but-unified' model of Canadian political discourse as a narrative of nation building to one that could be used to make sense of the contemporary Canadian condition as it existed in the 1970s—categorized as a psychiatric disorder. Inherent in either understanding, however, is a primacy of place centred on the transcontinental height of land.

Analogies of divided waters and attitudes, whether used towards nation building or fragmentation, were not simply static symbols of a naturally occurring process of individual and collective identity formation. An ongoing process of writing *into the land* was also evident.[2] This discourse and re-inscription reinforced certain social assumptions about an ever-increasing *separation* of people from the land and each other. The conflation of an associative landscape related to the height of land with the less than romantic anti-modern "Canadian schizophrenia" signaled a fragmentation of the concept of "The Great Divide" so that by the 1970s it no longer

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[1] Evelyn Oldham, "New Ski Packages Put Rockies in Competition with Europe," *Globe and Mail*, December 4, 1971, 39.

[2] W.H. New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence and Power in Canadian Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

defined the nation in any singular way even while its associative landscape value remained. A measure of height of land-inflected *alterity* had emerged alongside those normative narratives already established on maps, in official tourist brochures and commemorated as public spectacle. These voices were largely individual and at arm's length from each other but suggested that the height of land idea could be used to provide alternative and, at times, opposing perspectives on both human-environmental and social relations. The *writing* into the height of land idea had changed—and so did our *reading* out of it.

This chapter discusses a particularly evocative era in Western Canadian cultural landscape history: Where language, in particular metaphor, was applied in the ongoing culture-nature discourse. The transition from localized watershed to landscape icon had already gained momentum with the establishment of ACC "Great Divide Summer Camps" and a new and intense cultural landscape reconfiguration created out of the establishment of the Alberta-British Columbia border. The transcontinental height of land, in its transformation into "The Great Divide," also proved fertile ground as a source of intense imaginative expression which simultaneously traversed artistic genres and scientific fields. The paradox of a particular landscape expression cutting across disciplinary and interpretive borders, at the same time being used as an powerful expression of spatial politics, suggests the height of land remained largely amorphous, contradictory but worth thinking (and arguing) about. At the heart of this discourse was a continued anthropomorphic way of understanding landscapes as reflections of society and nation without explicitly stating it as such. The possibilities of presenting this vision were virtually limitless. "The Great Divide" thus becomes a trope, and the appearance of an *anti-modern* interpretation of this figure of speech was significant—a reflection not only of changing times and contexts but also of the powerful associative value certain geophysical environments

can contain. Mystery and mastery co-mingled around the same landscape but created different meanings.

This chapter discusses the myriad ways in which people conceptualized the Rocky Mountain height of land as a symbolic space in Canadian thought. "The Great Divide" came to signify a *place* in various ways relational to the height of land as *space*. The height of land and "The Great Divide" were one and the same but had different meanings. Often it was difficult to distinguish the human from the geophysical relation but changes in social relations between and among locals, governments, tourists and artists could affect how people experienced moving through, across and along the height of land. Here and in the next chapter I discuss how the *language* of the height of land *as space* was conditioned by practice (roads, railways) representation (lines, intersections) and the socio-cultural allusions—the representational space—that ground both. The height of land, and its relation with "The Great Divide", was not only a matter of reading the land but understanding *the reading of the land*.[3]

This chapter also explores the co-constitution of the world of ideas and matter. Geophysical landscapes were given shape by certain social conventions such as the inherent monetary and symbolic value of certain landscapes, which in turn, conditioned the ways in which people 'understood' these surroundings. One of the signposts of the first half of this chapter is that the late 19th and early 20th century inaugurated an intensive period of landscape transformation in the Rocky Mountains, but what marked the height of land off from other social attachments (to land) were the deliberate measures taken here with respect to economic exchange and boundary making through commemoration; the valleys and passes that intersected with the height of land were particularly singled out. The means by which this process of commemoration occurred were varied *and* varied in effectiveness, but at the heart of every

[3] New, 10.

project was a concern with territorial integrity and controlling nature. *Rebranding* the height of land as "The Great Divide" was symptomatic of this modernist cultural project.

Capturing and ordering spaces like the height of land were expressions of this paradigm. By the end of the 19th century the concept of "The Great Divide" was increasingly deployed in the interest of nation building. It was during this period that the Canadian state struggled to create a unified and economically feasible nation across the plains and Rocky Mountains. In this nation building process the concept of "The Great Divide" became increasingly useful both to symbolize the difficulties and barriers to Nation, but also the overcoming of these problems. In this rhetorical stance, politicians, journalists, and poets conflated this concept to encompass not only crossing of the Rockies, but the conquest of Nature itself. That this rhetorical use of "The Great Divide" terminology had these ideological underpinnings is clear from the fact that prior to this time the height of land of the Rockies had mainly been referred to as a "watershed."

By the second quarter of the 20th century this heavily freighted concept was not only used in nation building, but also in tourism, and in a reaction to this selling of the "Great Divide" the concept also became the subject of criticism by writers, photographers and painters. As such the "Great Divide" language began to be used in a variety of discourses and in an increasingly diverse and relational ways. "Great Divide" photography shifted towards monument-less landscapes where the geographical configuration of places that helped give meaning to the separate-but-unified idea was challenged or in some instances, elaborated upon in an informed way that offered new modes of understanding. One of the 'new' ways of expressing this insight was greater recognition of how audience had changed. With increased mobility and technological opportunity, one did not necessarily have to come to "The Great Divide" to take meaning—it could also come to the audience.

Much of the work of creative writers, photographers and painters which dealt with "The Great Divide" embraced anti-modernism. This approach constituted a significantly different type of discussion in comparison to the commemorative literature that continued to construct a landscape narrative framed by the "opening up" of a boundary that had previously been closed. The ways in which "The Great Divide" language was unhinged from its nation building context suggests that the way people perceived the Rocky Mountain height of land had also changed – the result of a combination of several causes, including National Park policy, mass transportation and communication, and the cultural inclination towards the consumption of other 'unexplored' landscapes. Crossing the Great Divide in the second half of the 20th century was still a symbolic act, representational in its narrative but now multiple in meaning.

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A turn of the century traveler on the CPR route between Winnipeg and Vancouver ruminated upon the significance of 'The Great Divide Arch' site located where the "summit of the Rockies" intersected the "watershed of the North American Continent." The landscape experience enmeshed the human with the geophysical:

> A breath of wind from east or west determines on which side of the Continent the water will flow. If from the west, the rain-drops fall into the stream which enters the Bow River…eventually mixing with the waters of the wild and stormy *Atlantic.* If the wind is from the east, the rain-drops…glide into the calm *Pacific.* [original italics].[4]

The traveler, like many before him/her, and many after was clearly moved by such a sight. The Canadian Pacific Railway 'Great Divide arch' was a spectacle, the result of what Ben Bradley calls the intersection of commodity circulation, modes of visualization, and hierarchies of place.[5]

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[4] "*The Great Divide",* (unpublished manuscript), Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies Archives, 05.5 G79 Pam
[5] Ben Bradley, Bradley, "Roving Eyes: Circulation, Visuality and Hierarchies of Place," (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 2001).

But there was also an established cultural hegemony at work in the *language* of the traveler, a moral tone that belied a set of conventional social assumptions:

> On one side is everlasting joy and glory; on the other eternal darkness and misery. God, in wondrous grace and mercy, has set before them life and death, blessing and cursing, and calls upon them to choose life. But, alas! The great majority of unconverted people hurry through life as if there were no hell to shun and no heaven to gain…. At this very moment the unsaved reader is on the verge of the "Great Divide.[6]

What annoyed this railroad tourist, however, was that many—or, at least the "unconverted"—were living in unbounded moral territory. With respect to the "unsaved" reader, the question remained not just which ones could be tempted or cajoled to cross but whether such measures would be successful in time. The traveler then turned her/his sights towards the more prosaic affairs of political partisanship and the business of running the young country:

> When a matter has been fully considered and discussed in the House of Commons the cry "DIVIDE! DIVIDE!" is heard on all sides. I don't call upon you to "divide," but to *decide* for Christ and eternity. Delay no longer…Remember, there is a "Great Divide" in the future [original italics].[7]

To cross "The Great Divide," then, had several meanings in Late Victorian Canada: A physical landform crossing; life and death; sin and salvation; centripetal and centrifugal power. In both the spiritual and secular, the crossing was entangled with the dividing. In other words, dividing and crossing were co-constitutive but the ways in which this rhetorical language was applied suggested that "The Great Divide" was a trope—beyond the issue of the spirit and the flesh— for the necessary inclusion (and exclusion) of people in the young nation, and the normalization of a *symbolic landscape* as simply a stage, a neutral space.

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[6] *"The Great Divide."*
[7] Ibid.

“Great Divide” language was used regularly in religious writing at the turn of the century. The following verses appeared in the “Homemaker” section of the March 8, 1929 edition of The *Globe and Mail*. Penned by E. A. Havelock, “The Twentieth Century” had originally appeared in *Canadian Forum.*

> Not onto us, o Lord, the praise
> For what is wraught by sea or coast,
> Through Babel shouts and words that
> Boast
> Of conquest comes the master phrase—
> “Not onto us.”
>
> Along the wires the currents fret
> Or fly where there is none to guide;
> The railway climbs the Great Divide
> And liners sail secure—but yet
> “Not onto us.”[8]

The unification of the nation and conquest of nature through technological application caused one to pause and reflect. Obscured by the moral message, however, was a culturally-grounded assumption that the height of land was significant as more than just a landform. The railway crossing of ‘The Great Divide” had been provided through the providence of God. The symbolic importance of “The Great Divide” originated from its divinely inscribed existence. In the passage to nationhood the metaphor of crossing ‘the Great Divide was a useful narrative device for proselytizing colonials—a significant part of an editor’s tool kit.

Observing the Great War through the iconographic images of Western Canada as a physical and metaphysical place was another way the nation could draw upon its landforms to create identity. Take for instance the lead editorial for the New Years 1916 edition of the *Globe and Mail:*

> The old world is dead. The reborn world may not emerge this twelvemonth or next. But when it comes it will be new. The past never

[8] *Globe and Mail*, March 8, 1929, 1.

> can come back. History will not repeat itself. The world has toiled up to the crammed hour of destiny. Up to the summit, and all the streams ran backward to the unreturning Past. Over the watershed and life's currents steer for the uncharted Future. Here we stand at *The Great Divide*. Now is the transition time. Fronting a new year, we front, through the shadows, a new world [italics added].[9]

"The Great Divide" is presented here in a frozen temporal moment—the "now…the crammed hour of destiny"—and fixed physical space—"the summit…the watershed." In effect, the transcontinental height of land becomes a *representational space*, a culturally-conditioned way of using the physical world to make meaning of the human experience in history.[10] Nevertheless, such temporal-spatial descriptions must necessarily take liberties with the actual interactions of rock and water that mark these places in order to convey the cultural significance of landscapes such as the height of land. The waters headed (downstream) "backward to the unreturning Past" obscured the similar movements of water on both sides. The "currents steer for the uncharted Future" is inflected by the notion of progress, the possibility of "a newborn world" and a new direction but who is to say that those waters on the other side of "The Divide" will not bring similar experiences from the past, as indeed they would for the better part of three more years. Further, conflating the structured calendar year with the spatial qualities of a landform masked the fixed (and assumptive) properties of a specific conception of both time and space. As the continental waters descended, so did another bloody year of warfare.

The temporal "Divide" flowed into a conceptualized moral space in the next section of the editorial:

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[9] Ibid.

[10] 'Representational space,' "directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants and users'" is one third of a three part theory of space developed by the cultural geographical theorist Henri Lefebvre. The other parts are 'spatial practice' (everyday routines and experiences that convey social assumptions concerning material needs and economic transactions) and 'representations of space' (how and in what way social space is conceived by its planners). Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

> In the new world, the distinctive markings on the map will be, not physical, but moral. In the past the dividing lines were the arbitrary boundaries of nations—oceans between continents, lakes and rivers between countries, imaginary lines drawn here and there by the exigencies of international politics. Over these crude divisions of geography despots and warlords contended for the mastery. But a day is coming when the map of civilization will be marked off and coloured, not by the accidents of physical geography, but by moral sympathies and moral antipathies… When the map of moral character is drawn the Rockies and the St. Lawrence, the Rhine and the Himalayas, will be not the disputed boundaries of territories, but the moral achievements of peoples.[11]

The irony of the editorial is that the disputed height of land—a direct consequence of the urgent need to resolve a future *domestic* political conflict—was in the process of being mapped by the Interprovincial Boundary Commission. Expected physical needs (i.e. clearing passes) and economic exchanges (natural resource extraction) had already been conceptualized into the land. Further, "The Great Divide," as metaphor, was mapped onto the "new world" as an *old-world* expression.

Environmental philosopher Max Oelschlager argues that contemporary narratives, regardless of the medium they are packaged in as scientific, religious, psychological or political discourses, "no longer fit with biophysically evolved realities….The heart of the problem is the so-called Great Divide – a boundary that assumes the separation from and dominance over nature by culture."[12] Oelschlager notes three characteristics that define the conceptual Great Divide: the categorical separation of culture and nature, the reinforcement of this separation through hierarchy (dominance of culture over a passive and inert nature), and a stronger, metaphysical configuration, where culture becomes "the locus of human self-identity (person) and collective significance (people), and where nature becomes merely the stage on which cultural and personal

[11] "A New Year, A New World, *Globe and Mail* (January 1, 1916), p. 6.

[12] Max Oelschlaeger, "Boundaries and Darwin: Bridging the Great Divide," in eds. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine, *Nature's Edge: Boundary Explorations in Ecological Theory and Practice (*New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 3.

lives are played out. Here culture is equated with spirit or mind, and nature is equated with body or matter.[13] Oelschlaeger posits that a primary source of human dignity, for Westerners, comes from a sense of control over destiny, over fate, over nature. As he notes, The Great Divide between nature and culture that humanity has "cemented" as *our* conception of self and society is a consequence of "narratives of our making."[14] Conflating the metaphysical divide with landscape can only be effected through language—a cultural construction.

"The Great Divide" language was also used to normalize specific assumptions concerning the separation of culture from nature—a modernist expression mandatory to nation building. An editorial in the March 16, 1927 edition of *The Globe and Mail* demonstrated how these mutually exclusive properties, framed throughout by religious metaphor, reflected and shaped the way people conceptualized the height of land as "The Great Divide" in the United States. The continental scope of the landscape narrative was evident:

> It was a striking parable of Gospel truth that was acted out last month in the heart of the Rocky Mountains at Colorado and the White House at Washington. Newspaper readers learned of it in the Associated Press dispatch: "The Continental Divide Has Been Pierced."[15]

The separation of nature and culture, then, was a transcontinental expression—not limited by nation but rather given shape by Judaeo-Christian assumptions that extended beyond the 49th parallel.

In addition, this metaphor was pushed further—*into* the ground. Two crews of workers had been working for two and a half years drilling an underground "pioneer tunnel" across the height of land. When there was only eight feet of rock separating them, a dynamite charge was placed in the space between them; an electrical wire circuit connected the explosives to the

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[13] Ibid., 4-5.
[14] Ibid., 12.
[15] *Globe and Mail*, March 16, 1927.

White House: "President Coolidge touched a golden key, an electric spark was released and the last remaining granite of the barrier that for ages has checked man's progress through the Rocky Mountains was removed."[16] The obliterated space between the tunnels became the place of crossing.

The subtexts of the hierarchical nature-culture divide were apparent but, *The Globe and Mail* extended this landscape narrative to other 'divides' where a similar language was extended to matters of faith:

> One's thoughts are turned back to the piercing of a Great Divide nineteen centuries ago, when more than the granite barrier of the Rocky Mountains was done away….The greatest "divide" the world has ever known is the barrier between God and man caused by man's sin.[17]

A "Great Divide" existed "in the tabernacle of Israel in the wilderness…the most holy place…in which was God's presence…separated from all else by a veil. This divide was pierced, however with Jesus' death: "The veil of the Temple, which forbade men's approach to God, had been rent in twain in the instant of God's death."[18] Now another "Divide" had been pierced:

> As the granite barrier was finally removed by the head of the Government of a great nation, by a single touch of his hand, so the head of the Government of heaven removed the barrier between himself and sinners at the death of Christ….The Great Divide was sundered.[19]

"Great Divide" language was not restricted solely to the realm of the metaphysical. Indeed, as discussed in the outset of this chapter, bridging the "Great Divide" is one of the enduring ideas of the 'separate-but-unified' model constructed into Canadian political discourse. In the transition from colony to nation, Canadian commentators transformed the Rocky Mountain height of land into a *natural* obstacle to be surmounted in the nation building narrative.

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[16] Ibid. The event was a multi-media event. In addition to the wire dispatch, the blast was broadcast over the radio on General Electric Radio Station KOA.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* extended this reason to wilderness in 1888. Titled "Patriotism in the Wilderness," the editorial asked, "is there any soundness in the reasoning which asks to take it for granted that because of their wilderness this people cannot be consolidated as a nation?" The answer was a resounding 'nay': "To any true thinking, [wilderness areas] join us as no cultivated spaces do. They are our parks, our camping grounds, our happy hunting ground, our preserves of sport. They are the common possession for enjoyment of all Canadians." The editorialist continued:

> Go to the Bow River, thou pessimist of Canadian consolidation, and become a brother of every British Columbian who has ever longed to come across the Great Divide.[20]

This type of language was also used to project common social assumptions about the temperament and attitudes of people on either side of the constructed psychological boundary. In 1898, A Globe and Mail journalist surmised that the "Englishmen" and "Crown Colony" identity that seemed to prevail among prominent British Columbians in Victoria was indicative of a sentiment borne out of the Georgia Straits; "a more distinct change of sentiment than does the 'Great Divide' of the Rockies."[21] In contrasting life on the plains with "the pleasure spots of the mountains," an essay in the summer 1906 in the *Globe and Mail* discussed "the disappearance in the higher altitudes of the strenuousness that characterizes the people of the Prairies:"

> The mountains are as truly a Great Divide between the people as between the waters of the continent….The mountains change the habits and industries of the population as effectively as they alter the flow of the waters and currents of traffic.[22]

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[20] "Patriotism in the Wilderness," *Globe and Mail* , July 18, 1888, np.
[21] "Business Methods of Seattle," *Globe and Mail*, April 30, 1898, 10.
[22] "Mining Towns of Kootenay," *Globe and Mail*, July 20, 1906, 9.

Political and economic questions could also be framed by "Great Divide" language. Increasing grain movements westward was a controversial proposal in the 1920s. *The Globe and Mail* rejected those who opposed this proposal. Again, a specific landscape was (re) worded in reference to another place:

> Opponents of the movement for increasing the westward flow of grain talk as if it were an attempt to interfere with the natural course of trade, ignoring the Rocky Mountains and forcing down railway rates without regard to natural difficulties….It is certain that there is somewhere on the Prairies a place which may be compared with the height of land whence rivers flow in different directions….Indications are that the "divide" will keep flowing westward toward the Pacific Ocean.[23]

The Great Divide as a representational space of national unity was the subject of an acrostic poem written in 1893 by J.D. Edgar. The Member of Parliament and eventual Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons included this verse as part of a collection of iconographic poems, titled *This Canada of Ours and Other Poems* championing nation and empire. In "The Great Divide," personification is used to tell the story of metaphysical unity in the face of physical separation:

> Two little rain drops side by side,
> Here at the top of the Great Divide,
> Ever while falling their love grows warm,
> Grows as they drift in the arms of the storm…[24]

In the 'notes' section, Edgar discussed the setting as a landscape spectacle. The spatial practice that defined "The Great Divide," the railway experience, was prominent:

> Stephen, a station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, marks the summit of the Rocky Mountains. Here all trains are delayed to allow passengers to see the exact spot where the waters of a mountain spring divide, and overflow towards both the east and the west. These divided drops flow in

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[23] "A Railway Great Divide," *Globe and Mail*, September 22, 1923, 4. Saskatchewan became known as 'The Great Divide in gain routing.' See "West Makes Claim to Chairmanship of Railway Board," *Globe and Mail*, August 14, 1924, 1.
[24] J.D. Edgar, "The Great Divide," in *This Canada of Ours and Other Poems* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1893), 33.

> opposite directions and by devious courses, and after descending more than 5,000 feet they reach the sea levels of the Atlantic or the Pacific.[25]

By placing this otherwise mundane political polemic in a collection of iconographic images of nation at the turn of the century, Edgar's Rocky Mountain height of land became a representative space and an image deployed in the service of nation and empire at the turn of the century.[26] Indeed, Edgar's verses were relatively unknown in comparison to other examples of "height of land" poetry.[27]

"The Great Divide" photo opportunity certainly became one of the signature moments in a series of rituals established around the normalization of this iconic space. In his study of the Yellowhead Pass landscape and the mediating influence of the Canadian National Railway, Ben

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[25] Ibid., 63.

[26] Some of the other themes in the collection evoked other landscapes ("Keswick Bay," "On the Saguenay" and "Canadian Autumn Tints"). Other poems drew upon historical events—real and imagined—to shape Canadian sensibilities ("Arouse Ye, Brave Canadians"—an appeal voiced by General Brock at the outset of hostilities in 1812 and "The White Stone Canoe"—"a legend of the Ottawas" but in fact partially adapted from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow). Still others were peculiar in their inclusion and controversial in their tone ("Euthanasy"). At other times, "The Great Divide" gave pause for reflection on how fragmented the country could be, and "The Great Divide" much less a 'separate-but-united' image.' See Nellie McClung, "Christmas Broadside with Printed Photo of Mr. and Mrs. McClung," University of Victoria Archives, Acc. 91-76. The photo is unique for the placement of the McClung couple in the photo (most landscape photos taken at 'The Great Divide Arch' were not portraits). Both husband and wife were pictured in front of the left (British Columbia) side of the monument. Nellie is looking out towards the photographer; her husband averts his eyes from the camera, glancing off to the west. The accompanying poem reflects this ambivalence of unity that "The Great Divide" was meant to convey.

[27] Duncan Campbell Scott's *Height of Land* (1909) was one of the better known and earliest landscape poems penned by the artist-bureaucrat. The setting of the poem is "the gathering of waters in their sources"—the headwaters of the Hudson Bay-Lake Superior watershed. The boreal landscape is a place of contrasts between "crowded southern lands" and "the lonely north," "bright uplands" and "charred earth," flesh and spirit. Scott's height of land is also a Canadian landscape, "a lonely north enlaced with lakes and streams." These sharply defined boundaries painted a picture framed largely by the innocence of a space (and time) largely removed from the immediacies of the present. As such, the *Height of Land* comprised one of the earliest literary manifestations of a much larger canon of 'northern verses' whose nationalism is found in the sharp separation of values and lifestyles that came with living either up or downstream. A man more well-known for his views on the assimilation of indigenous Canadians, his philosophical and spiritual proclivities spelled out a much more complex and conflictive image of a man than previously understood. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986); Stan Dragland, *Floating Voice: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Literature of Treaty No. 9* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1984); *Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1980); Lisa Salem, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, Vol. 18, no. 1 (1993), 99-117; Lisa Salem-Wiseman, 'Verily, the White Man's Ways Were the Best': Duncan Campbell Scott, Native Culture, and Assimilation," *Studies in Canadian Literature/Etudes en Littérature Canadienne,* Vol. 21, no.2 (1996), 120-42; and Rick Monture, "Beneath the British Flag': Iroquois and Canadian Nationalism in the Work of Pauline Johnson and Duncan Campbell Scott," *Essays on Canadian Writing*, (Winter2002), Issue 75, 118-142.

Bradley points out that relations between travelers and landmarks like Mount Robson were mediated on the most mundane level by the route and structure of the Grand Trunk Pacific's railroad through east-central British Columbia and by the standards, business principles and ideology that they were manifestations of. Passengers must have had many different interpretations of the landscape but they were invariably based on a shared or common view, one that was very much framed, serialized, standardized, and mechanically reproduced by the structures, vehicles and operating principles of the railways that transported travelers through space and time. As a landmark, Mount Robson became a kind of construct, trademark or visual commodity of the railways.[28] "The Great Divide," though not a landmark in the same way as Mount Robson, was no less constructed or mediated by the railway. Indeed, unlike the 'Monarch of the Mountains,' the height of land was much more mundane yet also a more intimate close-up object of significance since travelers could feel as though they were part of the unfolding story. Still, the emotions one felt towards such a spectacle were rooted as much in the metaphorical *language* of the spectacle as it was the physical presence of the site. *Where* one was counted equally with *what* one was doing at that place. Very few associated with staying sedentary at the "Divide" but identified with crossing it—and meeting the need to feel profound (at least for a moment) about it.

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway allowed artists to acquire 'passes' granting them access to the Rocky Mountain landscape. These passes were an integral part of the process of selling Canada.[29] One of the most popular stops along the entire Transcontinental Route was the "Great Divide" monument at Kicking Horse Pass. This place quickly became one of the predominant objects of attention in early 20th century mountain photography, particularly

[28] Bradley, *Roving Eyes,* 37-38.
[29] E.J. (Ted) Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism (*Banff: Altitude, 1983).

that of Byron Harmon (1876-1942).[30] The monument's form and function changed little between 1890 and 1930, updated only to include the interprovincial boundary established in 1905.

Postcards of "The Divide" were popular, especially for those interested in advertising their travelling adventures to family and friends. In this way, "The Great Divide" language became portable. Postcards could be purchased at Stephen and immediately sent from there. Most postcards contained the title heading 'The Great Divide' On Line of Canadian Pacific Ry.' on the back, and a space for correspondence was provided below. The postcard was a ready-made and simple way of conveying a narrative image far from the actual site, mediated through the technological processes of photography and circulation (i.e. railway).

The overwhelming majority of "Great Divide" photos were similar to the point of being formulaic—another way of transmitting representational space. The Great Divide narrative became enmeshed with the railway but the latter, by virtue of its unbroken linear movement from left to right (or vice versa) across the bottom of the postcard, substituted for the hydrological component that did not exist in this place (see Figure 4.1).

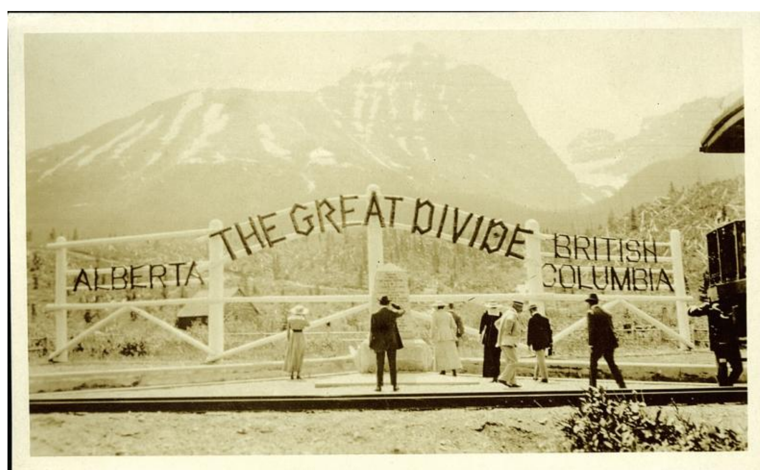


**Figure 4.1 Postcard, The Great Divide**

[30] Peter and Catherine Whyte, Eds., *Great Days in the Rockies: The Photography of Byron Harmon* (Banff: Altitude, 1984).

The railway literally ran off the edge on diametrically opposite sides. The placing of the Great Divide arch in the foreground, and centred exactly, conveyed a specific image implying that where the (imaginary) waters separated was also where the West began. This is a good example of the production (and rationalization) of a specific linear narrative, one that began in the middle of the postcard and continued right off the edge on both sides;[31] the water, like the rails were captured in a natural movement. What is obscured, however, is the fact that the landscape had been framed in this way. Indeed, neither the iron *nor* the water was actually a 'naturally occurring' part of the land. The watercourse—starting at a specific point in the middle, and extending outward in two equal directions—had been created in order to conform to how people expected to experience it *as tourists*. Both rail and water had been manipulated to affect a feeling of spectacle (see Figure 4.2).[32]

**Figure 4.2 - "The Great Divide (stream upon left flows into Atlantic while that to the right flows into Pacific)."**

The "fusion of the vehicular and the visual" transformed the way people conceptualized landscapes and experienced places.[33] Travelers on the Canadian Pacific Railway Transcontinental Route were bound to find the mountain portion of their journey one of the

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[31] Postcard, Royal British Columbia Archives, HPO33725.

[32] *Prairie Postcards PC014534, Peel's Prairie Provinces, University of Alberta Library.*

[33] Bradley, 8.

highlights in a trip that was certainly not lacking in attractions. The annotated CPR Timetable for 1898 illustrated the exalted position of the height of land even in the mountains. Indeed, one could read *in advance* of the "now sublime and almost terrible scenery" that marked the "summit of the Rockies"—a 15 minute trip between Stephen (named in honour of the first CPR President) and Hector stations.[34] Rail travelers were encouraged to disembark briefly at Stephen to take a photo of this lofty place.

Another calculated stop was at the CPR Glacier House, B.C., 42 miles from "The Great Divide." The CPR hotel at Golden was literally a place where Empire and Nation converged. As part of a transcontinental web of transportation links, "The Great Divide" became a crossroads. An American traveler noted of this arrangement that:

> It was most interesting to see the travellers by this morning's train—who took breakfast here (this is a regular breakfast station for the Eastbound trains at 7:30 a.m. & dinner station for the westbound train at 7 p.m.). Many of this morning's passengers landed yesterday at Vancouver from the "Empress of Japan" from the East & comprised many from Japan, China, India &. One poor Hindoo evidently from a hot climate, had on white trousers & a thin jacket—while I was comfortable in my winter suit! It gave me a chill to look at him! There is an English lady here with a man servant—a hindoo—who looks strange. This hotel register shows a great variety of localities from whence its guests come—practically form all over the world.[35]

The symbolic spatial importance of such a place as a site of consumption was in stark contrast to other height of land passes like Crowsnest and Yellowhead where passenger train transport did not yet exist. Indeed, Crowsnest and Yellowhead Passes were not seen as part of "The Great Divide" nexus even if they were part of the same transcontinental height of land mapped out by the Interprovincial Boundary Commission.

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[34] *CPR Annotated Timetable (1898),* 42.
[35] Letter from Thomas Scattergood, August 8, 1900. Royal British Columbia Archives, ADD.MSS.1021

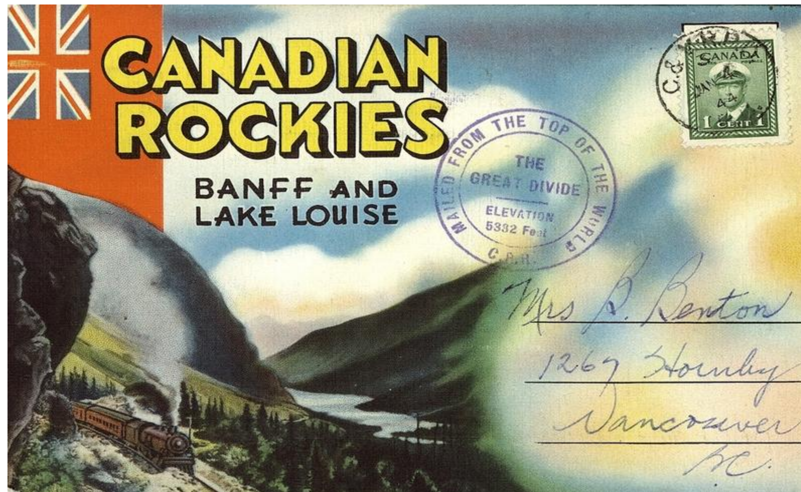

**Figure 4.3**

The rising popularity of motion pictures was another way "The Great Divide" language could be presented as a vehicle of national unity and a place for the subduing of unruly nature. Knowing the audience's proximity—or in this case removed—from the physical height of land could also allow a film maker to play around with the intersection of language, geography and landscape. Once again, however, the message of conquering Nature and the glory of Nation found fertile ground. In the 1937 film "The Great Barrier," Western Canadian historical fiction came to the silver screen as the story of the CPR construction through the mountains in 1883.[36] The title of the movie—loosely based on a 1925 novel titled "*The Great Divide"* by Alan Sullivan[37]—pitted humanity and nation against the elements. A fair dose of suspension of disbelief was necessary in viewing the film but the finding/founding discourse is apparent: As Colonel Rogers' scans the horizon towards the mountains he responds: "I have got to find a

[36] "The Silent Barriers" demonized in the film were not in the Rockies—Rogers Pass, 80 km west of "The Great Divide," was actually located in the Selkirk Mountains. The film was released in Great Britain as "The Great Barrier" but in Canada as "The Silent Barriers." The change in title may have been due to confusion with Australia's underwater landform. On the other hand, it is worth considering whether the close association with "The Great Divide" metaphor would have gone over better in Great Britain where fewer people would have questioned the inaccuracy of the title with location. The plurality of barrier and reference to a soundless landscape was also significant in constructing a specific spatial narrative.
[37] Alan Sullivan, *The Great Divide: A Romance of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1935).

pass, even if I have to go barefoot with no one but a couple of Indians and a pocketful of raisins." Later he tells the remaining survivor of a group who accompanied him into the mountains to find the pass that, "If we don't come through, we'll meet on the other side of the barrier—with wings on."[38]

The symbolic representation that the railway brought to the harnessing of nature and nation had largely passed into historical memory by the time it was adapted to film. A new road was being constructed literally on top of, and out of, the old—the auto route. The entrance of the automobile into the 'wilderness' was part of a continent-wide transformation in the ways urban residents perceived the value of nature and how to access it. The automobile was both a leveling agent for those previously unable to consume nature and, through the building of transmountain roads to support them, a continuation of the rhetoric of national unity through landscape consumption. The height of land figured prominently in this process—and continues to do so—as both a place to consume and to preserve.[39]

The construction of the "Great Divide" Highway (renamed Banff-Windermere Highway soon after) and Kicking Horse Trail Auto Route in 1923 and 1928 respectively ushered in the era of the road-as-narrative in Western Canada.[40] The twin themes framing this narrative were again the unification of the nation and the triumph of culture over nature. When the construction of "The Great Divide" Highway was announced in 1910, its name automatically

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[38] Ibid. One reviewer noted that the movie would appeal to the audience on two grounds—"first as a motion picture, and second as a Canadian motion picture. Canadians were bound to "get a tremendous kick out of this dramatization of a thrilling episode in our history….As a story of rugged Canadianism winning through against all obstacles, the picture will deliver still another thrill of satisfaction. There is no doubt in my mind that this patriotic angle will outweigh any deficiencies the picture might have if considered impersonally as just another movie….Pioneer days in various parts of the Empire and united States have been glorified innumerable times on the screen, but Silent Barriers is equal to any of them." *Globe and Mail*, April 6, 1937, 6.

[39] For more on the automobile and the consumption of wilderness, see Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement (*Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

[40] In his history of the Canadian road Peter Unwin has noted that "Like a book, the road takes us to another place, provides escape, entertainment, diversion, perhaps transformation and enlightenment. . . . To travel the road is to participate in reading . . . . The road, like the book, is someone else's attempt to fashion reality." See Peter Unwin, *Hard Surface: In Search of the Canadian Road* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2008), 204.

gave the height of land primacy of place.[41] "The Great Divide" was perceived as a picturesque landscape, but one that still needed to be tamed in order to be legitimized as a tourist spectacle.[42] "The Automobile Highway of the Great Divide" was the suggested name of the road. Although the details had not yet been worked out, the "scheme" appeared quite feasible. The first part of the road from Calgary to Banff already existed so the federal government would be asked to continue it to the "summit." The British Columbia government was willing to build the road from the height of land to connect with the present road running from Golden to near Wilmer, down the Columbia Valley. Travelling through Vermillion Pass, the road would continue on through the mountains and down the Columbia valley, a distance of 150 km in length.[43]

In an article titled "The British Columbia and the Road Problem," W.W. Foster, Deputy Minister of Public Works, spelled out the challenge facing the province.

> In the past years, before British Columbia entered upon its present era of prosperity, old trails, many of them relics of Indian and game tracks were improved each year with more regard to immediate necessity and economy than future utility. These trails followed the line of least resistance to an objective point for the time being, and had hardly any other feature to commend them.[44]

Ben Bradley has argued that as a kind of experiential filter, the medium of circulation would in effect produce the message of the landscape.[45] The differing needs of mining, timber, and agricultural industries necessitated the planning of a complete system of trunk roads that would open up British Columbia's vast natural resources.[46] In other words, the industrializing, capitalist driven culture that conditioned the contraction of time and space prioritized mobility

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[41] *Crag and Canyon*, Volume 11, no. 18 (September 3, 1910), 1.
[42] Ibid,
[43] Ibid.
[44] W.W. Foster, "The British Columbia Government and the Road Problem," *British Columbia Magazine*, Vol. 8, no. 3 (March 1912), 201.
[45] Bradley, 6.
[46] Ibid.

over any other consideration.[47] Foster's reference to previous trails as "old…relics" constantly in need of improvement on account of immediate expediency illustrated how the demands of resource extraction were both a product and agent of the hierarchical separation of nature and culture that defined these years. Indigenous trails were value-less because they followed the contours of the land and were thus meandering (and time consuming); spatial and temporal expediency called for direct confrontation with what the land threw *in the way* of the traveler.

The value of the height of land symbolism was driven by economic calculation. Included in the March 1912 edition of *British Columbia Magazine*, under the heading "Why We Need Good Roads," were a list of nine factors. The first four items were driven by economic exchange. Topping the list was the perceived need "to develop our resources." The second item was to lower the cost of marketing agricultural products. The third item was to "open up vast areas of land waiting for the plough," followed by the need to "tap the rich mineral districts" and develop timber areas. The following four items related to physical needs of road travel, namely the facilitation of easy and economical travel for business and pleasure, reducing the high cost of living by reducing transportation expenditures, to "compliment" the extension of the railway system and "to make our scenery and climate revenue-producing.[48]

Even protected areas that enveloped the height of land were established through power-sharing equations. The federal government agreed to financially support the construction of the highway in return for the acquisition of lands on both sides of the highway between the height of land (at Vermillion Pass) and its eastern portal at Radium Hot Springs. The result of this agreement was a National Park whose boundaries mimicked those of the park's—a sinuous "S"

[47] Bradley, 4.
[48] Foster, "The British Columbia Government and the Road Problem," 202.

shape.[49] In the immediate period leading up to, and following the ceremonies opening the "Great Divide Highway" on June 30, 1923, a great deal of attention was paid towards the historicizing of the height of land, a space where aesthetics and engineering complemented each other. The conception, construction and completion of the highway coalesced into a narrative mix of human determination, Euro-Canadian technological ingenuity, tempered by an apologia for the imposition of culture into the realm of nature—the melancholic construction of a romantic past. Central to this narrative was the gendered depiction of a virginal and pristine landscape made compliant by the forward rush of the automobile.

The consolidation of "The Great Divide" language was solidified through performance, or more precisely, the spectacle that arose in the wake of the automobile. The "Choric Ode on the Opening of the Banff-Windermere Highway Across the Central Rockies" revealed the predominant attitudes towards the geophysical world. Performed through call-and-response, the consolidation of nation and the harnessing of nature were two predominant images throughout the verses. In the first series of stanzas, the highway's completion was the culmination of a process that started in darkness and ended in light. The nobility of the project is confirmed through the harnessing of technology to illuminate a path through the mountains that had existed only as an abstraction. The next set of verses drew upon the romantic and gendered image of a fertile Earth whose purpose was to provide comfort to the harried man—another manifestation of a feminine nature metaphysically separate from (hu)man. In the third set, the *a priori* (and personified) form and function of the mountains were given shape in order that they could be used constructively for the future: The mountains were also reconfigured as gendered spaces:

[49] Kootenay National Park, the fourth of the federally-mandated intermountain protected areas, was established in 1920. The creation of Kootenay was unique in that its designation was a result of the political machinations involved in the building of the interprovincial "Great Divide Highway." For more on the establishment of Kootenay National Park and the role of the highway in its creation, see W.F. Lothian, *A History of Canada's National Parks* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, Parks Canada, 1981).

Thy bosom heaved with palpitating throes,
And like a giant breed there sprang,
Stupendous mountains from thy quivering side
……………………………………………..
Thou mad'st this joy by which men live.[50]

The next section engaged with a gendered and racialized space—a culmination of the triumph of the (male) Euro-Canadian adventurer over the hesitant indigenous (male):

Hector of the Palliser
Stood by Vermillion's eastern gate
And scanned the valley winding like a dream,
Lonely and virginal; nor knew what fate
Lay westward. And when, at last,
After the toil of many days was past,
He touched the valley on the farther side,
Unto the Indian brave who stood beside,
"Brother," he said, "there is a way![51]

"The Great Divide" Highway language became a national narrative, a unifying idea. The subsequent section heralded the "triumphant" voice of man and the deferral of nature to his project. The underlying sexual tension to this process continued. These following words, more than others, spoke to the hierarchical and metaphysical narratives of the modern era in Canadian geographical language:

Herald of victory, thou; indomitable;
Imperious child of human thought and dream,
Cleaving the mountain barriers,
Opening the long-closed gates.[52]

Images that coalesced around "mountain peace," "immemorial solitude" and "cosmic thought" were grounded in common social assumptions: The mountain landscape, until recently, had been people-less. But now, the industrious Euro-Canadian had challenged the mountains and

[50] *The Choric Ode on The Banff-Windermere Highway Across The Central Rockies (1923)*, 1.
[51] Ibid., 5.
[52] Ibid., 5-6.

prevailed. The verse concluded with the personification of nature and homage to the industry and industriousness of humanity:

> Child of the iron way,
> New triumph of man's day,
> A thousand valleys echo to thy call:
> "Oho! Oho! Oho! From sea to sea!"
> Dream, hoe and toil. Praise for man's victory![53]

The land, in this context, was anything but a value-free concept. The final stanzas painted a picture of a highway landscape that evolved in accordance with the nonhuman inhabitants of the area, a place "where eagles soared, mountain creatures…scanned the silences in slumbering peace…the wily cougar hides her brood." These "breasts of the eternal hills" would also be a place where the highway would provide respite "from the sunbaked street and poisoning marts where life grows dim and loveliness departs….where magic splendours crown the dying day."[54] The Banff-Windermere Highway boosters were intent on creating a rigid boundary between nature and culture when it was unclear there was one.

*The Ballad of the Banff-Windermere Highway* (1923) was shorter but continued the twin narratives of nation building and harnessing nature. The archetypical trail was revealed to unite the nation: "I am the Road that winds from Mountain's crest to Pacific's strand, I am the Road that finds the Eagle's. Eons have I lain unknown, Either to man or beast, till the buffalo had worn the trail that has shown the way, to the men from the East."[55]

The road was historicized and given agency within the context of earlier travels and explorations through the region. The image of the adversarial landform standing in the way of history's great solitary figures was once again constructed. "The Trapper and Hunter came,

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 6-7.
[55] Crawford Hamilton, "The Ballad of the Banff-Windermere Highway," (Invermere, B.C., 1923) University of Victoria Archives, PS8515 A586B35.

seeking their pelts and their Food, but the Mountains grim, encircled them and halted them where they stood."[56] The completion of the highway contracted time and space, and brought the height of land within a larger web of interprovincial travel: "But I waited not in vain for the men who needed me most, they found the way that is used today as a Highway from coast to coast."[57] Now that the highway had been 'discovered,' "a glorious banner unfurled…from Mountain's crest to Pacific's strand," it will "hold sway for ever…O'er the Wild and Free in the world."[58]

*The Crag & Canyon*, Banff's local weekly paper owned by Norman Luxton, a local businessman and outfitter, saw the highway in terms of local publicity and national patriotism. In May 1912, *The Crag & Canyon* reported on the progress of the Vermillion Pass-Castle Mountain section of construction which had begun the previous month. For four weeks in advance, a section of the cover page of *The Crag & Canyon* had been reserved for the opening ceremonies.

Over the next couple weeks, the significance and symbolism of the highway was maintained through reporting that played up the benefits that residents and Canadians could expect from such a project. The July 7 edition of *Crag & Canyon* lavished praise upon the road as "an historic event…of high importance" and "a big feather in Canada's national plume. It brought home to nearly twelve hundred people who attended the impressive ceremonies the fullness and richness of the glorious scenery to be held in the Canadian Rockies."[59] Tributes were also made to the "splendid car road, a genuine masterpiece of engineering that renders an expressive though silent ovation to the skill and imagination of the engineers on whom rested the

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] *Crag & Canyon,* July 7, 1923, 1.

responsibility of its construction."[60] Indeed, through the publication and widespread distribution of government literature, and nationwide media attention, one did not necessarily have to travel along the road for the symbolism of this place to have a meaning.[61]

No sooner had the pavement cooled than *The Crag & Canyon* considered the value generated by the fulfillment of the physical needs and economic potential that the highway offered. The July 14, 1923 edition of *The Crag & Canyon* turned towards the financial benefits and cultural capital that could be expected from the completion of the road:

> Since 1910, when the first engineers came into the country to make the first surveys and particularly for the past five years, motorists of both Canada and the United States have been eagerly anticipating the completion of the road. One of the primary results emanating from the opening of the trail is that it gives auto tourists the finest stretch of scenic road in existence, and from a purely monetary point of view, especially for this section of Alberta, this is exceptionally gratifying as Banff will be one of the beneficiaries of the trail. [62]

The editors also displayed an acute sensitivity towards how the narrative generated by the road would forge nationalist sentiments and generate a financial windfall for the town:

> The publicity that Banff has received through this has been enormous. Being a national affair of international importance newspaper men and magazine writers all over the continent have given their space and time to the cause. Banff, already, ranking among the world's famous summer resorts, has received untold benefit from this widespread and spontaneous publicity.[63]

These statements were an unabashed form of boosterism, situating the highway as the inevitable outcome of a process that started with "the ringing blows of Lord Strathcona's hammer nearly four decades earlier." The twin notions of the Rocky Mountains as "an

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[60] Ibid.
[61] "Will Cut Ribbon to Open Highway Across Rockies," *Globe and Mail*, June 30, 1923; "Wonderful Automobile Road, *Globe and Mail*, April 9, 1927, 8.
[62] *Crag & Canyon*, July 14, 1923, p. 1.
[63] Ibid.

impregnable barrier between East and West" and "a terra incognita to all but the most intrepid explorers" continued the hierarchical-metaphysical nature-culture dichotomy.[64] The gendered imagery associated with this statement (and others) complemented the conceptualizing of a space whose "artery opened up along which the life of the nation might flow uninterruptedly from coast to coast."[65] Lest one lose the true meaning of such an endeavour, the travel guides reminded the reader that "a new triumph has been won over the physical obstacles of nature, a magnificent preparation made for the new and fascinating mode of travel which has already revolutionized modern life, and a new open-air and open-sky way provided to the scenic treasures of Western Canada."[66]

Constructing a particular dichotomous nature-culture narrative was also accomplished through the selective (re)interpreting of history. There was a particular trajectory that disregarded contingency in order to allow for a seamless transition to the present:

> Nearly all roads before they become a highway have had a long history, a history stretching often into the dim and romantic past. The path taken by a primeval animal to a greener pasture ground becomes the road which centuries later carries the traffic of a continent; a trail worn by the feet of countless buffaloes becomes a prairie highway, but the route followed by the Banff-Windermere highway leads through virgin wilderness where few even of the topographical features bear a name. When the engineers went into the country in 1910 to make the first location for the road, no accurate map existed and no survey had been made. They surveyors had not even points to which to tie their lines. History, indeed, had scarcely touched this section of the mountains….So far as this section of the Rockies is concerned it may be said that history will begin on June 30 next when the first cars go over the Divide[67]

Conflating maps and surveys with the meta narrative of written history conformed to a culturally-conditioned conception of time and space. Moreover, the "touching" of a landscape

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[64] Ibid., p. 5.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 16-17.

privileged the physical transformation of a space over other ways of connecting with a landscape where ideas and things flowed, such as oral narrative and material culture. As for the indigenous presence in this area, the rhetoric was couched in the same way: "it is probable that no human voice *broke the silence* of the Vermilion and Kootenay valleys. [italics added]"[68] Not everyone writing of the highway and its place in the history of the region concurred.

Within months, several periodicals were weighing in on the meaning and consequence of The Banff-Windermere Highway.[69] These essays were less prone to rampant self-congratulation or outright condemnation. The narratives did show, however, that there was little consensus with respect to the highway and what it meant outside (or inside) town. Further, those articles that presented auto route landscapes enveloped with possibility could just as easily be juxtaposed by other narratives using the same scenarios to paint a picture of ambivalence. Indeed, a multiplicity of opinions existed within the Banff community itself. In an article in *Travel Magazine* titled "The Passing of a Rocky Mountain Trail," journalist Terry Ramsaye had the opportunity to ride "on a sentimental journey" with the last pack party immediately before the June 1923 opening. Ramsay's narrative presented a landscape imperiled and enlivened by the impending automobile. The author also spent considerable time considering the ways people continued to travel along the land and through the landscape. Ramsaye's narrative demonstrated that there *was* a human presence that had long predated the highway. Indeed, Ramsaye conceived the Banff-Windermere Highway as part of a larger (and longer) spatial-temporal narrative where the human presence had been deeply felt.

[68] Ibid. 17-19

[69] The "Great Divide" Highway name was dropped sometime before the opening of the auto route. Although no explanation seemed to be offered it is possible to surmise the reason for such a decision being rooted in the fact that the Banff-Windermere Highway name would be a built-in advertisement for both communities—a less abstract name than the earlier "Great Divide" moniker.

Ramsaye could not completely conceal the sense of accomplishment that came with the apparent grafting of culture onto nature. He wrote, "The great interior of unnamed peaks, wild rivers and silent glaciers….the mountain country back from the railways is, with the exception of David Thompson and the occasional passing of traders and trappers still unknown"—until now:

> Now, presto, with the lightning of the modern era the century-old trail becomes a broad highway. In a single step the rocky tortuous path is at one with the beckoning ease of Michigan Boulevard, Fifth Avenue, and El Camino Real.[70]

Was Ramsaye purposely facetious in his analogy? The subtext is unclear but he did set out with the full knowledge that this pack trip was the "closing of the old epoch, a farewell to the old trail, and a greeting to the new highway nearing completion."[71] Ramsayse situated himself between two spatial and temporal boundaries. As a journalist, Ramsaye was also acutely aware of the expedition's responsibility to record the region at a historic turning point. "Traveling as Thompson did, we were ten days in the passes and defiles. The first party of the motor tourists will probably sweep across the one hundred and forty miles in six hours or less."[72]

Ramsaye made special note of the spot where the literal and material crossing of "The Great Divide" occurred; a place of simultaneous *finding and founding:*

> Up over the Great Divide, marked by an Alberta-British Columbia boundary stone, we came presently to the place where a barway stood across the road grade, marking the point at which we must abandon gasoline and take up the ways of the wild….The party was unloaded into a conglomerate heap of bedding rolls, typewriters, and candy boxes by the roadside. A booming "Hello, hello came from the timber nearby and following it a stalwart man, who announced himself as Walter Nixon.[73]

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[70] Terry Ramsaye, "The Passing of a Rocky Mountain Trail," *Travel Magazine,* Vol. 41 (1923), 22.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

Indeed, there were people "on the other side." Even more poignant, however, was the location of what Irene Klaver calls a "boundary on the edge,"[74] an intermediary object. The height of land, as a geophysical space, came into contact with a conceptualized place (inter provincial boundary) at the same time the automobile culture interacted at its outer edge with the nature "of the wild." The *barway*, as the intermediary object, suggested possibility as much as it insinuated closure. The barrier had been established as a means of *holding back* automobiles from that part of the road not yet constructed, however all around the road was permanent opening. Ramsaye moved through and beyond the wall—but not within the restricted visual and experiential confines of the automobile. Rather, he negotiated the boundary *from the inside out:* The pack train crossed the boundary with horses. The party was simultaneously *dis/embarking* at the barway.

Other articles expressed a measure of melancholy over the rapid transformation of the landscape in such a short period of time. An article in the 1923 edition of *Canada Magazine* titled, "From Indian Trail to World Highway" used flashback imagery to illustrate how the vision of "an Empire highway" came to fruition:

> Yesterday: A skin-clad band of Assiniboine Indians returning by winding, deep-rutted, age-old trails form their hunting-grounds in the high hills, their trailing travois poles loaded with the spoils of the chase
>
> Today: Luxurious automobiles form far corners of the continent humming along the smooth-surfaced-highways which, winding over mountain passes and through forested valleys in the Rockies, have for their foundations the war trails of the red man.[75]

The highway was the logical outcome of a 70- year old "vision" that saw its necessity as a transportation route that would "give access to Canada's vast wealth of untilled land and virgin forest, would open up a new route to the Orient and to the great island possessions in the far

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[74] Irene Klaver, "Boundaries on the Edge," in eds. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine, *Nature's Edge: Boundary Explorations in Ecological Theory and Practice* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), 125.
[75] Dan McCowan, "From Indian Trail to World Highway," *Canada Magazine*, Vol. 61 (1923), 227.

southern seas." The rest of the article detailed the history of this transformation from an "Indian Trail" into a World Highway."

An article in the Banff-based *Mountaineer* Magazine (August 1925) offered a conflicted and ambivalent interpretation of the highway. Titled *"The Friendly Road Replaced by the Modern Highway"* author Ethel C. McDonald evoked the turn of the century overland travelogue by the American writer David Grayson to juxtapose the journey taken by foot compared to the automobile.[76] McDonald situated the Banff-Windermere Highway within a larger transcontinental geographical context, one that began at the start of the California-Banff segment of the 'Bee-Line Highway' which ran through the Columbia River valley, Kootenay National Park and Banff National Park to the doors of the similarly named resort operated by the CPR. The highway that McDonald experienced had been sundered from its past. The consequence was nothing less than a complete change in the local landscape:

> Today all is changed; the Country Road, now dignified by the word Highway, is replaced by roads of the modern era, and claimed by motors. Dust flies from rushing cars; the air has lost its fragrance through the smell of gasoline; the birds have left their old habitations by the roadside, for their songs were interrupted by the honking of auto horn, and the flowers and berry bushes droop wearily with the weight of dust, accumulated from passing cars. [77]

The landscape was now hostile to the non-motorized overland traveler. Auto horns force the wary pedestrian into the ditch, children fear the road and the horse and buggy no longer exist. Self-preservation is the new "etiquette of the broad highway, which has assumed much of the hardness of asphalt and macadam in the atmosphere." No one offered assistance on these mean streets.

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[76] Avid Grayson, *The Friendly Road: New Adventures in Contentment, Adventures in Friendship* (New York: Book League of America, 1910).
[77] Ethel McDonald, "The Friendly Road Replaced by the Modern Highway," *The Mountaineer* , Volume I, no. 2 (August 1925), 8.

Not everything was lost however. McDonald noted that there was much to be said in favour of these Great Highways, despite all the negative changes. After all, although much of the "picturesqueness" that came with the Friendly Road was gone forever, the highway, as a leveling agent, opened up unexplored outdoor areas previously restricted to the privileged few. The highway—"within easy access of millions"—carried people "to the soul-satisfying peace of nature.[78] Possibly no section of the "Grand Circle Tour", the six thousand mile system of highways "which practically encircles the western hemisphere" was more beautiful, McDonald argued, "than that part which runs through the Columbia River Valley, the Windermere Valley, through the heart of the Canadian Rockies into Banff:

> This road has no rival. Majestic peaks wrapped in eternal snow looms up in all directions; beautiful river valleys are entered and others seen from various passes; turbulent mountain torrents find their outlet into large streams, crossed and recrossed many times and Alpine meadows with their riot of colors break at intervals the somber note of the heavy timber….The fulfillment of the Motorists' Dream….the missing link of the California to Banff Beeline Highway….visualizes the most beautiful and stupendous works of nature.[79]

The fulfillment of the Motorist's Dream, no doubt, but a mediated experience nonetheless and another boundary to cross. In the dash to get to the Pacific, "The Great Divide" would become a photo op, another object to check off the itinerary.

When the 54 kilometre Kicking Horse Trail auto route opened in 1928, connecting Lake Louise to Golden through Field—"cleaving the mountain barriers, opening the long closed gates"—the "Mountain Lariat" had come to fruition.[80] The federal government, following convention established earlier with the *Banff-Windermere Highway* guide, published a book extolling the wonders of "the new mountain circle." There was little doubt what the road-as-

[78]Ibid., 9.
[79] Ibid.,10.
[80] M.B. Williams, *Kicking Horse Trail (*Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1928), 33.

narrative attempted to convey: "For the Road Beautiful means the Village Beautiful, the Town Beautiful and in the end the Nation beautiful as well."[81] In an essay titled "The Road to Arcady," the author considered the road "not unlike a piece of music itself," where the long approach from Calgary "across the Plains" served as an ever intensifying prelude, to be followed by "the strong chords of the full movement" when one entered into the great peaks. Here the great variety of peaks mirrored the "tremendous crescendos of those glorious up-sweeping climbs to the heights, the long diminuendos of the downward glide, followed, lest the senses should grow weary, by the smooth andantes, the quiet stretches of level road through the forest or along the valley floor."[82] To travel one of these splendid highways from end to end, the author argued, "is to realize that the new Genius has not only lightened man's labours, and extended his power over space and time, but that it has brought him a fresh world of experience not unlike that of art itself."[83]

The durability of "The Great Divide" rhetoric of nation building is evidenced by its continued use in the post-World War II era. The past flowed into the present. Much of the earlier, nation building era sentiments remained and continued to be written into the land and its language. What had changed, however, was the increasing unease that many felt when it came to using this metaphor of the height of land in any singular narrative that captured the authority of voice. "The Great Divide" became an unwitting iconographical landscape reference in the limited identity discourse of post-War Canada—a convenient tool to frame the changing faces (and concerns) of the country.[84]

[81] Ibid., 38.
[82] Ibid., 33.
[83] Ibid.
[84] See J.M.S. Careless, "Limited Identities in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (1969), 1-10.

The *Canada 70 Study (1969)* was "the most extensive probing of the nation's attitudes ever attempted by a popular publication." Under the direction of John Bassett, publisher of the *Toronto Telegram,* the report was "based on about five hundred lengthy interviews of people who study and create opinion." Supplementing these interviews was a standardized questionnaire comprised of 16 parts which surveyed each province. The Study Series was released in six volumes: v. 1. The Atlantic provinces, the struggle for survival. --v. 2. Quebec, the threat of separation. --v. 3. Ontario, the linchpin. -- v. 4. The Prairie Provinces, alienation and anger. --v. 5. British Columbia, The Great Divide. --v. 6. Canada 70, a summary coast to coast.

According to the study, British Columbians were living in a "Great Divide" separating their province from the rest of the nation. The study found that central Canadian discourses of French-English relations left many British Columbian respondents feeling as though they were "looking through the wrong end of the telescope."[85] Notwithstanding the meta narrative that was reinforced through this conventional compartmentalization of regions (which omitted the territories entirely), what set the British Columbia volume apart from the others was the normalization of a collective psychological state of mind with an imaginary geographical space—"The Great Divide." The label did not just reify the rigid separation of regions but also transposed what was a localized place on to a much larger area. Further, the title's inference was misleading. A divide was necessarily composed of two rigidly separated areas. If British Columbia—as one half of this equation—was located to the west, what comprised the 'east'? Given that Alberta had been 'packaged' with Saskatchewan and Manitoba in volume 4, the assumption would be that the rest of Canada represented the east. This important delineation is never made clear.

[85] *British Columbia: The Great Divide* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969).

In any case, the choice of such a confining metaphor was illusory. There were as many "divides" within each of the conceptualized chapters—and this includes the original "Great Divide" province. Conceptualizing a boundary between one province and an undetermined number of jurisdictions of the provincial, national and regional on the other side was next to impossible. Just exactly where the "Great Divide" began and finished was also left unclear. The title suggested a state of mind was influenced by geography but offered no evidence why there should be only two directions—east or west. The tone of the British Columbia component of the study had thus been framed from the outset by the title. This psychological landscape narrative was entrenched further with the observation that many British Columbians felt cut off from the rest of Canada by "the Rocky Mountain Curtain."—an expression more commonly associated with international geopolitics of an entirely different kind. The Great Divide existed in spite (or perhaps because) of its constant crossings and re-crossings.

The *Canada 70 Series* height of land abstraction actually harkened back to the pre-War "Great Divide" rhetoric as much as it spoke to the evolving sentiments of the era. The inclusion of the term in a nation-wide study purporting to establish a 'realistic' snapshot of Canadian regionalism suggested that the term had become firmly established as rhetoric of nation building. It is more accurate to argue, however, that the height of land imagery was undergoing a period of transition which reflected transformations in the wider context of social-geographic relations. "Great Divide Literature" continued to present the Rocky Mountain height of land in a nation state context but increasingly also began to show an anti-modernist bent, one that paralleled the increasing regional discontent with a strong central state. One of the most apparent examples of this change came through the ways authors attempted to write their own philosophies into the land. The 'new' literature was de-centered, (still) political and grounded in personal experience.

It is somewhat fitting, perhaps, that the finest example of this genre was overlooked for over two decades after its original publication, and never included in the mainstream of Canadian literary canons—no doubt due to its play on words and anti-modernist language which contemporary critics could simply write off as "inaccessible." Indeed, it is in spite of, or most likely due to, the fact that "The Great Divide" language was largely eschewed, that Howard O'Hagan novel *Tay John* was both the most important contribution to the de-territorializing of the post-War "Great Divide" landscape at the same time remaining one of the more obscure works of Western Canadian historical fiction well into the 1970s.[86] Since the 1990s, the narrative structure of *Tay John* has been the subject of analysis by literary critics.[87] Other writers have attempted to flesh out the creative tension between the story teller and the story, and how O'Hagan attempted to negotiate the power and limitations of words, but avoided how these devices changed the way readers could make meaning out of the landscape. How O'Hagan challenged normative perceptions of the Rocky Mountain landscape by applying his own literary re-inscription of the land is important to the story of height of land perception in this chapter.

That *Tay John* is discussed at all today is due in no small part to the ways in which people's perceptions of the mountain landscape have changed. *Tay John* plays not just with literary convention but how stories are continually refashioned as they travel between story tellers and the places where these tales are told. Throughout the story the land and the person are intimately connected. Kumklessem, (later Tete Jaune), a mythical-legendary yellow-headed

[86] Or it may simply be a matter of bad timing. *Tay John* was originally published by a fledgling British publisher in 1939. When the publisher disappeared not long after the outbreak of The Second World War, the story languished in relative obscurity until it was republished (with some revisions) in 1960. The 1974 McClelland and Stewart edition finally brought O'Hagan's most well-known work to the Canadian public. For more on the publishing history of Tay John, see Margery Fee, "A Note on the Publishing History of Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John,"* in Margarey Fee (Ed.), *Silence Made Visible: Howard O'Hagan and Tay John* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1992), 85-9

[87] Francis Zichy, "Crypto-, Pseudo-, and Pre-Postmodernism:" Tay John, Lord Jim and the Critics," *Essays on Canadian Writing* , Volume 81, (2004), 192-221; Arnold E. Davidson, "Silencing the Word in Howard O'Hagan's Tay John." *Canadian Literature,* Vol. 110 (1986), 30-44.

Metis Shuswap trapper was conceived out of the illicit encounter between a married Shuswap woman and her Euro-Canadian lover. Kumklessem was "born" out of the ground from which his mother had been placed after she succumbed to illness purportedly brought to the people from outside. In the first section, "Legend," Kumklessem struggles with the expectations placed upon him as a result of the visions that an elder has had. The 'half-breed' roams the valleys and ridges in the immediate years preceding the entry of Euro-Canadian interests into the area. The second and third parts of the story, "Hearsay" and "Evidence-without a Finding" tells the story of how, after leaving the tribe, Tay John finds himself between the indigenous and Euro-Canadian worlds—wedded to neither. These latter sections are told through the mediating voice of Denham, a British remittance man living for over two decades in Canada. Tay John returns (in)to the ground at the end of the story, a rather inauspicious departure but only if interpreted through the culturally-conditioned lens of the Judaeo-Christian world.

O'Hagan was not concerned with the separations of the material and spiritual or life and death—extensions of and precursors to "The Great Divide" idea. Kumklessem was an imagined character who was nonetheless "real." Studies discussing the ethnographic research adapted by O'Hagan have already demonstrated that the title name, derived from the Native guide who in 1820 took the first Hudson's Bay party through what is now called Yellowhead Pass and settled in the northeast corner of Shuswap territory, was most likely Iroquois. In other words, O'Hagan's "Tete Jaune", though an outsider reminiscent of the Hudson's Bay guide, was an imagined personage. Further, the importance given to the Shuswap belief that "one day a leader would come among them…with yellow hair and lead them back over the mountain to their cousins, the Salish tribes along the coast" is not borne out in the ethnographic research; yet there

was an immutable, elusive essence to the story that O'Hagan believed transcended the empirical discrepancies.[88] These moments of incertitude marked the anti-modernist tone of the story.

O'Hagan's height of land is part of a landscape where ambivalence and illusion are predominant. Just as O'Hagan refuses to bind his characters by passing moral judgment on the peoples and cultures in the story, the author also presents an alpine landscape that defied all attempts at establishing any kind of representational space framed by a nature-culture division; any kind of glorification (or melancholy) of the 'triumphs' of man over environment is blunted by the fact that the eventual disintegration of the Grand Trunk Railroad (and the enterprises that grew around it) rendered this kind of spatial representation fleeting. O'Hagan resisted labeling the landscape, seeing it as an anthropocentric assault on the mystical. Another recurring theme in the novel was the rejection of linear division for cyclical movements and (re)creations.[89] People moved across (and through) the Yellowhead Pass/Athabasca Valley landscape in various directions with no defined beginning or end.

'Seeing' landscapes as cultural creations is indirectly alluded as central to the story. There is an indeterminacy of time and space established in the novel's outset:

> The time of this in its beginning, in men's time, is 1880 in the summer, and its place is the Athabaska valley, near its head in the mountains, and beyond them a bit, over Yellowhead Pass to the westward, where the Fraser, rising in a lake, flows through wilderness and canyon down to the Pacific.[90]

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[88] Hingston, "The declension," 181. O'Hagan does acknowledge Diamond Jenness for allowing him to use *Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: Acland, 1932) for his research. For more on O'Hagan's ethnographic research see Ralph Maud, "Ethnographic Notes on Howard O'Hagan's Tay John, in Margarey Fee, *Silence Made Visible*, 92-96.

[89] Robinson, Jack. "Myths of Dominance Versus Myths of Re-Creation in O'Hagan's Tay John." *Studies in Canadian Literature* , Vol.13, no.2 (1988), 166-74; Ella Tanner, *Tay John and the Cyclical Quest: The Shape of Art and Vision in Howard O'Hagan* (Toronto : ECW Press, 1990).

[90] Hoard O'Hagan, *Tay John* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 11.

This landscaped language, one shaped (but not labeled) by the height of land was the dominant narrative but with the passing reference to "men's time" other adjacent space-time configurations existed. O'Hagan's mountain country landscape was a microcosm of the universal human inability to distinguish illusion from reality because they were interchangeable.[91]

The constant crossing between illusion and reality should be considered alongside "The Great Divide" idea of the modern Canadian state which was predicated on the normalization of bifurcated relations. O'Hagan's height of land, however, is shaped by the (re)crossing of places and the people that move between them. Whenever the tribe rested, "Tay John moved in and out among them, always leaving, still always returning, making great loops through the mountains, till the pattern of his travels reached out form the village like the petals of a flower."[92] The space to place narrative so prevalent among Euro-Canadian geographical imaginations was also challenged in the Athabasca Yellowhead area. Denham discussed travelling with Tay John up the mythical Snake River, a tributary of the Athabasca.[93] The area they were travelling through was "a new country where no man has stepped before." But what did this abstraction obscure? "It is only your vision that holds [the country] in the known and created world. It is physically exhausting to look on unnamed country. A name is the magic to keep it within the horizons. Put a name to it, put it on a map, and you're there."[94] The Interprovincial Boundary Commission and National Park designations were only the more "official" examples of such narrative making processes.

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[91] Ronald Granofsky, "The Country of Illusion: Vision, Change and Misogyny in Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John,* in Fee, Ed. *Silence Made Visible,* 111.

[92] O'Hagan, 57.

[93] The Snake River may have indeed been named after The Snake Indian River, a large tributary of the Athabasca River. See Aphrodite Karamitsanis, *Place Names of Alberta, Volume 1*. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), 228

[94] *Tay John*, 80.

O'Hagan's depiction of the land upon the entry of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway is the theme of Part II—"Hearsay." Change had come swiftly to the scale of the landscape. In 1904 the railway was an idea that "stirred like a wind through the valleys…the smell of Asia was in the air…the snow topped mountains would be pierced again."[95] Compressing space and time was the physical manifestation of humanity's hubris, an attempt to deny fate. In Part III—"Evidence Without a Finding" Tay John comes down from the high country. The anti-modernist impulse was once again given expression in the denial of progressive time:

> He had fled from the old. He looked for the new. Yet there is nothing new—these words, nor their meaning—nothing really new in the sense of arrival in the world….Today was implicit in time's beginning. All that is, was. Somewhere light glowed in the first vast and awful darkness, and darkness is the hub of light. All that is not seen is dark. Light only lives in man's vision. Here is light where once was darkness, and beyond it, farther than our eyes can see…is darkness still.[96]

In discussing Tay John's mare—his 'sole possession'—and how she introduced him to "her own people, her own country…back to the low country," O'Hagan ruminated on the cost of possession:

> Possession is a great surrender. The more a man has, the more surely is he owned by what he has. Man, the possessor on this earth runs form servitude to servitude. He seeks to rid himself of one encumbrance only that he may be free to embrace the burden of another. Land, houses, money—he must serve their growth, their numbers, their exactions. Freedom for most of us, brief, evading precise definition, is only the right to seek a further bondage.[97]

Later O'Hagan stripped away the meanings of a *past to present* narrative of progression and replaced it with a measure of temporal fluidity between past/present/future: "Men walk upon the earth in light, trailing their shadows that are the day's memories of the night. For each man his shadow is his dark garment, formed to the beginning of his end, somber and obscure as his own

[95] Ibid., 73-74.
[96] Ibid., 161-162.
[97] Ibid., 113.

beginning….Our life, our brief eternity, our today is but the twilight between our yesterday and tomorrow."[98] The objectification of the 'external' world—mountains, rivers, passes, height of land—was solely the outward expression of an internal struggle with one's own mortality: "Man, if he could, so vain he is, lift his shadow from the ground and with his blunted fingers shape it. Yet he cannot—for the substance of the shadow is in the fingers that would turn it, and its form, that makes it whole, lies tight upon the earth from which they would remove it."[99]

O'Hagan recognized certain geophysical landforms that had come to define the conventional narrative of the Canadian West as places where the urge to outrun mortality was bound up with opening new lands. The height of land was one such place:

> We cry, we of the West, we Westerners, we who have come here to sit below the mountains—Give us new earth, we cry, new places that we may see our shadows shaped in forms we have never seen before. Let us travel on so quickly, let us go so far that our shadows, like ourselves, grow lean with our journey. Let us look into the new land, beyond the wall that fronts our eyes, over the pass, beyond the source of the river. Let us look into the country beyond the mountains.[100]

The physical world that we purport to understand and apprehend is an illusion. Moreover, what we think is conditioned by what we believe and vice-versa:

> Illusions? Fantasy? Remember I speak to you in the country of illusion, where a chain of mountains in the distance seems no more than a dog may leap across, or where on a clear winter's day a mountain thirty miles away seems so close that you might stretch your hand out and lean against it….But illusion may be more than that; it may become the power to believe, to hope, the callous inability to doubt.[101]

De-centering monumental landscapes like "The Great Divide" was a project in challenging the narratives of modernism but it was also liberating.

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[98] Ibid., 162.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.,162-163
[101] Ibid., 163.

This anti-modernist philosophy can also be seen in the environmentalist writing of the 1970s and 1980s. One of the progenitors of the 'new' writing was Sid Marty. The one-time Park Warden and literary non-fiction author regularly entered into discussion on environmental issues in the Rocky Mountains. The fluidity and ongoing negotiations of boundaries that constantly occur across cultures and landscapes was one of the central concerns in *Headwaters*, a collection of poetry published in 1973. Marty questioned the boundaries between culture and nature, wilderness and civilization. The National Park boundary was one such place to test those ideas with grammatical effect: "In here we declare/only the animals/may kill each other/sometimes may even kill us." In another part, Marty argues that drawing lines around watershed is fruitless without an embodied understanding of the 'lay of the land:' "But it's hard to draw/ the boundary/Imaginary line/that cuts the watersheds/you got to know the ground climb the crumbling mountain walls/ to know which way the rivers run/ headwaters, where the world begins."[102]

In "Inside the Map," Marty turned toward the social assumptions carried by authoritative narratives. Trails that cleaved ranges were "more mapped than real." The "continuity" of these lines was compromised by "swollen creeks of runoff" and "burdened by snow slides it drags downhill." This process of de-territorializing spaces included challenging one of the most privileged narratives of conquering nature—the unabashed acceptance of technology: "The dull metal phone line/ is lost in a tangle/of trees and mud/the voice fades/shorted through stones/and roots/the twisted line breaks down.[103]

Marty did not write about "The Great Divide" as a singular landscape, but through his verses on particular passes that straddled the height of land, one may gain insight into his

[102] Sid Marty, "Pushing the Boundary," in Sid Marty, *Headwaters* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973), 12.
[103] "Inside the Map," 16.

struggle with the meta narrative of "Great Divide" language. In "Abbot," Marty takes on the (posthumous) first person voice to deconstruct the motives and meanings given to the commemoration of a mountaineering fatality. The Alpine Club of Canada's Abbot Pass Hut (1923) straddles "The Great Divide": "So they've named a pass for me/and built a hut there/well why not/ I died well, I fell off a mountain." The symbolic setting of Abbot's death was also noted: "I was going to see new places/to foot the ridgepole of the continent/off balanced I guess/ by the completely indifferent climate/that kind of clearness in the air/makes men dizzy."[104] When Marty does refer to "The Great Divide" in the poem "Drowning," the landscape is a place of life *and* death: "The Kicking Horse River/conceived from glaciers/of the Great Divide/weaves all its threads/July increased/in a deep sweet pool."[105] In "Yellowhead," Marty wrote: "What's written is little/so argues me a fragment/of the past, fair haired trapper of the smoky peaks/gave my name to the famous pass/and Tete Jaune Cache/I had a name once, now I am Yellowhead
Now that I am a place and not a man/my faults are forgotten, why should I remind you."[106] The intersection of Marty and O'Hagan's ecological philosophies with the Yellowhead Pass landscape proved fertile ground for anti-modernist travel writing and historical fiction periodically throughout the 20$^{th}$ century.

Another way in which the anti-modernized "Great Divide" was given expression came through changes in artistic visual imagery. Harold Town (1924-1990), according to critic David Burnett, argued that "the activity of painting was not just symbolic of the activity of painting but an analogue for the complexity of human relations *between* freedom and order." *The Great Divide* (1965) illustrated Town's confrontation with the language and rhetoric of the height of land, revealing how normative socio-political narratives informed how he conceived of

[104] "Abbot", 45.
[105] "Drowning, 83.
[106] "Yellowhead," 39.

representational space in the process. Interpretations varied from the objectivist- realist to the subjective-embodied. Art historian Anne Newlands quoted critic Harry Malcolmson's depiction as "a crackling silver of white that could relate to a stream cutting through a landscape, looked at from the air. Doughnut shapes are brilliantly employed to suggest the even texture and subtle roll of the glaciated Northern Canadian hill. The entire canvas is suffused with the unshadowed golden light that floods the Northern landscape prior to sunsets." Burnett suggested that "the notion of the 'doughnuts' as trees seen from above is even more powerfully made if we see the bared strips on either side as the slices made into a hillside by tree-felling." W. H. New, on the other hand, argued that in addition to the geographical and political, a reading extended towards the sexual. *The Great Divide* demonstrated the importance of landscape as a point of reference for much of the artist's work.[107]

The rhetorical effect of crossing "The Great Divide" in the 20th century proved a persuasive tool in the imaginative modernist project of nation building. Since the conquest of nature was inextricably intertwined with the unity of the nation, specific geophysical landscapes such as the height of land had become a rare breed by the last decades of the 19th century—a geophysical space still relatively 'unknown' and hence available as both a utilitarian and romantic notion. The attendant interests of industrial capitalism—the transcontinental railway followed by the auto route and—mediated experiences of "The Great Divide" traverse but so did the language employed in describing the landscape. A great deal of writing, largely romantic and oft times racialized and gendered, was applied to historicizing the height of land idea as a national place and virtue. "The Great Divide" landscape appealed because the metaphysical and

[107] For more on Town, see David Burnett, *Town* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1986); Harry Malcolmson, "Introduction," *Paintings 1964; Paintings 1965* (Toronto: Mazelow Gallery and Jerrold Morris International Gallery, 1966); Annie Newlands, *Canadian Paintings, Prints & Drawings* (Toronto: Firefly, 2007), 326; and New, *Land Sliding*, 186.

social assumptions behind the descriptor were already entrenched. People were not just separated from each other but also from the land—a necessary requirement towards scientific progress and national unity.

Rhetorical effect has a habit of knowing no bounds, however, and the very "Great Divide" language of separation, unity and conquest already established could be used to challenge those assumptions. This chapter attests that the alterity of "The Great Divide" was increasingly manifest as an anti-modernist model through a similarly imaginative landscape conception. Challenges to the singular nation building narrative built around earlier notions of "The Great Divide" were evident in historical fiction and poetry. Newsprint media also used the idea to help frame narrative that still appealed to a national audience. *The Globe and Mail* revealed a marked shift in using the same expression ("The Great Divide") to describe a very different nation in the century between 1880 and 1980. *The Toronto Telegram* defined British Columbia through "The Divide" symbolism—only this time to describe a traverse that continues to fall well short of its unifying allure.

Through all of these transformations, sometimes subtle, other times profound, the predominance of the height of land idea remained. One need not necessarily eschew the materials and processes that defined the height of land idea in order to express a differing or opposing point of view. And it is in these similarities bridging eras and centuries that one comes to understand just how established the height of land idea had become by the 1970s. Modernism and anti-modernism may have travelled two different paths but each was a mirror onto the other.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CROSSING "THE GREAT DIVIDE" AND THE NEW MILLENIUM: THE HOWSE PASS HIGHWAY, THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL AND THE FIREWEED TRAIL

This study asserts that associative landscapes such as the transcontinental Rocky Mountain height of land can have a particular hold on the imagination of societies and individuals. At the same time, the ways in which the height of land idea are abstracted out of the ground are not only a manifestation of the particular social-cultural values that underwrite these images but can have direct bearing on how that landscape can mediate ongoing social and cultural relations—in this chapter the often contentious relationship between business and commerce with environmentalism. Further, the perception of landscape may change over time, subject not only to transformations that arise in wake of economic and political transition but also with respect to material changes within these landscapes—in this case the effects of fire over a large area.

This chapter examines the geography-landscape discussion through a study of social conflict centred on the height of land idea. This approach suggests that the height of land idea remained a significant and contested way of conceiving mountain landscapes even as the scale of vision and motives for privileging such a landscape changed. Issues around modes of travel and mobility constellating at the continental height of land still figured considerably in shaping the meaning of the landscape—only now the predominantly economic interests of regions and cities trumped nation building and capturing 'nature.' A new way of conceptualizing "The Great Divide" was underway. "The Great Divide" idea also became a wedge mirroring the periodic fractious relations between the neighbouring provinces. People still thought a great deal about the "Great Divide" but the centripetal force that the transcontinental height of land previously presented gave way to a more diffuse understanding of the politics of such landscapes. In the

half-century between the 1960s and the new millennium, two major projects focused on traversing the passes and valleys of the height of land. Each program referred either directly or slightly more obliquely to the transcontinental height of land traverse—and each expected to draw upon some degree of interprovincial cooperation (as well as provincial and federal funding). The Great Divide Trail (GDT) and Howse Pass Highway (HPH) proposals were intended to apply a measure of human permanence across and along the Rocky Mountain height of land. The failure of both speaks to issues of economy, politics, and a new environmentalism. The "sure-thing" support of the pre-war Banff-Windermere and Kicking Horse Pass loops did not carry through to the post-war period.

The HPH and GDT projects failed due in part to conditions particular to the contexts of the specific proposals but one common cause cut across both. Whether a blazed track, paved arterial two-lane highway or a meandering backcountry trail, the construction of an unbroken linear track—strictly used for commodity circulation in the case of HPH, or as a commemorative form of recreation in the case of the GDT—crossing the transcontinental height of land no longer carried the cultural capital of nation building that could unite the increasingly disparate interests now invested in the particular landscape or place.

The demise of the HPH and GDT routes are instructive examples of social-spatial contestations that still hold a specific landscape at the centre of discourse even as the terms of their value carried over from a previous period of time are not necessarily carried forward. This is even more evident when one examines a success story framed by the height of land idea that emerged in the wake of earlier shortcomings. The establishment of *The Fireweed Trail (1969)* speaks to the presence of new ideas (and social groups) that shaped not just the form of new

height of land endeavours but their function as well. The enduring legacy of the wilderness idea and the growing strength of the environmentalist movement were significant factors.

The cultural landscape of the Rocky Mountain height of land between the 49th parallel and 120th meridian shifted as environmental concerns meshed with broad based social issues in the 1960s and early 1970s.[1] Where rail and road routes had previously been accepted ways of exchanging market commodities with manufactured goods, and were seen as icons of national unity, they were now seen in more negative ways. The discourse in which the height of land was conceptualized as a landscape of meaning was also reconfigured. The HPH proposal called for an auto route connecting Red Deer, Alberta with the Trans Canada Highway just north of Golden B.C. The highway would cross over the height of land at Howse Pass, a 40 kilometre connector through Banff National Park. The GDT proposal provided for a high altitude backcountry trail that would start at Akamina Pass in Waterton Lakes National Park and cross periodically over "The Great Divide" into British Columbia, eventually ending at Mount Robson. Both projects emerged out of what their backers believed were common interests that could successfully address any opposition. Both proposals were ultimately unable to overcome the interests that opposed them.

On the surface there does not seem to be much similarity between the industrial concrete and carbon infrastructure of the Howse Pass Highway and the low-impact essence of the Great Divide Trail. Given the contexts and contingencies grounding both proposals one would be inclined to see the HPH unnecessary as well as too late, and the GDT a peculiar (and possibly frivolous) addition to an already extensive recreational backcountry system. If one steps back from these blunt conclusions, however, and considers the implementation of a privileging of

[1] See Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 1993).

place that foregrounds the height of land idea one can see that their failures are not the only story. *Why* the height of land idea remained so central to the promotion of each route is also instructive as a way of understanding how the implementation of a landscape idea could be, in turn, challenged by the society that established this privileging of place to begin with.

Historical and geographical literature has been informative in discussing the ways in which all manner of routes reinforce or challenge relations of power and space, including those routes that were started but never completed, fallen into disrepair, or rejected from the outset.[2] Indeed, asking why highway and trail proposals can become hotly contested topics to the point where they founder allows the researcher to address similar questions from different angles. The answers are not necessarily evident. Tracing the collapse of the HPH through environmental optics is also useful, but that is only part of the story. Indeed, HPH supporters adopted an argument that was calculated to win environmental support. They could not, however, negotiate the arcane world of Parks Canada policy, federal bureaucracy and provincial-federal relations. Moreover, the story of the HPH is one of multiple and overlapping contestations between and among environmentalists, municipal chambers of commerce, urban adventure seekers, rural resource industry populations, First Nations and constituent-minded politicians at the federal and provincial ends. In the end, the failure of the HPH cannot be blamed on one overriding factor.

The same may be said of the GDT. Still, locating the primary reason for the lack of support for the GDT can be found in exploring the dissonance between the historicism of the trail's title and the realities on the ground. British Columbia and Alberta were not the same

[2] Reviewer Stephen K. Lekson interestingly uses a similar nature-culture "Great Divide" metaphor to frame the "fault line" in the sciences and humanities when it comes to archaeological approaches to built and unbuilt environments. Lekson concludes that "archaeology, at least in North America, has fallen into the [sciences and humanities] fault and is being ground in the chasm." See Stephen H. Lekson, "Review: Landscape with Ruins: Archaeological Approaches to Built and Unbuilt Environments," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 37, no. 5 (Dec. 1996), 886-892.

provinces as they had been during the Banff-Windermere and Kicking Horse Pass auto route projects. As shown in the previous chapter, by the 1970s, the centripetal force that "The Great Divide" idea brought to the nation building process came to an end. The era when a universal, unifying concept could be used to fashion a narrative of nation building had come and gone. To be sure, there were other complications but in these causes one can locate the larger structural changes that had transformed the nation writ large—namely regionalism, provincialism and the shift towards an entrenched urban/rural disparity. Supporters of the GDT in Alberta found themselves in a peculiar position that challenged the assumptions and stereotypes of the time. The resource and industrial development image of Alberta seemed to belie the fact that the easterly province was much more coherent and vocal in getting the GDT on track than its apparently more environmentalist western neighbor. The original GDT envisioned a truly integrated interprovincial route yet it was the British Columbia "side" that seemed much more ambivalent. Lost in this interpretation, however, are the geographical realities: Albertan supporters, perceiving the route in tourism terms, were overwhelmingly urbanites from Calgary and Edmonton. There was no such parallel grouping among the far flung and industry-reliant communities in the East Kootenays.

*Howse Pass Highway.*

Until World War II the Howse Pass played a limited role in the economic and cultural history of Canada. Although the pass permitted relatively easy access to the Columbia River watershed via the North Saskatchewan River, David Thompson abandoned the route for fear of Peigan violence.[3] Sir Sandford Fleming briefly considered the pass for the construction of the CPR in 1872, but ultimately rejected it in favour of Yellowhead Pass (which was also eventually

rejected for Kicking Horse Pass). After the Second World War, however, the lack of steep approaches made it perfectly suited for a trunk road connecting the Prairies with the Columbia Valley and an appealing area to nature-lovers.[4] The call for building a Howse Pass Highway Corridor, however, had to overcome opposition in British Columbia. The perceived ambivalence among British Columbians dominated early discussion among Howse Pass supporters throughout the 1960s.

In August 1963, W.P. Bolze, president of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce reiterated the Council's belief that it was only "a matter of time until the people of British Columbia realize the merits of the David Thompson-Howse Pass highway."[5] His comments came in the wake of a report that members of the B.C. Tourist Association were split over the relative merits of the Howse Pass route as opposed to the Yellowhead route. The reason for this ambivalence was the fact that many did not know much about it while others had never heard of it at all. Meanwhile, the inevitability of the Howse Pass Highway on the other side was already considered a given: An article in the *Red Deer Advocate* reported that "Alberta has partially finished its section of the proposed Howse Pass route and the cost of finishing the entire highway would be only $4,000,000. The Yellowhead construction would cost $60,000,000.[6] The following spring, promoters invited six federal cabinet ministers and several other high ranking government officials of the federal government to join a horseback ride through the pass as guests of the

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[3] See Barbara Belyea (Ed.), *The Columbia Journals* (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007)
[4] Toni Owen Carter, "A New Low-Keyed Howl for the Howse," *Alberta Report*, Volume 20, no. 22 (May 17, 1993), 14.
[5] *Red Deer Advocate*, August 16, 1963, 1.
[6] Ibid. The Yellowhead Interprovincial Highway, formerly a tote road, was paved and officially 'opened' in 1970.

Central Alberta Chamber of Commerce.[7] The irony of passing through the Howse Pass landscape on horse in order to promote a high speed auto route seemed to be lost on the party.[8]

Despite boosterish promotion in 1963-64, The Howse Pass transportation corridor idea would lie dormant for the next 25 years. The 1978 National Parks Act placed a moratorium on new roads and trumped any logistical or financial argument for the highway. The introduction in 1987 of federal Bill C-30, which aimed to tighten development restrictions in the National Parks, instigated renewed interest. The debate over the next 20 years would be defined by a series of overlapping engagements and issues, each of which contributed to the increasing complexities of negotiating a commonly perceived privileged landscape among disparate communities in the late 20th century. Indeed, the future of the HPH played out at the municipal/regional, provincial and federal levels of government.

One of the most acute intersections of social relations and landscape abstraction occurred at the regional level between the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce and local environmentalists. In January 1988, Pat Henry, director of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce, told a joint meeting of the chamber and city economic development boards that it was “now or never for the plan,” and….that never “would be a tragic loss for everyone.”[9] The Alberta Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society replied at the end of the year. In announcing its opposition to the highway as the theme for a major campaign, Chapter President Ray Rasmussen

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[7] *Red Deer Advocate,* March 24, 1964.

[8] If any sense of disjuncture in the pressing of space and time from one mode of technology to another was understood, it was not voiced openly. Still, the experience of the party through the pass was instructive if only for the way in which it illustrated the means by which the embodied experiences of a landscape could be so easily abstracted from one form of movement to another without any sense of difference.

[9] *Red Deer Advocate*, January 23, 1988.

stated, "This is not just a Red Deer to Golden issue. We have to make Canadians aware…that this is a major intrusion into the wilderness."[10]

The Red Deer Chamber of Commerce had anticipated the environmental argument. Instead of advocating financial benefits as a way of obscuring the environmental debate, or restricting arguments towards a defense of the alleged negative effects of such a project, the Chamber actively insisted that the highway would be an environmentally-positive project. "We wouldn't be moving mountains or doing a lot of damage," argued Lynn Davis, a member of the Chamber. Furthermore, "that thing that keeps coming to my mind is the number of miles actually travelled through the park will be reduced overall," a reference to the reduction of mileage that would be a corollary of avoiding a roundabout route through either Kicking Horse or the Yellowhead Pass. Further, the type of traffic on a Howse Pass route would not be "intrusive" into the surrounding environment since commercial traffic would pass through the landscape without stopping, and the tourist traffic—"the bulk of the rest of the traffic"—were the "type who use a pullout, jump out of the car, snap a few pictures and jump back in and drive on. I don't see how that can be a big environmental factor."[11]

The Red Deer River Naturalists' Society opposed the Chamber's arguments on environmental and economic grounds in an 11-page report early the following year. The Society extended the spatial scale of its opposition, arguing that:

> [The highway] is certainly not a good deal for taxpayers in the rest of Canada who would lose a valuable part of the park. Nor would it be good for the rest of Alberta as any extra trade would be at the expense of Edmonton, Calgary, Jasper, Banff and those providing services along the existing corridors into the parks.[12]

[10] "Park Pass Highway Opposed," *Red Deer Advocate,* December 29, 1988.
[11] "Mountain Pass Hope Defended," *Red Deer Advocate*, December 30, 1988.
[12] "Pass bad deal, naturalists say," *Red Deer Advocate*, January 17, 1989.

The new road would not eliminate the need to twin the Trans-Canada highway, and a new route through the Rocky Mountains would reduce traffic on the Trans-Canada highway by about three to ten percent, equivalent to only three to four years' of traffic growth. In addition, the report argued that increased commercial and tourist traffic would damage the wildlife in the Howse Pass region where elk and other wildlife currently flourish. By the same reasoning, wildlife numbers, especially those of moose and other game species which thrived along the David Thompson Hwy [sic] between Rocky Mountain House and the Kootenay Plains, would also decline.[13] In order to tip the balance of public support back in favour of the Highway, the Central Alberta Chambers of Commerce organized a hike and horseback trip over a 25-km portion of the proposed 75-km road.[14]

The HPH proposal lay dormant for a few years until May 1993, when Red Deer Chamber of Commerce executive director Pat Henry revisited the environmental concerns of the project, commenting that, "No one knows the truth. If there is unique flora and fauna in the pass that a road would hurt, we want to find out. We just want to make sure they keep the door open if the route proves feasible."[15] This time environmental activists turned toward the financial costs that would accrue. Dorothy Dickson of the Red Deer River Naturalists argued that, "If they're going to get studies, they should jolly well pay for them; they shouldn't force the public to pay for what we don't think is needed."[16] Furthermore, she argued, it would be cheaper and easier to blast through Kicking Horse Pass than build the Howse Pass Highway. Dickson also took exception

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[13] Ibid. For more media discussion of the report, see "Henry Dismisses Howse Pass Claims," *Red Deer Advocate*, January 21, 1989; "Chambers Defend Howse Pass Road, *Red Deer Advocate*, February 10, 1989; "Howse Pass to get Hearing," *Red Deer Advocate*, March 11, 1989; "Report Labels Pass Bad Deal for Locals," *Parkland News*, March 21, 1989;"Howse Pass Dead Now: MP," *Red Deer Advocate*, August 2, 1989; Howse Pass Highway Issue not Dead: Fee," *Red Deer Advocate*, June 3, 1989.

[14] "Pass Proponents Plan August Trip," *Red Deer Advocate*, July 21, 1989. One may suppose that the incongruencies of a pack trip to promote a high speed automobile route (like the one organized in 1963) could be lost on the participants.

[15] Toni Owen Carter, "A New Low-Keyed Howl for the Howse, *Alberta Report*, May 17, 1993, 14.

to the argument that the gentle grade of the pass allowed for a relatively straightforward construction plan. A horse ride through the Pass showed her the Howse was not all low, flat and easy. The head waters of the east-flowing Howse River were high above the west-flowing Blaeberry River: "We had no idea how steep it was when we rode through in 1988. It was the roughest ride I've ever done," she said. Her group was forced back six miles short of the logging road on the B.C. side because it was too steep and wet for horses to continue. Finally, she pointed out, the Howse River Valley was one of only two big areas left for park wildlife to graze in during winter: "I think they're nuts to support it. It would only be a shortcut for traffic to B.C. and how would that help business?"[17]

The HPH debate extended to the complex worlds of constituent and partisan politics in the run up to the October 1993 federal election. Supporters of The HPH proposal had always been cognizant of the need to get the federal government on-side; a head-on confrontation with Parks Canada was impractical given the structure of decision making in the National Parks. Nevertheless, both immediately before and after the 1993 election, candidates and MPs seemed to show a willingness to challenge Parks Canada to garner constituent support. The HPH debate had populist appeal.

HPH supporters received a tri-partisan boost in October 1993 during a federal election forum at the Red Deer Legion Hall when incumbent Conservative MP Doug Fee said that the Society was "on the right track" in proposing to carry out economic and environmental studies of the project. Fee based his endorsement on what he perceived as an absence of wildlife when he travelled the pass on foot three years earlier. Stopping just short of calling for construction, Fee's comments were bound to score political points in the upcoming election. Consequently,

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

both the Liberal and Reform candidates also supported the study. Indeed, Reform candidate Bob Mills, a Red Deer travel agent, remarked that "the amount of money that we can make from inbound tourism in this area is just phenomenal and we had better not overlook that resource." With respect to environmental concerns, Mills' remarks were a curious blend of the aesthetic and populist utilitarian rhetoric calculated to score votes: "We have to keep an environment that people want to look at but by the same token we have to be able to get there."[18]

Bi-partisan Liberal and Progressive Conservative consensus signaled the potential electoral value of the HPH. Liberal candidate Dobie To remarked that "an alternate route through the Continental Divide" would alleviate traffic safety hazards by diverting some of the traffic away from the Trans-Canada. Ken Arnold, the candidate for the Natural Law Party, didn't raise objections to economic and environmental studies of the road so long as natural areas could be preserved. This apparent acquiescence left the New Democratic and National Party candidates as lone voices opposing the HPH, and consequently supporting the current sitting government's position on refusing to allow further construction in Banff National Park. NDP candidate Karen McLaren remarked, "My first instinct on this is to say that parks are sacrosanct and we shouldn't be messing around with them." National Party candidate Joan Hepburn echoed those remarks adding that, "The Howse Pass is one of the few remaining areas where some of the large animals live."[19] Clearly, pragmatism trumped ideology for some candidates.

In February 1994, after the sweeping electoral victory of Jean Chretien's Liberals, members of Red Deer Regional Planning Commission voted unanimously to send a letter to Parks Canada asking it to defer a review on banning all new highway construction in Banff

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[18] "Howse Pass Study Urged," *Red Deer Advocate*, October 15, 1993.
[19] Ibid.

National Park.[20] When Federal Heritage Minister Dupuy offhandedly (through MP Mills) rejected the request on environmental and historical grounds, the Chamber dismissed the Minister's reply as "rhetoric." Chamber of Commerce Chairman Merv Phillip's stance became more defiant:

> That isn't going to discourage us. The government tells me they did a study in 1985. But we didn't have free trade in 1985. North American free trade means industry must become more competitive, and a short-cut through the mountains would cut costs for local manufacturers who ship to the West Coast….Everybody is interested in jobs.[21]

The height of land at Howse Pass was an industrialized landscape, a corridor in time and space not unlike its railway ancestor.

Comments like these were, nonetheless, not lone voices in the wilderness. Reform MP-elect Bob Mills endorsed the route as a "most logical route, a feasible way to go because it would help attract more tourists into [Central] Alberta….When I first got into politics I considered myself a strong environmentalist. I believe we have to make tradeoffs though." Mills also demonstrated a pragmatic approach to the nascent issue of the wilderness-civilization debate:

> Every consideration must be give[n] to the natural environment and how it can be protected. At the same time all people should be afforded an equal opportunity to experience the beauty and scenery of remote areas such as Howse Pass.[22]

Heights of land were not neutral spaces. Political debate was given shape by the HPH which, in turn, transformed the symbolic meaning of the height of land at Howse Pass in the process.

The HPH proposal pitted environmentalists and chambers of commerce at a local level but also revealed a province at odds with itself.[23] At the same time, the HPH debate provided an opportunity for its supporters to link provincial identity with the highway opposite the apparent

[20] "Howse Pass Promoters get Boost By Commission," *Red Deer Advocate*, March 1, 1994.
[21] "Chamber Dismisses Minister's Reply," *Red Deer Advocate*, September 14, 1994.
[22] "Howse Pass Seems Feasible for Road: Mills," *Red Deer Advocate*, August 16, 1994.
[23] See "Howse Highway: Tremendous Vision or Insanity?" *Red Deer Express*, January 15, 1997

machinations of its western neighbour and federalist adversaries further afield. The entry of the ideologically conservative *Alberta Report* into the debate served to catalyze increasingly polarized positions, and extended the debate far beyond the local and municipal. An August 1996 article in the *Report* discussing the future of the HPH reiterated (and rejected) the older arguments against the project but also brought up for discussion some new and potentially more heated ideas. This article moved the debate beyond a conflict framed by financial opportunity versus environmental protection. Lying at the heart of the HPH controversy was the integrity of Albertan territory. The prospect of connecting central and northern Alberta with British Columbia at Golden, and the potential tourist traffic between Nordegg and Saskatchewan River Crossing had been considered for decades, the article surmised, so any rejection of the HPH was a result of a coordinated and concerted effort by "B.C.'s eco-sensitive government" and "easterners who see the [Banff] park as their playground." Here was an attempt at deflecting the more nuanced and localized essence of the debate towards conventional interprovincial and regional politics that had marked Canadian geopolitical discourse for decades.[24]

*Alberta Report's* description of British Columbian ambivalence was not so much pejorative (or self-serving) as it was a decades-long frustrated reaction borne out of a combination of long-standing local opposition in Golden and simple lack of interest (and knowledge) of the Howse Pass opportunity in Vancouver and Victoria. HPH supporters demonstrated imaginative approaches to resolving the conflict by playing up the image of the province done wrong. Ron Killick, part owner of the David Thompson Resort (halfway between Nordegg and North Saskatchewan Crossing) suggested the province could give Ottawa the Siffleur Wilderness Area adjacent to Banff Park in return for a 200-foot strip through the Howse

[24] Peter Verburg, "Adventure on the hoof in the Howse, where legends live and dreams die hard," *Alberta Report*, Volume 23, no. 36 (August 19, 1996), 18.

Pass. This was an innovative solution, the article pointed out, but in an ideological sleight of hand asked: "should Albertans give up any more of their land to the dictates of Heritage Minister Sheila Copps?"[25] Notwithstanding the presumptions behind the collective "Albertans" label and the ad hominem snipe at an (Eastern) Cabinet Minister, the idea of simply swapping a (provincially) protected area for another may have been the musings of a single interested party but also pointed towards the widespread practice of seeing landscapes as spaces that could be parsed off and used as bargaining chips. Furthermore, describing the future HPH route on horseback in order to convey to the reader what the landscape would be like in an automobile was once again lost on the writer.[26]

The article also unwittingly peeled away political rhetoric to allow a glimpse at a long-standing social conflict framed by differences in how one physically engaged land:

> Midway through a precipitous, 2,000-foot descent, we met a pair of scruffy, middle-aged backpackers at Doubt Hill. Nearby, the Blaeberry River crashed down a multi-tiered 400-foot waterfall. The hikers were skeptical about the need for a Howse highway. "I'd like to keep this place accessible only to those who are willing to work for it," said one. "A road would ruin this pristine wilderness." The fact that dozens of other passes will remain forever untouched by development was immaterial.[27]

The *Alberta Report* viewed Howse Pass as just another pass; the human hand that sullied this place would not have any effect on the others. An argument of this kind ignored the changes that would ensue: animal migratory patterns to air quality. Further, the hiking experience would be significantly altered: How embodied physical labour mediated the way people experienced place was still strong.

A slightly earlier article in *Alberta Report,* "A Fourth Road to the Sun," framed the territorial issue in such a way that the Howse Pass was an Albertan identity question though the

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[25]Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

height of land defined *both* provinces' borders. Once again the common-sense economical and safety concerns were hijacked by entrenched grievances:

> For tourists and truckers in central and northern Alberta, the gentle mountain pass would provide a safer and quicker route through the Rockies than the Trans-Canada's treacherous Kicking Horse Pass between Lake Louise and Golden, B.C. A fourth highway route across the Rockies (the Yellowhead and Crowsnest are the other two) would be an economic and tourism boon for central Alberta. Yet every bid to pave the pass has been thwarted by environmentalists and federal park bureaucrats.[28]

Blaming politicians—especially Eastern based ones—was not new. The subtext in this passage, however, pointed towards ideas that perpetuated the conquest of nature. Ascribing passive qualities to a mountainous landscape could only stand to reason if considered from the perspective of a gradual grade amenable to auto-mobility. "Pav[ing] the pass," in this case, became the method of implementing the height of land traverse idea. The picture became even more muddled when environmental rhetoric was used to *support* the HPH:

> Backers of the Howse highway believe an environmental assessment would support their case. Red Deer MLA and Labour Minister Stockwell Day says the route would "reduce the load on the Banff corridor, and shorter driving distances would lessen fuel emissions." As for Mr. Mussell's "dwindling wilderness areas," Mr. Day responds: "We have more land mass designated as park area than any other province. This highway would be the equivalent of a strip of thread along a football field."[29]

Minister Day's reasoning was little more than a shell game. Shorter driving distances did not necessarily lead to decreased fuel emissions since heavier volumes of traffic would just shift towards Howse Pass. Even more revealing, however, was Day's use of metaphor to frame the landscape. Day conceptualized the Pass as a bounded space representative of a particularly urban landscape.

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Peter Verberg, "A Fourth Road to the Sun," *Alberta Report*, Volume 23, no. 20 (April 29, 1996), 14.
[29] Ibid.

Day's entry into the debate also signified a change in the scope of discussion in Alberta. The provincial government in Alberta had largely remained on the sidelines in the 1980s and 1990s. The hands off position changed in the spring of 1996 when the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce turned towards the provincial government for funding as part of a 4-way partnership. Red Deer Chamber of Commerce Chairman Phillips argued the case before the legislature's agriculture and rural development committee. His approach to dealing with the Alberta government was to get it on board by guaranteeing that the province would not have to pay a penny for a project that the Chamber estimated approximately $120 million. The provincial government would only fund the feasibility study. Under the plan, the federal government would pay for the 24 km. built through the national park and B.C. would fund the remaining 56 km. The Alberta government wouldn't pay construction costs because Highway 11 already ran into the park.[30] Although Alberta had no jurisdiction over the proposed route, the chamber "hoped the province would exert political pressure. We need the power of the provincial government to bring B.C. on side and then for both (provinces) to bring the federal government on side."[31] Phillips evoked the grand narrative of the past, calling the Rockies one of "the greatest interprovincial trade barriers in the country."[32]

The fortunes of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce seemed to turn when Day publicly endorsed the Howse Pass project, even though Premier Ralph Klein had not come to a decision. Day's Red Deer North constituency association passed a resolution backing the idea at the Alberta Conservative Party's annual general meeting in Calgary. Day argued that the highway would reduce traffic in the "overloaded Banff corridor" and stimulate Central Alberta

[30] "Howse Pass gets a Hearing," *Red Deer Advocate*, March 27, 1996.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

manufacturing by cutting shipment costs to the coast.[33] In July 1996, Alberta Minister of Infrastructure Ty Lund publicly supported the project, arguing that it would actually improve the environment. Lund stated that a fourth pass to B.C. through the mountains west of Red Deer would "would clean up the environment and boost the economy. Lund also brushed off one of the central arguments against the project: "I've heard there's a couple of grizzly bears in the valley and very little other." The new pass would also help reduce exhaust fumes from vehicles because it would take drivers less time to get to where they're going. In addition, because the pass would only cut through 25 km of virgin forest, it would be less intrusive than the existing TransCanada Highway which covered 140 km. in Banff and Yoho National Parks. Lund's support drew a blunt response from Rocky Mountain House-based environmentalist and president of the Alberta League for Environmentally Responsible Tourism Martha Kostuch to remark: "This confirms [Lund] as the minister of environmental destruction."[34] Local First Nations voiced their concerns at the same time the provincial government sent a message of tacit support.[35]

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[33] "Day Optimistic about Howse Pass Question," *Red Deer Advocate*, March 30, 1996.
[34] "Lund Backs Howse Pass, *Red Deer Advocate*, July 10, 1996.
[35] The *Kiska Waptan* (Bighorn Band) was located along the south shores of Abraham Lake, approximately 40 kilometres east of Howse Pass. The families living on the reserve had lived and hunted in the valleys on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River for over a century. Charlie Abraham, counselor for the Bighorn Band, remarked on how once again the community had been forgotten by everyone involved. Abraham was annoyed by this lack of consultation and ambivalent but reflective about the projected benefits and costs of the highway: "For us, the development would be good and bad….In one way, it's good but with big trucks coming through it won't be good. A lot of people get killed, wildlife gets killed or scared off….We've been trying to come up with something pretty quick about the development. We need to find out right away what the community thinks about the idea." The local First Nations were determined to come to a decision as soon as possible. Opponents of the highway, however quickly rejected any notion of sustained benefit to the community. Kostuch remarked, "there may be some economic benefits for the band but my guess would be that the promoters of the highway would capture the market, not the Bighorn Band." She followed by arguing that there were actually bigger potential benefits for the Bighorn Band if the highway was *not* built: "Ecotourists from Europe and Japan, as well as North America, are paying to experience wilderness and to see the traditional Indian lifestyle. The best solution, both environmentally and economically, is to have the country protected. Eco-tourism is, in the long run, the most beneficial future." R. John Hayes, "Big Horn Band Forgotten," *Alberta Sweetgrass,* Volume 3, no. 10 (September 1996), 15. Kostuch' conflation of "experiencing wilderness" and "see[ing] the traditional Indian lifestyle" fell just short of the 'ecological Indian' stereotype. Kostuch had not deliberately set out to perpetuate this lingering narrative but in a push to put an end to the HPH, had fallen back on this kind of rhetoric. Her comments were likely never intended

One of the ways to bring the HPH debate within the relational properties of humanity and environment is to understand it as part of the ongoing geography-landscape discussion where seeking to abstract (and rationalize) the benefits and costs of the scheme were not necessarily the same as understanding through bodily experience the landscape that it would still remain part of. An article in the June/July 2002 issue of *Beaver Magazine* spelled out the conundrum that was the HPH in a larger historical context. The hiking and writing couple Stephen Bown and Nicky Brink had travelled the Howse Pass trail the previous summer. After describing the pass as "the type of valley that would lure an adventurer ever deeper into the wilderness," Bown reflected on the gentle grade of the pass and what that implied:

> The level grade of Howse Pass will come as a surprise to anyone who has seen the wild and impenetrable rock walls and glaciers that make the Canadian Rocky Mountains world famous, or who has driven the treacherous stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway through the Kicking Horse Pass to Golden. Why doesn't the railway or highway follow mellow Howse Pass instead of the circuitous, dangerous, and expensive-to-maintain routes now used?[36]

Bown noted that the couple actually discussed this issue as they were passing through Howse. The couple was acutely aware of the historical significance of the pass, however they also expressed a complex (and conflicted) sense of place—where romanticism and pragmatism co-existed: "It was obvious that we were in a pass; it seemed like a secret gateway through an impenetrable wall to an unknown world on the other side, which of course it was." In the wake of this picture of sublimity, however, Brink & Bown understood how industrial capitalism and the application of technology had contracted space and time:

> There are only a handful of viable natural passes through the bewildering miasma of peaks and ice fields that form the height of land that is now

for an indigenous audience. For more on the Big Horn Stoney see Chief John Snow, *These Mountains are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney People* (Calgary: Fifth House, [1997], 2005). For the "ecological Indian" idea, see Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth & History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

[36] Stephen Bown, "In the Footsteps of David Thompson," *Beaver* (Volume. 82, no. 3 (June/July 2002), 13-18.

> the boundary between Alberta and B.C., and locating them was an expensive and uncertain process. These days we hardly notice a good pass, accustomed as we are to the engineering marvels of the twentieth century--highways carved out of the rock, bridges spanning frightening torrents, and tunnels shielding the road from avalanches. The internal combustion engine has shrunk distances and made travel easy, fast, and predictable, but on foot, as we were, it became obvious why these original routes were so valuable, why adventurers like David Thompson devoted years to locating them, and why they could become the focal point for simmering political rivalries between fur companies and their native customers.[37]

Two centuries later, rivalries continue, suggesting Howse Pass is both more and less than the 40 km. strip of land some have purported it to be. Three-quarters of a century after its conception, the HPH project remains alive—if not in a continuous state of limbo—at the county level, its feasibility subject to a host of contingencies ranging from the prevailing economic climate to the discourses of provincial-federal relations.[38] So long as public perception translates into environmental decisions the HPH idea will be in permanent hiatus, cash strapped and politically unfeasible. The ebb and flow of the HPH vision is more a reflection, then, of the ongoing privileging of the wilderness idea and the symbolic significance in making (or being restricted from making) the "Great Divide" crossing.

*The Great Divide Trail*

The Great Divide Trail (GDT) has had a disproportionately long history compared to the amount of trail built in its name.[39] Given the success of earlier, nation building projects rhetorically centred on "The Great Divide," the prospects of establishing a successful wilderness

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[37] Ibid.

[38] In May 2005, Clearwater County, in partnership with Alberta Economic Development, the Town of Rocky Mountain House, and Lacombe County hired Schollie Research and Consulting and HDR | HLB Decision Economics to conduct an independent analysis of the costs and benefits associated with constructing a highway over the Howse Pass. The study concluded that "benefits outweighed the costs." <lacombecounty.com/index.php?**...**&gid=297&Itemid=15> (accessed February 10, 2009).

height of land traverse centred on this landscape would seem a sure thing. This would be an erroneous assumption. Constant and continuous project re-conceptualizations—on account of several factors including chronic volunteer deficiencies, federal government ambivalence, public indifference, financial constraints and organizational challenges—dogged the successful completion of the GDT. Above all else, however, the interprovincial cooperation that marked the Banff-Windermere and Kicking Horse Pass auto routes in earlier decades was absent. Because the GDT was largely a grass roots initiative, at arms' length from both federal and provincial levels of government, the story of the proposed route is an account of how, in the determined drive to build a recreational and environmentally-friendly "alternative" trail, volunteer workers attempted to construct a different landscape experience along the height of land. The GDT was not about mapping the "unknown" nor was it about uniting the nation. This "Great Divide" landscape was initially marked by numerous height of land crossings along a single track, in effect adding to the narrative already established by the Interprovincial Boundary Commission and reified through subsequent high speed transportation routes, monuments and maps. The height of land that the GDT offered was another linear narrative added to those already codified through mapping and legislation. The GDT was also an attempt to move along and through an already iconic landscape in a way markedly different from what had come before. Moving along and through the height of land on foot was in part a reaction to mechanized methods of mobility.

But the privilege of place that was the transcontinental height of land did not change. Hiking the "Great Divide" height of land was a culturally constructed expression of landscape consumption. Notwithstanding the multiple heights of land that occur in a multitude of spaces

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[39] Dustin Lynx, *Hiking Canada' s Great Divide Trail: Revised and Updated* (Calgary: Rocky Mountain Books, 2007), 8.

across North America, the primacy of place given to “The Great Divide” as a ‘natural ‘ place was reified by the initial emphasis on the project as an interprovincial endeavour. The height of land meaning generated through the GDT nonetheless remained open to negotiation and contestation as this vision did not come to fruition.

The first record of the GDT appeared in the minutes of the National Park’s Standing Committee Meetings in Banff and Jasper in 1966. The Girl Guides of Canada also proposed a similar idea the same year.[40] The following year, local architect and mountaineer Philip DelaSalle envisioned an accessible backcountry route that would follow the Divide between Kananaskis and Yoho Valley. DelaSalle framed the trail as a bridge between the mutual exclusivity of wilderness and civilization: “This area…should be made more accessible to all the visitors who wish to walk away from the car parks and enter into closer contact with nature.”[41] With a little work, crossing the intercontinental height of land could offer one of the last genuine hiking experiences remaining available from the front country.

During the summer of 1967, Jim Thorsell, an independent consultant, was employed by the National and Historic Parks Branch to conduct a survey on trail use in Banff and Yoho Parks. Included in his final study report was a review of proposals made by various groups and individuals for the establishment of a GDT running north from the International Boundary at Waterton Lakes National Park to Mount Robson Provincial Park. Two years later, the National Parks and Historic Sites Branch announced its intention to establish the GDT.[42]

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[40] Ibid., 8.
[41] Ibid. Philippe Delesalle fonds, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, M51.
[42] J.W. Thorsell, *A Trail Use Survey: Banff and Yoho National Parks, 1967* (Ottawa : National Parks Service-Planning, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1968); Jim Thorsell, “The Great Divide Trail,” in Brian Patton and Bart Robinson, *The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide: A Hiker’s Manual* (Banff: Summerthought, 1971), 198.

Thorsell spelled out his vision for the GDT in the spring 1968 edition *of Canadian Audubon.* "Walking, according to a recent report from the United States Bureau of the Census, has now become the favourite outdoor recreation of the American people." A variety of trails from metropolitan area bicycle trails to national heritage trails of 3000 miles in length were being established in response to a growing urge of a usually sedentary population to enjoy the many benefits of foot travel away from congested highways. Thorsell referred to increasing volunteer involvement among civic groups in southern Ontario, Edmonton and Vancouver as a factor in the establishment of long-distance trails. Thorsell also challenged the view that the backcountry was nothing more than a "scenic cemetery."[43]

Thorsell eschewed the "Great Divide" landscape label for the height of land, choosing to give it an embodied and historically contextualized essence by applying the indigenous "backbone" reference. Thorsell also emphasized the integration of the trail into an already established network of national and provincial jurisdictions and trail systems: "The trail would cross 24 passes, traverse numerous valleys and lakes, and follow ridges and crests which closely parallel the Continental Divide."[44] To underscore the (re)crossings of the trail, of the 300 miles, 104 were in Banff National Park, 92 in Jasper National Park, 75 in British Columbia park and wilderness land, and 30 in the Alberta Forest Reserve. A separate alpinists' route diverging from the main trail at Lake O'Hara and continuing northwards through the Freshfields, Columbia, Chaba and Hooker Icefields was also pondered.[45] Visitors would be encouraged to experience "any portion or all of its length." There was a decidedly patriotic-free tone to the purpose and meaning of such a trail, far removed from the thinly veiled messages of the railway and auto route eras: "At a time when such large proportions of our young people are reared on asphalt and

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[43] Jim Thorsell, "Proposal for a Great Divide Trail," *Canadian Audubon,* Vol. 30, no.3 (May-June 1968), 75-76.
[44] Ibid.

concrete….The Great Divide Trail…would act to stimulate foot travel rather than freeway frenzy through the mountains." [46] The GDT was meant to serve the environment and nourish the body.

From the outset the GDT, like most recreational backcountry routes, was expected to be an inter-textual experience, modified by guidebooks and maps. The back pages of the first edition of *The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide: A Hiker's Manual (1971),* adapted from Thorsell's pamphlet titled *Provisional Trail Guide and Map for the Proposed great Divide Trail (1970),* was the first attempt at presenting the trail as "ready made" for travel.[47] In response to the federal commitment, The Great Divide Trail Committee was established with the support of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, Canadian Youth Hostel Association, local chapters of the Alpine Club of Canada and Parks Canada planners. Between 1971 and 1972, further studies undertaken by the Canadian Wildlife Studies recommended rerouting the GDT from high use areas such as Lake O'Hara.[48] Despite these recommendations and provincial support, federal government support of the GDT did not materialize, but government obstinacy did not stop local and provincial grass roots organizations from pursuing the project.

The first comprehensive in-depth study of the GDT was carried out in August 1971 at the request of the Canadian Wildlife Service and published the following year by the Research Council of Alberta. *Trail Conditions Along a Portion of The Great Divide Trail Route, Alberta and British Columbia Rocky Mountains* (1972) defined some of the most pressing concerns for the development of the GDT. The study focused on the portion of trail between Haiduk Lake and Wonder Pass along the western boundary of Banff National Park, adjacent to the Alberta-British Columbia boundary. The route was examined during which time field work was concentrated on

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 77.
[47] The pamphlet had been produced for the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada.
[48] Ibid., 9.

identifying the soil and drainage factors associated with the trail's condition with a view to compensating for existing damage or preventing further damage to the environment.[49] Observations were made at 500-foot intervals along the trail to locate and precisely delimit trail damage. Notes were made on thickness and types of surface deposits, bedrock lithology, local topography and aspect, ground water and surface water drainage; the proximity, extent and meltwater effects of snowbanks, and vegetation. Soil pits were dug at selected sites, profiles described in detail, and samples taken for analysis in order to characterize soil types over large areas. The trail was then classified into damaged and undamaged lengths so that observed hydrologic, geologic and pedologic conditions could be related to the trail condition. Momentum for the GDT increased in 1976 with the publication of a Master's Thesis detailing a trail planning methodology for a section of the proposed route.[50] Success still depended ultimately on direct federal support, but by 1975 (the projected completion year) these guarantees had not been realized.

In 1974, a small grant from the Federal Opportunities for Youth Programme and funding from Alberta Department of Youth, Culture and Recreation allowed six students to explore possible routes located *outside* the National Parks. From fieldwork during the 1974 season, the Great Divide Trail Association (GDTA) was born. The mandate of the incorporated, non-profit organization was the establishment of a protected corridor for the proposed GDT, and to the initiation of the trail's construction and maintenance in all sectors <u>outside of the National and Provincial Parks</u> (original emphasis).[51] The group started out with approximately 150 members.

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[49] J.D. Root and L.J. Knapik, *Trail Conditions Along a Portion of The Great Divide Trail Route, Alberta and British Columbia Rocky Mountains*, (Edmonton: Research Council of Alberta, 1972), 2.
[50] Bart Deeg, *A Proposal for a Trail Planning Methodology*, Unpublished Master's Thesis (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1976).
[51] *The Great Divide Trail: Banff to Waterton, —Its Concept and Future, 2nd. Ed. (*GDTA: May 1976), 6. Located at Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies Archives, Project Great Divide Trails Fonds (M341).

Several organizations also supported the GDTA including the Alberta Wilderness Association, Alpine Club of Canada (Calgary Chapter), Calgary Field Naturalists Society, Canadian Youth Hostel Association, Chinook Outdoors Club (Lethbridge) and Alberta Fish and Game Association). British Columbia groups included the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C., North Kootenay Historical Society, North Okanagan Naturalists (Vernon), Sierra Club and the Outdoor Recreation Council of B.C.[52]

The aims of the GDTA were fivefold and reflected the predominant concerns of people interested in preserving mountain environments. These aims detailed the ways in which the wilderness-civilization separation had been rendered moot: 1) To establish and maintain a long-distance hiking and equestrian trail through the Continental Divide region to be known as the Great Divide Trail; 2) To encourage the preservation and appreciation of areas along the divide which have scientific and/or aesthetic significance, through speaking engagements and organized outings along parts of the trail; 3) To expose people to both scenic highlights along the continental divide as well as various land uses carried on within the region. Members of the public will thus become more aware of conflicting land uses and will encourage proper land use management within the provincially owned territory of Alberta and British Columbia; 4) To promote the use of non-motorized wildland recreation as a healthful and enjoyable means of exercise; and 5) To encourage proper wilderness etiquette through the Trail User's Codes, newsletters and other publications."[53]

The GDTA remained a fledgling organization throughout its existence. The years 1974-81 were marked by trail building on the one hand and the much less mundane but complicated task of constructing (and conveying to the public) a landscape vision on the other. One can gain

[52]Ibid., 6-7.
[53]Ibid., 8-9.

a more complete understanding of how the GDTA negotiated various cultural and physical 'crossings' through the organization's published proposals and newsletters. Intermittent media accounts also provided a glimpse of how the association's work was presented to the public.

The GDTA published the findings of its first full season of fieldwork in *The Great Divide Trail: Banff to Waterton—Its Concept and Future (*1976). Multiple crossings over human and nonhuman landscapes were an important component of the trail's definition:

> The Great Divide Trail is visualized as a long distance hiking and equestrian trail running along, adjacent to or over the Continental Divide outside of the National Parks. It will travel through both natural and disturbed regions. It is expected that the Great Divide Trail will act as a backbone to a network of trails within the Forest Reserves of Alberta and British Columbia. The route is planned to traverse both the valley and alpine regions but will be located primarily in sub-alpine areas.[54]

The Report outlined the reasons for choosing the height of land as an axis for its fieldwork. The traversing of interprovincial boundaries was one motivating interest, as was the unique hydrological qualities of the landscape. There was also another practical (and climatic) reason for the trail's location: "[The Divide] is a geologic entity consisting of a chain of mountain ranges which tend to produce precipitation on their western flanks and a rain shadow on their eastern slopes. I repeat, it has been the western ranges, not the main ranges (i.e. The Great Divide) that has been the barrier." In addition, these mountain passes were "rich in Indian lore and pioneer artifacts."[55] The commemorative and modernist "mountain barrier" narratives so prevalent among earlier 20th century Great Divide route literature were peeled away to reveal a different set of motives for the GDT. The route chosen for the GDT allowed for localized environmental disparities but the *proper place name language* of the trail did not change. The

[54]Ibid., 2.
[55]Ibid.

GDTA had no intention of turning its work into a glorification of man (and nation) over nature but in maintaining the name it unwittingly did.

GDTA members were also mindful of the importance of long-distance overland routes whose trail heads and jumping on/off points were relatively accessible in North America. These routes shared common similarities as trails that facilitated a form of recreational consumption as well as, but not necessarily restricted to, national commemoration. The GDT was discussed within the context of other "geological" long-distance trails that maintained their "unifying concepts" such as the Appalachian Trail (1937) in the eastern United States, the Bruce Trail (1967) in southern Ontario and the Pacific Crest Trail (still in construction) through the Cascade Ranges in the Western United States: [The] "definite appeal associated with straddling the backbone of the North American Continent—to know that this is the point where the waters divide to form the headwaters of the major rivers draining the continent" was also a 'natural' drawing point bearing mention in *The Great Divide Trail*. The diversity in geologic, geographic and biologic features was also appealing; especially the contrast in vegetation between the rain shadow of the east slopes and the moist densely forested western flanks. Finally, the GDTA recognized the learning experience that only the embodied process could provide:

> An appreciation of the role the mountains played during the history of man in the area could be gained when travelling through the area. The historic Indian trails, the old pioneer campsites and the weathered boundary markers are intriguing aspects of the Continental Divide region.[56]

Building the trail—a labour of love for volunteers—was one thing. Constructing consensus in the public realm was quite another. Zealous dedication to crossing the literal Divide did not necessarily lead to success in other more pragmatic and tangible crossings. The success of the

[56] Ibid., 4-5.

GDTA was mitigated by a myriad of problems. Notwithstanding inaccurate stories, constant funding shortfalls and membership problems, engaging with and securing the support of British Columbians proved to be an intractable problem.[57] Communicating across the Divide proved to be more challenging than building a trail along it.

The GDTA seemed to show an appropriate advance awareness of the potential problem. The 1976 Great Divide Proposal included a contingency plan that provided for both an interprovincial and intra-provincial route.[58] Such an alternative option would be necessary. A feature length story in the May 1977 edition of *The Sierra Club Bulletin* detailed how the GDT between Waterton and Banff NP had been conceptualized to pass mainly through Crown lands in both provinces, however, to date, more progress on the trail had been made in Alberta than in British Columbia:

> The concept of the trail has been accepted by the Alberta government; the mechanics have been worked out for establishing the route and allotting lands to it….Negotiations with the British Columbia government continue, but contingency plans are being made to route the entire trail through Alberta if necessary. British Columbia officials have become so committed to resource extraction along or near the spine of the Rockies that they fear any possible conflict with such development.[59]

The Sierra Club offered to help coordinate efforts on "two sides of the divide" but their interests lay predominantly with the "sparse and far-separated" population from the East Kootenays. The magazine urged those Club members and "interested parties" to support groups that had publicly expressed their support for the project, and to especially impress upon the British Columbia

[57] A National Geographic feature edition on the Continental Divide Trail in the United States erroneously stated that "while these debates work themselves out, Canada offers its Great Divide Trail: 350 miles already available, with hundreds of miles in alternative bypaths—more than enough for a full summer's wilderness travel, and access easy enough for a week or weekend." William Ellis, *Majestic Rocky Mountains* (Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society, 1976), 71.
[58] *Great Divide Trail,* 5.
[59] Pat Kariel, "Waterton to Banff: Canada's Proposed Great Divide Trail," *Sierra Club Bulletin* (May, 1977), 44-45.

government the need for quick action, before the land is irreparably lost to nonrecreational users.[60]

GDTA frustration with developments in British Columbia was evident in its quarterly newsletter. In autumn 1977 the GDTA considered this problem with an article titled "West is West and East is East and the Twain Shall Meet—Hopefully." The article pulled no punches:

> Money; time; effort; delay; hope; and disappointment—this seems to be a history of the GDTA dealings with B.C. Despite the fact that more expense has been devoted to public relations on the west side of the continental divide during the past year, few instances of positive support have been forthcoming. There is indeed a much stronger concern for the successful development of the GDT in Alberta, Ontario and the Western U.S.[61]

Some of the reasons for these major obstructions included the low priority given to the GDT by already beleaguered B.C. conservationists; extensive distance from major urban centres in the Kootenays (although that did not seem to be a problem for members as far away as California, Ontario or England the magazine pointed out); a great deal of "misunderstanding as to the nature and scope of the proposal; and the fear "[of] many local individuals that the Trail will be overrun by Calgarians, Easterners, and Americans and that an endless stream of garbage will remain."[62] One wonders if those holding out in the Kootenays—and the article does not provide any scope with respect to just how much of this opposition was open and direct—associated outsiders with garbage. In any case, the GDTA planned to continue pushing ahead in British Columbia: "Public relations campaigns are in full swing in the Vancouver area, and [we] are "planning a concerted effort in southeastern B.C."[63] No further details were provided. The GDTA clearly was engaged in a frustrating juggling act of multiple crossings which proved too

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[60] Ibid., p. 45

[61] Jenny Feick, "West is West and East is East and The Twain Shall Meet—Hopefully," *The Great Divide Trail Association Newsletter* (Fall 1977), 5. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Great Divide Trail Fond(M341).

[62] Ibid.

much for the organization. By 1980, the GDTA pulled back from British Columbia entirely to focus on Alberta.

For almost two decades the Great Divide Trail remained an abstraction, a physical marker more conceptual than real. Hikers engaging with any long-term movement through or along the GDT height of land were most likely using previously constructed trails at most only indirectly part of any comprehensive trail building initiative from the mid-70s to early '80s. Indeed, the Great Divide Trail chapter of *The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide* had been removed from the book by its third printing in 1986. Nevertheless, the retention of the transcontinental "Great Divide" name in recent attempts to revitalize the route demonstrates the continued hold this expression has not just on how we make sense of our geophysical world but the complex world of social relations.[64]

The failures of the Howse Pass Highway and Great Divide Trail Projects demonstrated that regardless of motives, the era of transcontinental height of land crossings relying on the narrative of economic nation building (and the federal/provincial funding which comes with it) had come to an end. Further, the nature conquering rhetoric that leveraged earlier height of land crossings had passed, depriving boosters from drawing upon a powerful set of images to push their schemes through to fruition. The success of earlier projects like the Banff-Windermere and Kicking Horse Pass Highways had hinged upon a measure of regional-provincial-federal consensus which did not materialize in the post-war era. The HPH scheme may have been economically sound, even necessary and, in the case of the GDT, a much needed alternative recreational site to the established National Park trail network but the large-scale opposition to

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[63] Ibid. The GDTA did plan to continue to present their plans to groups already on the list of supporters and "again present a case for the interprovincial routing of the GDT between Banff and Waterton Lakes National Parks." (5)
[64]The GDT project has been revived in the past several years. In 2000, Rocky Mountain Books published *The Great Divide Trail* (Dustin Lynx). The described route is comprised of already existing trails.

these routes mitigated against their success. Conflicting interests—sometimes transparent—militated against these schemes. Still, the height of land idea remained influential in the way people conceptualized and conferred privilege of place to specific geophysical landscapes. Form remained the same but function was reconfigured.

*The Fireweed Trail as a Counterpoint*

While earlier visions of "land to sea" or "plains to peak" height of land crossings did not come to fruition, another trail which arose out of a much different set of circumstances (and scale), did prevail, and this success tells us a good deal about changing perceptions of ecology and landscape in spite of—or perhaps due to—our unflinching devotion to the wilderness idea. The *Fireweed Self-Interpretive Trail,* emerged out of the ashes of the 1968 Vermillion Pass Fire which spread *along* the height of land, and *crossing* interprovincial and inter park boundaries. The 1.2 kilometre stroll, which started at the 'Continental Divide' roadside monument on the Banff-Windermere Highway, also traversed the height of land. The meaning of The Fireweed Trail is significantly different from the earlier height of land traverses due in large part to the way in which it came to fruition through the processes of ecological transformation and historical commemoration. To be sure, there are certain structural forces in place that ground the height of land idea inherent in this place: Long-standing National and Provincial Park policies concerning the protection of "wild" spaces; and the self-interpretive aspect of the trail mediated by text—all anthropomorphic expression of the way spaces of this kind should be represented. The Fireweed Trail is also relatively automobile-free (trailheads may be reached by car) but it is in the conflation of the "wild" with the height of land as a *protected* place where this landscape is ultimately and definitively ascribed value.

If the failures of the HPH and GDT were due in some part to the inability of social and cultural groups to successfully negotiate matters of power and space, these impasses did not suggest that the ways in which people perceived landscapes had changed. Instead, it could be argued that the human 'hand' in constructing these cultural landscapes had become even more intrusive. In spaces designated as *'wilderness'* and *'protected places*,' the height of land retained its hierarchy of place, sometimes as a result of negotiated settlement between social groups and at other times a result of planning landscape change as a consequence of environmental processes. To be sure, cultural landscape construction did not occur in a vacuum outside the realm of physical changes in the land. Nevertheless, while transformations in the physical-material were bound to have a corresponding effect on human perceptions of these places underlying values and assumptions could still guide the manner in which this process occurred.

On the evening of 9 July 1968, an animate height of land crossing occurred. A bolt of lightning struck the timber-dry area near Marble Canyon in Kootenay National Park, four miles from the Alberta-B.C. boundary. Moments later, massive puffs of smoke arose, fanned by high winds. The blaze quickly headed down the Marble Canyon valley towards Mount Eisenhower. The fire proceeded to jump the Banff-Windermere Highway in two locations—close to its source and at its north end at Vermillion Pass. Approximately 125 firefighters (mostly First Nations from northern Alberta) from the Alberta Forest Service and 120 Armed Forces Personnel were added to the dozens of wardens from all Alberta and B.C. National Parks before the fire was finally brought under control. Twelve bulldozers were used to cut fireguards at both ends of the blaze and seven planes were employed in order to drop water and water-and-mud "bombs" on the fire. At one point the fire came within two kilometers of the Trans-Canada highway, forcing

authorities to close the highway at its junction with the Banff-Windermere Highway. This spot became a landing strip for those planes taking on containers from water pumped from the Bow River. A pall of smoke covered the town of Banff within 24 hours, sparking rumours of an impending town evacuation. By the time the fire was under control four days later, over 6000 acres had burned in on both sides of the height of land.[65]

Discussion followed in the wake of the fire. Some writers imagined the fire fighting as a form of cross-cultural reconciliation.[66] Much was also made of the aesthetics of a fire-ravaged landscape.[67] Other articles discussed the fire in the context of regeneration.[68] The fire also provided ready-made context for a long-time anthropomorphic debate: preservation vs. conservation. What to do with respect to the fire-killed timber within the boundaries of the storm was of great interest to commercial logging interests. W.McKin, Regional Director for the Banff and Kootenay areas of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, asked for approval to turn down requests from commercial logging interests to salvage the merchantable fire-killed timber within the boundaries of the recent fire so as to "allow nature to

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[65] "Fire Burns over 6,000-acre" Tract, *Crag & Canyon (*July 17, 1968). The progress of the fire was reported in several papers across Canada, and almost all major city newspapers in Western Canada. Canadian Press reported that "some 70 students and hippies who were recruited from the Banff area shortly after the fire started were released from fire duty." Quoting a local firefighter, "while the hippies were on duty there were lazy and all they did was yap." *Prince Albert Herald* (July 13, 1968), located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000756. For more on the history of fires in Kootenay National Park, see Alan M. Masters, Forest *Fire History of Kootenay National Park, British Columbia* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks Service-Environment Canada, 1989).

[66] *The Calgary Albertan* editorial for July 24, 1968 viewed the fire's legacy as a cathartic moment in Native-Euro Canadian relations. The fire may have blackened thousands of acres of forests and left "scars" on the mountainsides and in the valleys but "it may also have helped to heal one of those running sores on the body—a sore that has been open for the best part of a century and which in some respects has been getting angrier lately." Seen in this light, the fire should be understood as a "catalyst in this healing process….If respect is one means of improving relations between racial groups and between individuals of different races, these Indian firefighters did much more than quell flames in the Banff area this month." "Legacy of Fire," *Calgary Albertan* (July 24, 1968). Located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000826.

[67] "Tragedy in the Parks," The *Calgary Herald*, July 12, 1968. Located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000843; "Blaze Leaves Lasting Scars," *The Albertan*, July 16, 1968. Located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000811;

[68] "Forests Recover Gradually," *Calgary Herald*, July 15, 1968. Located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000822.

take its course." McKim listed several reasons for this decision. First, the burn had great interpretive potential as the successional pattern would not commence again if the timber as logged. Second, the area was expected to yield much interesting and valuable ecological and biological information if research projects were allowed to be carried out. Third, due to the extreme heat from the fire, it was doubtful whether the volume in merchantable material would justify an economical logging (and any network of roads constructed to acquire the merchantable trees would cause unwanted and unnatural erosion). Finally, the time-scale of such an "undesirable intrusion" would be approximately three years; otherwise the trees would become unmerchantable.[69] The rejection of logging in the area was in line with the prevailing ideas of the late 1960s that saw value in the preservationist argument.

The ecological imperative also curried favour along this easily accessible and highly visible section of the height of land. The fire landscape itself had become a tourist location. In July 1977, as part of a regular *Crag & Canyon* column titled "Where Man & Mountain Meet," Jon Whyte reflected on The Vermillion Pass Fire and what the ensuing landscape had meant to him as he walked through "the spars of the burn." Whyte had made periodic trips through the burn site as early as summer 1969. The ground was still blackened with soot but the area was filled with woodpeckers and the ground covered with toads. The first small new pines were between three and ten inches in height:

> In many ways it was the most interesting of trips for we had anticipated that it would be a sad and dreary landscape we would be wandering through. To find the way teeming with life, regenerating plants of arnica and fireweed, to see the grasses emerging right from the scorched earth we had not anticipated. The vital green and quickness of the place

[69] Letter from W.McKim, Regional Director, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development , September 4, 1968. Located in LAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 1662, File/dossier K186 (pt.4), #000746. McKim also referred to the "topography of the area such that any activity would be visible for the highway."

> against the absorbent blackness of the background revealed the patterns of regrowth easily and instantly.[70]

Eight years later the blackness of the landscape had been almost completely concealed by the shrubs that had taken over. The pines were almost seven feet high in some places, and the area was rich in birds. This landscape impression would be completely lost on the traveler, however, if he/she did not enter into it by foot:

> The effect from the highway is still bleak I suppose: travelling at high speed past it, the viewer is likely to concentrate on what he thinks are the barren spots left by the ravages of the fire. But as soon as we walk through the area, the ability to discern all of the vitality which bursts everywhere up and around the fallen trees and standing spars is brought to the fore. Along the trail there seems to be almost no blackness left….Only when we have actually walked through the resurgent vitality which is everywhere present in the burn can we be convinced of the necessity of forest fires.[71]

In its earliest years, hikers entered a landscape not dissimilar to that described by Whyte. A self-interpretive pamphlet located at the site presented a narrative full of juxtaposition: "From the road the forest appears dead, but it is by no means lifeless. In fact, there is a greater variety of plant and animal life here today than there was in the old forest before the fire. Take a walk through the burn. See for yourself the growth of a new forest on the floor of the old."[72] Travelers could experience the trail without the pamphlet but those who used the literature to augment the landscape experience would learn how the "rebirth of a forest" was reflected through different species of trees and a greater diversity in the ecology of small mammals. The Boreal Redback vole inhabited the litter of decaying trees and moss that covered the old forest floor while The White-Footed Mouse, Meadow Vole, Western Jumping Mouse, Cinereus Shrew,

[70] Jon Whyte, "Where Man & Mountain Meet," Crag & Canyon, June 29, 1977, 8.
[71] Ibid.
[72] *Fireweed Trail, Kootenay National Park British Columbia, Publication No. QS-W020-000-BB-A1* (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979).

Northwestern Chipmunk and Golden-Mantled Ground squirrel lived in the burn.[73] The guide reminded the reader that "at first glance the burn may appear an unsightly and desolate area. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder. After a closer look, the burn becomes a fascinating place where you may discover the story of forest fires."[74]

The Fireweed Trail signified a new height of land experience where the landscape had been shaped by ecological transformation but *how* one passed through this space still mediated the experience. The intercontinental and national symbolism of the trail comes almost exclusively from the road or the parking lot. The 1.2 km. trail is at the spot where monuments and marker inform that one is crossing the Continental Divide as well as interprovincial and National Park boundaries. The parking lot thus serves as both commemorative site and trailhead. The Fireweed Trail, as a route that simultaneously negotiates the ecological height of land and crosses the anthropomorphic "Great Divide," continues to carry significant meaning as a place of natural and human history. The Fireweed Trail may indeed be a fruitful example of what makes for a successful late 20th century trail project, but it is also a product of its time.

*Conclusion*

Crossing "The Great Divide" by foot or traversing a pass on the "Continental Divide" by motorized transport was still an event of some import in the second half of the 20th century; convincing the public that these projects were of some significance was another matter. The men and women that envisioned the Howse Pass Highway and Great Divide Trail were passionate people, motivated by what they perceived as legitimate needs, pragmatic concerns and beneficial results. The various boosters of each project were prepared to discuss and promote their projects

[73] The guide noted that hikers would probably not see these mammals since most were nocturnal.
[74] Ibid.

in public forums. None expected failure. The reasons for their defeat were varied and somewhat contingent but one common factor in all of these stories was an underestimation of the ways in which regional, provincial and national politics were difficult to align in an era that no longer faithfully followed the big nation building project vision. "The Great Divide" idea had previously worked strictly as a centripetal force imposed from without in places like the Banff-Windermere and Kicking Horse Pass autoroutes but when a diffusion of competing interests and regional identifications from within competed with the universal and unifying symbolism of the height of the land traverse, multiple meanings prevailed. By the 1970s, the nominal "Great Divide" idea had passed.

The ultimate failure or success of these routes can tell us something about social-spatial practice as well as the complexities of the geography-landscape discourse but successes and failures are, by and large, two sides of the same coin. The state of limbo that defined the HPH and GDT is best understood when placed beside similar but successful routes conflating 'wilderness' and 'nature' with the height of land idea. The experience that unfolds passing along the Fireweed Trail is also a consequence of intermingling processes, a beneficiary of the anthropomorphized "wilderness park" ideal and physical transformations in the land. In these places, the height of land still mattered but the terms in which the landscape was ascribed value had changed significantly. By the end of the 20th century, "The Great Divide" height of land that had been brought to bear in the name of national unity, controlling nature, and inter-provincial cooperation was no longer influential in the backcountry.

## CHAPTER SIX:

## SHIFTING LANDS: THE POLITICS OF CONTESTING MULTIPLE HEIGHTS OF LAND IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Locating and simultaneously affixing meaning to the height of land idea is evident in various ways, all of which are examples of how power relations bear upon spatial practice. The history of the height of land in the Canadian Rocky Mountain West is an instructive way of entering into a discussion of cultures, countries and the landscape abstractions that shape both. This chapter pursues these themes through an analysis of three landscape debates within a century, all centred on the ways in which the height of land idea could be presented as a 'natural boundary' in northern British Columbia. Taken in aggregate, the three cases demonstrate the difficulties in establishing the universality of the transcontinental height of landscape as a permanent singular and systematized boundary above and beyond its socio-ecological contexts. The geophysical and human elements that shaped these heights of land were, in and of themselves, also in a constant process of change.

This chapter also brings the history of the transcontinental height of landscape known as "The Great Divide" to the present by illuminating three eras in its spatial and temporal trajectory—from the late 19$^{th}$ century when this particular height of land, as "The Great Divide," was one of several competing mountain boundaries, through the first half of the 20$^{th}$ century when the "The Great Divide" became ascendant, to the second half of the century when the hegemony of "The Great Divide" was challenged. This chapter concludes with the contemporary contestation of the Treaty 8 western boundary, which, involving multiple transcontinental heights of land with different basins in the Rocky Mountains, dissolves "The Great Divide" idea as *the* singular landscape narrative. The height of land prominence may yet

exist today but the notion that it may be found in a singular form—"The Great Divide"—is now far from clear.

Two considerations inform this argument. First, the discussions framing each of the three debates were all, to some degree, guided by the unconscious acceptance of continuous human movement through complex landscapes that could not be captured and frozen through simple categorization and reduction. The persistent presence of uncertainty over establishing systematic boundaries through the height of land idea in one way or another belies the fact that such landscapes are simple backdrops, and the ways in which people perceive them fixed in a specific time. Studying each case as a 'stand-alone' moment, however, would necessarily negate the ways in which each event had an effect on the next. Further, contemporary court documents currently under litigation in B.C. Supreme Court (the 3rd case) have conferred legitimacy to the height of land by historicizing the first two cases. The current litigation carries within it the echoes of the debate on the western boundary of the Fertile belt (the 1st case), and the western boundary of Treaty 8 (the 2nd case). The most effective way of presenting the history of the height of land idea, then, is to tie all three spatially-related debates together.

Second, the legal-political discourse by which the height of land debate has travelled from its interpretation as an article of the HBC Deed of Surrender through its reading in the wording of Treaty 8 and into the B.C. Provincial Supreme Court is marked by continuity and change. "The Great Divide" hegemony, though not referenced directly in this chapter, has been eroded to the point where it is only one of several contested landscapes—all of which still adhere to a particular interpretation framed by *a* height of land. Although legal language frames the debate, it is unable to normalize the height of landscape beyond its cultural context. The height of land debate is seemingly caught in a circular process where the assumption that it is *ipso facto*

the most natural (and by extension most "natural") landscape obscures the presence of other understandings. In spite, and perhaps because of this process, however, the height of land idea remains a powerful rhetorical tool at work largely under the radar as an abstracted landscape—"The Great Divide" and "Continental Divide" still condition how various communities viewed mountain boundaries.

Late 19th century western Canada was a land in profound transition. Political expediency and financial logistics underwrote much of the discussion occurring in the first height of land debate within the Departments of the Interior and Justice in the decade between 1887 and 1896. At the centre of this discourse was exactly where the western fringes of what was commonly known as the Fertile Belt ended, and how to go about normalizing this boundary. Determining this boundary was important in defining the limits of ceded Hudson Bay Company (HBC) land which was necessary for allocating survey costs the HBC would assume in claiming a portion of land in each township within the Fertile Belt, as per Article 5 of the 1869 Deed of Surrender. Establishing a boundary was also necessary for normalizing the British Columbia-Northwest Territories border below the 54th parallel. The two proposed boundaries were the "base" of the Rocky Mountains (in tandem with the "foothills" which figured prominently) and the Arctic-Pacific "water-divide" along the peaks of the Rockies. This debate over which boundary was most appropriate revealed an overriding anxiety with establishing an easy to define, unbroken linear boundary that was simple to produce, cost effective, and *logical.* The interdepartmental scope of the debate also raised the specter of a power struggle between the two departments.

Three decades after Confederation, the practice of transposing a universally abstracted landscape onto a localized space intersected once again with the establishment of Treaty No 8. Indigenous-Newcomer relations, in addition to interband and provincial-federal relations, were

shaped by the ways language could be employed in establishing a universally abstracted landscape out of the individual components that comprised the Rocky Mountain geophysical environment. The height of land ascendancy was certainly not new, having already been established in 1763, 1812 and, most recently in 1850.[1] The height of land boundary that prevailed in Treaty Eight, though defining only part of the overall area, was particularly significant. First, Department of Indian Affairs documents demonstrated that the height of land idea, though apparently defined according to universally abstracted qualities, was nonetheless manifested in three different and disparate landscaped images: "The central range of the mountains;" the "spur of the peaks;" and the "Water Divide/Watershed Ridge." Each of these three interpretations carried significantly different visions but also shared similar objects, systems and ideas even if they were not located at the same place. Nonetheless, binding each interpretation together was a certain social assumption about the height of land as a 'naturalized' and universal landscape—positions nonetheless subject to a variety of contingencies, not the least of which were local land use patterns and ecological change. The legitimacy of the height of land, as an idea, was partially dependant upon a process of erasure and overwriting of earlier linear narratives some of whom continued to carry importance. The hierarchy of place debate in northeastern British Columbia was an active one.

One of the central concerns of this project is to study how the historical geography of the height of land idea bears upon the present. Complex landscape politics occur when peoples and

[1] Eventually the boundary of more than half of the 11 numbered treaties would employ the height of land in its text. Those numbered treaties where the height of land idea figures prominently are Treaties Three, Five, Seven, Eight, Nine and Eleven. The complete texts of the Numbered Treaties are accessible in print and can be viewed electronically. See *Indian Treaties and Surrenders: From 1680 to 1890* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1993). For those treaties not covered in Indian Treaties, see <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/hts/tgu/index-eng.asp> (accessed January 22, 2010). The height of land was also central to the 1850 Robinson Treaties which defined part of the Hudson Company Charter. See http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/hts/tgu/pubs/trob/rbt/rbt-eng.asp and http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/hts/tgu/pubs/trob/rbt2/rbt2-eng.asp (accessed January 22, 2010).

communities meet in a liminal space and actively intervene in contesting the historical geography of this area. "The central range of the mountains" and "Water- Divide/Watershed Ridge" interpretations that inflected the height of land idea at the turn of the century are currently at the heart of ongoing litigation in the British Columbia Supreme Court. British Columbia presently argues that the western boundary of Treaty Eight was defined by the Rocky Mountain height of land (the "central range of the mountains"). The Canadian government, as well as several bands signatory to the treaty, have argued for the more westerly "Water Divide/Watershed Ridge" height of land. At stake are the interrelated concerns of provincial-federal relations and the question of shared resources, and the land base addressed in the Treaty. Also up for question is the integrity of the boundary making narrative as it applies to at least one of the Numbered Treaties. One of the most compelling aspects, however, is the continued historicizing of the height of land as it gradually gives way to a new set of landscape visions that share some elements but not all.

Two arguments—one general to the universal height of land idea and one specific to the context of Treaty Eight—guide this chapter. First, narratives that draw upon heights of land as authorizing agents are simply one way culturally-inflected boundaries are used as effective devices to simplify the conceptualization of a much more complex landscape. The hydrological flow system so central to all height of land ideas is in fact the reflection of a particular social assumption grounded in a northern hemisphere context that sees the abundance of water as a matter of course.[2] Treaty Commissioners (and their colleagues in the Departments of Interior and Justice) entered the northern Rockies determined to apply the hydrological flow and water-divide system as the logical basis to frame the narrative of boundary making. At the same time,

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[2] Jamie Linton, *What is Water? The History of a Modern Abstraction (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010)*

however, Treaty Commissioners discussed the *incomplete and unknown* that marked the area both before and after the treaty making process. Indeed, even knowledge of the people inhabiting the area that comprised the larger watersheds defining the height of land was spotty. The hydrological understanding prevailed, however, as a system previously applied and widely utilized across the continent. This perception was made explicit in Privy Council and Departmental correspondence. Consequently, *two* competing heights of land arose —materially different (as objects), 'labeled' differently (as hydrological systems) yet similar in the assumption that they were the most effective way of making absolute meaning out of incomplete knowledge. The treaty texts that have made their way to the court room have identified the 'central range of the mountains' and 'water divide/watershed ridge' as the two conflicting heights of land but this legal discourse does not challenge the universal currency of the height of land as an *idea*.

Second, what follows is the need to reconsider the terms of the debate over what actually constitutes the actual height of land as it applies to Treaty 8 litigation, and the difficulties of bringing order to a space that defies any simple way of compartmentalizing. Here is where "The Continental Divide" legacy remains entrenched. The bifurcated (and constituted) hydrological flow systems of both the 'central range of the mountains' and 'water divide/watershed ridge' positions refer back to the archetypical *height of land* abstraction to affect meaning. Extracting the two culturally constructed landscapes out of a singular universal abstraction given shape by a seemingly unchanging hydrological and geological process has served to obscure what are in fact different ways of understanding the land—actually different landscapes—effected by a host of human and nonhuman processes. Both boundaries are, in fact, only two of multiple lines on the

ground, yet the current litigation process pit one landscape vision against the other by using a similar archetype—the height of land.

The establishment of false dichotomies cannot be used to definitively resolve a conflict. Indeed, the current conflict cuts *across* and *within* cultural lines, a provincial-federal dispute as much as an inter-band conflict. Local First Nations have demonstrated land use patterns that continue to override both boundaries, so any acceptance of the hegemony of the height of land idea is predicated on the assumption that this geophysical landform was in fact a largely intact stand-alone space invested in perpetuity with significant universal meaning that cut across cultures. In other words, the abstracted height of land has always existed separate from its social context. Proving this assumption is far from a given.

Treaty maps (and the various texts that explain them) are not the end product of discovery and contact; rather those engaged in their making were laying a new set of lines down on a known but changing world.[3] Treaties are also living agreements, subject to consensual (and intermittent) revision. Indeed, within and across *both* Treaty Eight height of land contestations were several overlapping boundaries generated by indigenous hunters and trappers that took into account other geophysical land forms: seasonal hunting rounds and animal migration routes. The height of land idea which promised a more distinct and rationalized boundary has introduced new conflicts in its wake.[4]

Still, the current constitutional-legislative framework of the dispute is a constructive medium for indigenous and Euro-Canadian interests to (re)consider the language of the original

[3] Stephen S. Hall, "I, Mercator," in Katherine Harmon, *Personal Geographies and other Maps of the Imagination* (New York" Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 15.

[4] David Harvey has argued that things do not, indeed cannot, stand alone without having an effect, and indeed being changed by, other things. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996)

treaty. Just as the implementation over time of the terms of treaty is an instructive bellwether for measuring its efficacy, so must the ways in which it is 'seen' as a geographical space. The integrity of a treaty is also determined by the way in which consensus is reached (and maintained) concerning the area that it encompasses. The motivations and means by which the treaty was originally conceived as space must be considered in this light. The height of land that entered the court will not be the same that leaves it.

The emergence of the hegemonic "Great Divide" interpretation of the height of land idea in the Rocky Mountains was a consequence of several years' discussion within the Departments of the Interior and Justice concerning what defined the Rocky Mountains—a significant concern the wake of the transfer of Rupert's Land from the HBC to the Dominion in 1869. This debate was precipitated by issues related to the projected agricultural and settlement potential of the western limits of what was known as the Fertile Belt. Article No. 6 of the Deed of Surrender of 1869 had inconclusively stated that the western limits of the HBC claim ended at the western limits of the Fertile Belt. The inconclusive nature of such a boundary definition was acceptable so long as there was no immediate push to inhabit the area but over time circumstances changed—especially after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. Two years later, the question of the westerly limit of the territory within which the HBC could claim certain sections in a surveyed township prompted a much more concentrated consideration of exactly where the HBC limit was. At stake were not just the administrative limits of the HBC claims but the financial costs the Company would accrue in laying claim to a portion of this tract as per the terms of the original Deed of Surrender.

From the outset, two competing landscape visions framed the discussion—the summit (or "water-divide") of the Rocky Mountains and the base of the mountains (also called the "foothills"). In January 1887, the "Rocky Mountain Boundary Question" was addressed for the first time. Richard E. Webster and C.G. Hamilton, under the auspices of the Department of the Interior, argued that the expression found in the HBC Deed of Surrender, "bounded on the West by the Rocky Mountains," implied the summit or water-divide of the Rocky Mountains. The authors' interpretation was based on a cross-referencing of both the wording of the Deed of Surrender and their own hierarchies of place that privileged headwaters over other river locations. Indeed, affixing the height of land was as much a matter of expediency that precluded any systematic study that would involve further investigation:

> The fact that the Northern branch of the Saskatchewan River rises in the Rocky Mountains and that the Northern boundary is stated to be the Northern branch of the Saskatchewan River without any limit of longitude or any line drawn or point taken East of its source strongly confirms this view as otherwise most difficult questions would arise and it would be impossible to state with any precision where the Western boundary ran or to whom particular parts of the territory belonged.[5]

The decision to affix the height of land as a boundary was political, and as such open to differing interpretations. Several months later J. Johnston, the Chief Draughtsman for the Department of Interior responded to the westerly limit query, stating that in his opinion the "limits of cultivable or grazing lands which naturally terminates at the base or foothills of the Rocky Mountains" was the appropriate boundary. Johnston's decision to separate the (economic) foothills landscape

[5] Letter from Richard E. Webster and C.G. Hamilton to Department of Interior, January 18, 1887. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

from the (political) interprovincial watershed boundary interpretation was clearly based on a specific way of seeing the mountains.[6]

The apparently logical foothill boundary was soon put to the test. British Columbia's position in this westerly limit debate complicated the process and demonstrated how any landscape boundary interpretation was political and not simply an intellectual exercise. In March 1888, Johnston revised his earlier opinion in light of federal-provincial relations. In viewing the question from "the important bearing it may have on the unsettled boundary line between British Columbia and the Northwest Territories," Johnston extended the previous western boundary of the fertile belt to the provincial boundary, "which, up to about the 54th parallel, is the watershed of the Rocky Mountains[original emphasis].[7] This opinion was reiterated two months later when A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, endorsed the height of land as the boundary, arguing that "it is generally understood to be a governing rule in the case of mountain boundaries that the summit, or watershed, is invariably assumed to be the line intended."[8]

If there was indeed a "governing rule" in the case of mountain boundaries its application was not universally recognized. The economic interests of the government vis-à-vis the HBC was also significant. Mountain landscapes were increasingly subject to the optics of economic interest that came with the increasing commoditization and rationalization of the constituent

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[6] Letter from J. Johnston, Department of Interior to Webster and Hamilton, December 7, 1887. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.
[7] Internal Department of Interior Correspondence from J. Johnson to Deputy Minister A.M. Burgess, March 3, 1888. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.
[8] Letter from A.M. Burgess to Deputy Minister of Justice R. Sedgwick, May 19, 1888. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

landforms as a natural resource.[9] In any case, assumptions with respect to mountain boundaries were contingent upon the political decision making process and not universally accepted as strictly natural landscapes. In April 1891, Minister of Justice John Sparrow Thompson expressed the opinion that there were strong grounds for placing the boundary line at the limit of cultivable and grazing lands—a position also taken by the Inspector of Mines. The Minister did not wish to "be considered as expressing a positive opinion in favour of this view," but nonetheless viewed the arguments in support of such a position to carry enough weight that the government would not be justified in supporting any other "construction" of the Deed of Surrender. Of course, in the event the HBC was not disposed to accept this view, the Minister of Interior "would be glad to have the matter settled by the Courts, and would be willing to cooperate with the Company in such proceedings."[10]

The Surveyor-General E. Deville found this decision troubling on practical grounds with respect to the methodology of determining where the line should be surveyed. "The name of 'Foot Hills," the Surveyor-General remarked, "is applied to a certain portion of the country lying between the prairie proper and the base of the mountains" when:

> It is in reality a continuation of the prairie which becomes more and more broken when going towards the Mountains. There are no means of determining where the prairie ends and the foothills commence without a more precise definition of the meaning of the term "Foot Hills."[11]

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[9] Samuel Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency; The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1959).

[10] Letter from Deputy Minister of Justice R. Sedgwick to Deputy Minister of Interior A.M. Burgess, April 7, 1891. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185. Also see the letter written by Department of Interior Secretary John R. Hall to HBC Governor Sir Donald A. Smith on April 17, 1891. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

[11] Internal Department of Interior correspondence from E. Deville to G.U. Ryley, July 31, 1891. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

The hybrid prairie-foothill landscape in turn affected the relationship of the foothills to the base of the mountains. Determining the base of the mountains was more practical because it was better defined, according to the Surveyor-General. The proper way to ascertain its position would be through a survey—a relatively inexpensive process since the line would not require to be fixed with precision.

The following January, the Department of the Interior solidified its height of land interpretation in a letter outlining the rationale for its position. An imperialist tone inflected the explanation. The letter referred to international French and English pronouncements on similar controversies that supported the watershed interpretation. With specific reference to the Canadian context, the Department of Interior referred to the consequences that would follow in provincial-federal relations if such a boundary was rejected for the foothill interpretation:

> The soundness of the [water divide] proposition would seem to be supported by the fact that the Order in Council accepting this very Deed of Surrender on the part of her Majesty under the provisions of the Ruperts Land Act 31 and 32 Vic., Cap. 105 prescribes as the Western boundary of this Fertile Belt these very "Rocky Mountains which in the earlier Imperial Act of 1863 (26 and 27 Vic. C.83) defining the boundaries of the Colony of British Columbia are (Section 3) given as the Eastern boundary of that Colony the same "Rocky Mountains" and it can hardly be reasonably assumed that British Columbia was to cross the Range to find an undefined Boundary on the Eastern side of that Range. [original emphasis].[12]

If an alternative interpretation was to prevail, the letter pointed out, an "undefinable line" would either fall short of or go beyond what was assumed to be "the natural line of division."[13] In other words, the height of land was assumed to be *a priori* existing outside the considerations of ecological and social processes despite the influence of previous legislation. Through this

[12] Internal Department of Interior correspondence written by Horace Davey, R.B. Finley and Edward H. Pollard, January 26, 1892. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.
[13] Ibid.

reasoning the height of land effectively became a privileged position in any future consideration of boundary making in the Rocky Mountains.

This 'natural' essence conferred upon the height of land was, nonetheless, subject ultimately to political and financial considerations. The matter was finally resolved between March and May 1896 when the Surveyor-General, Geographer and Chief Astronomer of the Department of Interior re-iterated what had, in fact, been its position since 1888. The rationale for choosing the height of land boundary, however, had changed. To begin, although it was possible to perceive this transaction as "more in the nature of a real estate transaction between the Crown and a private Company," the transaction was "in all intents and purposes a political one and that the rules which apply to boundaries if made by negotiations between two countries would also apply in regard to the boundaries determined by the Deed of Surrender."[14] In referencing the choice as political, something more than a financial transaction, the Department of the Interior positioned the height of land as a universal boundary effectively trumping other ways of 'seeing' the land. The height of land became, in essence, the predominant instrument of spatial practice for any future boundary making narratives in the mountain west—a congruence of the geophysical with the political to be sure but given expression as a selective process of prioritizing landscapes.

There was also an attendant economic equation to the question that factored in any final decision. The original wording of Article No. 5 of the Deed of Surrender did not limit the share of the HBC to one-twentieth of the lands that were fertile or fit for cultivation. On the contrary, the article's wording gave the HBC one-twentieth of *all* the lands whether arid or cultivable within the boundaries mentioned in Article No. 6. Since it was well known that there were very

[14] Letter written by Deputy Minister of the Interior A.M. Burgess to Minister of the Interior T. Mayne Daly, March 10, 1896. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

large areas of “waste land pure and simple—sand hills, alkaline plains and the line—within that tract,” it was entirely possible that some or all of this one-twentieth section could be land unfit for cultivation or settlement.[15]

In any case, the Surveyor General and Chief Astronomer had already reported that the boundary suggested earlier by the Minister of Justice in 1891 would be a difficult line to survey. Even if the base of the mountains (as opposed to the beginning of the foothills) were determined to be the boundary it was practically impossible to establish this in any financially viable way. Not only would the base of the mountains remain difficult to establish, in the minds of the authors “it would cost more to find such a line than the whole value of the one-twentieth which would fall to the Company between that line and the summit of the mountains.” This arrangement made little financial sense since it was assumed that the only thing of value that the Company stood to acquire would be “base metals and coal and coal-oil, with, perhaps, here and there a share of such timber as is to be found on the slopes.”[16]

The height of land may have been bestowed with a measure of legitimacy as a constituted boundary but its hegemony could only be conferred through normative practices framed by selective interpretations of history and geography. An attendant measure of rhetoric was also necessary. A letter written two days later from W. King of the International Boundary Commission spelled out the rationale for the watershed boundary decision—the “meaning of the ‘West by the Rocky Mountains’”. Notwithstanding the force of law given to Article 6 of the Deed of Surrender, interpreting the location labeled through the “bounded on the West by the Rocky Mountains” language was nonetheless framed as “a question of political, or quasi-political boundary.” In other words, the boundary would necessarily be the provincial line—“the

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

summit or watershed ridge." The practicality of surveying anything other than the height of land was compromised by the "indefinite" nature of such landscape processes. Colonial assumptions also marked the way the Department of the Interior historicized the landscape. The boundary of British Columbia had been codified through imperial terms: The Imperial Act of 1858 confirmed (through language) the province permanently to be the western side of the watershed "by the main chain of the Rocky Mountains."

In the Act of 1863, the apparent inadequacies of the original law were recognized so the wording changed to "by the Rocky Mountains." The first act logically explained the second, the memo pointed out, "for there was apparently no intention of changing the boundary where it follows the mountains." Consequently, "the main chain" must apply to the summit ridge, for along the watershed ridge only can a mountain be said to resemble a chain." The absolute conviction that the water-divide ridge was the sole place for a mountain to resemble an unbroken linear track was not revealed through any applied system of learning so much as it was constructed (and given authority) through language. Instead, the epistemological basis for categorizing alpine ecologies changed. By way of reverse logic the memo pointed out what could transpire if the eastern base was deemed the boundary:

> If, however, the "Rocky Mountains" in the Deed of Surrender is held to mean the eastern base, and if a decision to that effect has any legal force as interpreting the Imperial Acts above cited, then, by like reasoning, the Eastern boundary of British Columbia should mean the <u>Western</u> base of the Rocky Mountains. [original emphasis].[17]

The ultimate resolution of Article No. 6 of the HBC Deed of Surrender established "The Great Divide" height of land watershed as the western boundary of the Fertile Belt. Any number of 'natural' boundaries existed but political (as well as financial) expediency dictated that this

[17] Letter from W. King, International Boundary Commission to Deputy Minister of the Interior A.M. Burgess, March 12, 1896. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

particular reading of the Deed of Surrender would prevail. Normalizing this boundary outside the socio-ecological context was increasingly important to directing any future events like these. The same debate that framed the interdepartmental wrangling over the western HBC boundary, however, could also shape the ways in which *intra*cultural discourse presented itself in the context of treaty making.

In the months immediately following the Order in Council (P.C.1703) establishing the Commission that would eventually lead to Treaty 8 (1899), the question of distinguishing 'natural' from 'artificial' boundaries was discussed. In the eyes of the Department of Indian Affairs, the "division line" between the peoples living east and west of the mountains was the frame of reference for a resolution:

> As the Indians to the west of the Mountains are quite distinct from those whose habitat is on the eastern side thereof, no difficulty ever arose in consequence of the different methods of dealing with the Indians on either side of the Mountains. But there can be no doubt that had the division line between the Indians been artificial instead of natural, such difference in treatment would have been fraught with grave danger and have been the fruitful source of much trouble to both the Dominion and the Provincial Governments.[18]

Indigenous peoples living on either side of the mountains were indeed quite distinct but what was left unclear were the specific cultural indigenous groups to which the commission was referring to and more specifically the territories in which they were presumed to reside. Did the commission cast its glance further west, towards indigenous peoples living on the Coast or was the Order in Council guided by the notion that the height of land pre-empted any regular crossing? Even more problematic, however, was the predisposition to establish a binary

[18] Letter from Department of Indian Affairs Superintendent Clifford Sifton to Governor General in Council Lord Minto November 30, 1898. LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, file no. 75,236-1.

landscape of east/west, natural/artificial defined by what was assumed to be a natural boundary line—The Rocky Mountain height of land commonly known at the time as "The Great Divide."

In order to gain some understanding of the Treaty Eight (1899) boundary controversy, it is necessary to place the conceptual "central range of the Rocky Mountains" term in the wider context of the preceding Treaty Seven (1877). The western boundaries of Treaty Eight are defined as:

> Commencing at the source of the main branch of the Red Deer River in Alberta, thence due west to the central range of the Rocky Mountains, thence northwesterly along the said range to the point where it interests the 60th parallel of north latitude…[19]

The western boundary of Treaty Seven was also defined as the "central range of the Rocky Mountains, or to the boundary of the province of British Columbia."[20] Two issues arise from the use of this term in two separate treaties: First, that part of the height of land contiguous with Treaties Seven and Eight was interchangeable with its popularized name, "The Great Divide," when Treaty Eight was established in 1899. Notwithstanding its status as a territorial/provincial boundary, replacing the "Great Divide" with "the central range" to describe the *entire* western boundary to the 60th parallel revealed either a sleight of hand or willful blindness as to the ways in which the geological (and social) height of land that defined the interprovincial border was significantly different in northwestern British Columbia. Previous correspondence over the western boundary of the Fertile Belt illustrated how the supposed consensus of the watershed line as the arbiter of boundaries was the exception that proved the rule: Most modern abstracted landscapes were shaped by processes subject to political and financial expediency. The height of

[19] Text of Treaty Eight <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/hts/tgu/pubs/t8/tre8-eng.asp (accessed January 22, 2010)
[20] Text of Treaty Seven <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/hts/tgu/pubs/t7/trty7-eng.asp> (accessed January 22, 2010)

land was an abstraction but most certainly not separate from the social and natural processes that shaped it.

The second consideration may be taken from the first: Was "the central range of the mountains," grounded in a specific cultural way of 'seeing' the land, similar to the "height of land?" The answer depended on perspective—and, of course, priorities. Several years after Treaty Eight came into existence, the Department of Indian Affairs weighed in on the height of land/central range question. In a December 1909 memorandum to the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Treaty Eight Commissioner J.A. Macrae noted that the text of the treaty did not coincide with the landscape indicated on the map that accompanied the treaty:

> the south western boundary of the territory intended to be indicated on that map…should not be so regarded because in laying down such western boundary a certain water-shed or height of land seems to have been followed which may not coincide with the descriptions of the words contained in the Treaty.[21]

The memo stated that there seemed to be a significant difference of opinion not only as to what constituted the "Central Range of the Rocky Mountains," but even as to what mountain range or ranges were to be included in the Treaty. If, as some held, the Rocky Mountains were all the mountains lying between the eastern mountain slope and the Pacific Ocean the "central range" lay far to the westward or southward of the treaty limit as delineated on the map. On the other hand, if the Rocky Mountains are only the easterly range which terminates on the north at the mouth of the McKenzie River the limit would probably lie further to the eastward or northward than delineated.

The memo's wording reflected a culture/nature discourse through the modernist language of what was real (i.e. practical) and what was something else:

[21] Letter from J.A. Macrae to Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, December 30, 1909. LAC, RG 10, Volume 8595, File 1/1-11-5-1.

> Although a height of land is a natural and convenient territorial definition such a definition *was not used* in the treaty and whether the particular height of land selected to be followed in delineating the southwestern boundary of Treaty No. 8 on the aforementioned map coincides truly or approximately with the "central range of the Rocky Mountains" or not appears to be very much open to question. [emphasis added].[22]

The letter left a door open to an alternative landscape perception. Macrae refused to express a definitive opinion on the matter but did find it prudent to point out that reaching a resolution was necessary in order to "govern any treaty made with Indians, principly [sic] in British Columbia."[23] Not open to question, however, was who held the upper hand in the decision making process—and where these directives originated from.

In January 1910 Indian Commissioner David Laird brushed aside the memorandum's concerns, arguing that the points raised in the letter did not present any great difficulty since "the printed map of the territory embraced in the Treaty, which accompanies the pamphlet report of the same, appears to me to be approximately correct."[24] Laird based his conclusions on two premises: First he continued the practice of subsuming the open interpretation of the "central range of the Rocky Mountains" idea—as it was worded in Treaty Seven—under the universal " height of land" conception, made all the more complete given the assumption that it was also the interprovincial boundary. There was, in fact, only one landscape, according to Liard, and it comprised an unbroken line northwesterly to the 60th parallel—"The Great Divide". Laird also played down the boundary question by raising what he saw as the more pressing concern—managing federal-provincial relations. Consequently, Laird deflected the primary issue from one of boundaries to that of implementing—or more precisely in this case, avoiding—one of the

[22]Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Letter from Indian Commissioner David Laird to Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, January 11, 1910. LAC, RG 15, D-II-I, volume 728, file 404185.

primary terms of the Treaty: Providing land in severalty to the extent of 160 acres to each Indian who desired it.[25]

There was little question that the drafters of the original document only had one "central range of the Rocky Mountains" in mind but did this conceptualized space necessarily imply that only one "height of land" existed—and was it located exclusively within the limits defined by the "central range?" Indeed, the same strength of the height of land idea could also prove to be its greatest weakness: more than one height of land could exist at the same time and even overlap in places. The "central range of the Rocky Mountains" and "height of land" were just two of several landscapes.[26]

Several historically-informed considerations lie at the heart of the ways in which the essentialism (and reduction) of the height of land idea enforced order in northeastern British Columbia. First, one must question the ways in which indigenous and Newcomer interpretations of landscape informed the decision making process with respect to the conceptualization of height of land boundaries at that time. Did particular indigenous bands view heights of land in the same ways that particular Euro-Canadian officials did at the time the treaties were drawn up?

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[25]Laird wrote, "The main difficulty in connection with Treaty No.8 respecting British Columbia is not its boundary in that Province, which is scarcely doubtful, but in regard to the provision in the Treaty which says: [']And her Majesty the Queen hereby agrees and undertakes to lay aside reserves…in severalty to the extent of 160 acres to each Indian…['] The last clause about land severalty is the greatest difficulty….If practicable, it would be advisable not to carry this clause out in British Columbia." Ibid.

[26] Hugh Brody has shown that despite the geographical limits to the west and south that the Rocky Mountains define, as well as the political limits to the north and east in the shape of provincial and territorial boundaries, the area known as northeastern British Columbia is complex and diverse—and constitutes something far more rich and strange than the word "region" can suggest. Indeed, three landscape fringes meet, overlap and moderate one another—*foothills* of The Rocky Mountains; *prairie* of the Great Plains; and *muskeg* of the sub-Arctic. This landscape diversity has created a convergence of habitat second to none in North America. Accessibility to such varied landscape endowed with a diversity of animals has been reflected in the similarly complex history of human occupation. Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre [1981], 1988), 16-21. For more on the complex human history of occupation see, Diamond Jeness, *The Sekani Indians of British Columbia* (Ottawa: Canada Department of Mines and Resources, 1937), 1-16.

What were the motives of indigenous bands in agreeing to a formalized and formulaic boundary? Was it possible to successfully transfer and extend the height of land boundary from one treaty on to another in spite of their different locations and landscapes? Resolving these questions definitively may be next to impossible but the Fertile Belt debate showed that one could extrapolate *from* the height of land idea the objects and systems that purportedly gave it shape and transpose them on to other landscapes to create an unbroken bounded space. The height of land idea proved remarkably agile as a portable landscape.

Comparative studies of historical texts, including indigenous land use maps, provincial & federal maps, and the litigation process itself are useful for making sense of places where a concurrence of boundary lines exist. Collectively, a common narrative arises through a century of western boundary making in Treaty Eight. Starting with the earliest references of the need for making Treaty in northern British Columbia through the the Order in Council establishing the scope of responsibility for the Treaty Eight Commission, and on to the first maps and the discussion of discrepancies in boundaries, a constant and continuous fluidity of landscape boundary interpretations was occurring. Overlapping spaces, contrary to the rigidly formulaic boundary making process used in all the Numbered Treaties, proved to be the rule rather than the exception.[27]

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[27] The treaty making process of Treaty 8, like those before and after, was primarily an attempt on the part of Canadian Treaty Commissioners at constructing an ordered landscape through the *metes and bounds* system of describing land. 'Metes' referred to measurement and 'bounds' to boundary. This system used physical features of the local geography, along with directions and distances, to define and describe the boundaries of a parcel of land—a *framing* of landscape not unlike any colonial map. The boundaries were described in a moving prose style, working around the space in sequence, from a point of beginning, and returning back to the same point. The metes and bounds system ultimately produced a geometrically ordered space—one that dovetailed nicely with "The Great Divide" landscape. The *metes and bounds* methodology may have been an effective and time-saving tool of measurement but was nonetheless grounded in a specific way of understanding the land at a given moment. The various landmarks and landscapes that gave shape to the *metes and bounds* system were understood as impermeable to ecological change when abstracted out of the land and put into text. Further, the ways in which people perceived

To begin, the Treaty maps, like all maps, are texts—cultural constructions to one extent or other. Consequently, the authoritative 'voice' that they express must be considered in the wider context of maps that describe similar spaces (and boundaries) but in different ways. Not only the boundaries but the ways (i.e. shapes) that these places are described can be considerably different from the culturally-inflected words of the Treaty text alone. The use of the "height of land" descriptor overlain on the western boundary for both the provincial and federal maps illustrates the common currency that this landscape vision conveyed. The motives and means by which Treaty 8 came into being help shed light on how the height of land abstraction affected the process.

The hegemonic "Great Divide" height of land significantly influenced the treaty making process even before the treaty was signed. In 1891, a Privy Council Report raised the need to make treaty with local indigenous communities in the Mackenzie River country and the District of Athabasca, including the Peace River district and the area encompassed by the southern limits of Athabasca County and north and west of the Treaty 6 limits.[28] The narrative scope of the area under consideration was determined by the Department of Indian Affairs as "commencing at the Eastern boundary of Alberta east of the 112 meridian where the northern boundary line of Treaty Six intersects with the height of land."[29] First running in a north easterly direction to the 58

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these border landscapes were shaped by the assumption that they would be impervious to any future transformations in social relations arising out of the wake of ecological change (and vice versa). An excellent discussion of the history and methodology of the metes and bounds system can be found in Walter Robillard, Donald Wilson and Curtis Brown, *Brown's Boundary Control and Legal Principles* (New York, J. Wiley, 1995). For more on the metes and bounds system in colonial Latin America, see Santiago Munoz Arbelaez, "'Medir y Amojonar:' La cartografia y la produccion del espacio Coloniale en la Provincia de Santa Marta, siglo XVIII ['By Metes and Bounds:' Cartography and the Production of Colonial Space in the Province of Santa Marta (18th century)]," *Historia Critica*, Vol. 34 (July-December 2007), 208-231.

[28] Privy Council Report, January 26, 1891. LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, file no. 75,236-1.

[29] Ibid.

parallel, then easterly to the 105$^{th}$ meridian, the narrative turned north to the 63th parallel, eventually reaching:

> a summit of the northern spur of the Rocky Mountains which divides the waters of the MacKenzie River from those of the Yukon River, hence southerly following the summit of said spur of the mountains to the 60$^{th}$ parallel of the northern boundary of British Columbia.[30]

These boundaries, though apparently natural, were nonetheless constructed as part of the *metes and bounds* system. The letter requested that should the government choose to make treaty, the Minister wished to be alerted as to "which point or points would be the location for the projected meetings."[31]

The Order in Council establishing the Commission for Treaty Eight (P.C. 1703) on June 27, 1898 acknowledged, through the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, that the Department of Indian Affairs:

> possesses so limited a knowledge of the condition of the country and of the nature and extent of the aims likely to be put forward by its Indian inhabitants, that he, the Minister, considers that the Commissioners should be given discretionary powers both as to the annuities to be paid and the reservations of land to be set apart for the Indians.[32]

As for the territory to be ceded, The Commissioners were given discretionary powers since the extent of land to be ceded would be determined by the condition they found it in as a "consequence of the inroads of white population."[33] How the height of land would later become a contested boundary must be understood in this context.

The Commission may have had discretionary power but the mountain and water landscape abstractions they were most familiar with would shape who was included within

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Order in Council #1703, June 28, 1898. LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, file no. 75,236-1.
[33] Ibid.

treaty. Commission understandings of Indigenous cultural landscapes were incomplete but that did not stop it from assuming that only the interprovincial and height of land boundaries were the framing references for determining how local indigenous would distinguish the 'natural' from the 'artificial:'

> The Minister submits that it will neither be politic nor practicable to exclude from the treaty Indians whose habitat is in the territory lying between the height of land and the eastern boundary of British Columbia, as they know nothing of the artificial boundary, and, being allied to the Indians of Athabasca, will look for the same treatment as is given to the Indians whose habitat is in that district.[34]

Notwithstanding the cultural construction that grounded both boundaries, The Order in Council was prepared to recognize the permeability of the provincial border but unwilling, at the risk of contradicting its abstract universal qualities, to extend that idea to the height of land. To do so would undercut the justification for the primacy of the height of land idea in the first place. Distinguishing between 'artificial' and 'natural' boundaries, therefore, required the establishment of similarly easy ways to identify borders whose (assumed) process of bifurcated division of waters was instantly suitable for the sake of geopolitical expediency. By 1912, the western boundary had been conferred this legitimacy by The Geographic Board of Canada.[35]

The Commission did have a rudimentary understanding, however, of how the area adjacent to the western boundary was significantly different with respect to land use patterns. In April 1899, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Cliford Sifton pointed out that when the

[34] Ibid.
[35] See the accompanying map, "Indian Treaties: 1850-1912," in The Geographic Board of Canada, *Handbook of Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: King's Printers, 1913).

Government negotiated for surrender to the Indian title of land in the organized territories it had to deal with Indian nations with distinct tribal organizations: "The communal idea was strong and made necessary the setting apart of reserves for the continuance of the common life until the Indians could be gradually weaned from it."[36] From information that has come to hand, however, in the new lands considered for treaty, "it would appear that Indians whom we are to meet fear that the making of a treaty will lead to them being grouped on a reserve:

> From what I have been able to learn of the north country, it would appear that the Indians there act rather as individuals than as a nation, and any tribal organization which may exist is very slight. They live by hunting and by individual effort….They are averse to living on reserves and as that country is not one that will ever be settled extensively for agricultural purposes it is questionable whether it would be good policy to even suggest grouping them in the future. The reserve idea is inconsistent with the life of a hunter.[37]

Minister Sifton's observations suggested a considerably different pattern of land use than those areas under other numbered treaties. Given these comments, it is hard to see how "The Great Divide" height of land could have been a universally understood land use boundary. To simply expect the local inhabitants to make changes on such a structural level was next to impossible when the people had been accustomed to a way of life that implied the periodic transcending of any fixed height of land. These land use patterns had been entrenched over time and would continue to do so into the future—even in the face of changing landscapes brought about by the intensification of resource commoditization.

Local indigenous understanding of heights of land in northeastern British Columbia continued to develop in ways that reflected both an intrinsic understanding of this particular landscape as well as other important geophysical places other than the transcontinental height of

[36] Memorandum written by Clifford Sifton (n.d) LAC, RG 10, Volume 3848, file no. 75,236-1.
[37] Ibid.

land. *The British Columbia Public Hearings Section of the Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline Commission* published its findings in 1979. With some exceptions, the height of land idea did not carry a privileged hierarchy of place for local First Nations people but was nonetheless part of the seasonal hunting life.[38] "The Great Divide" height of land *did* matter more, however, in places where it had become a built landscape—the Alaska Highway. Here, anthropological interpretations have been beneficial in some respects and inconsistent in others. At the December 1979 hearings, anthropologist Marty Weinstein discussed the pattern of land use at the level of Band-by-Band hunting territories:

> The interesting thing about the pattern in terms of the land is that it tends to conform to watershed boundaries. Looking at the map superficially, at first it seems startling that the Halfway people were one side of the Alaska Highway and used that land and the Blueberry and Doig people used the land on the other side of the Alaska Highway.[39]

Weinstein pointed out that land use tended to conform to height of land watershed boundaries but only insofar as the map depicted an incomplete description of the region's cultural landscape (Weinstein's reference to superficial map reading seems to suggest this practice was an exception to the rule). One could surmise that the highway had obstructed indigenous land use boundaries but Weinstein discounts this conclusion, arguing instead that the highway may have been imposed onto the height of land but remained faithful to indigenous watershed boundaries:

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[38] First Nations perspectives of the landscape of the height of land can be abstracted to some extent using the land use maps prepared by Hugh Brody and Marty Weinstein. These documents were included in their testimonies and reports to the British Columbia Public Hearings Section of the Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline Commission. See *Northern Pipeline Agency: Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline—British Columbia Public Hearings, Volume 16*. (Fort St. John, B.C.), December 13th, 1979, 1725-1729; *Maps and Dreams*, 150-173.

[39] The Alaska Highway was constructed along portions of the Rocky Mountain height of land during the Second World War. See *Northern Pipeline Agency: Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline—British Columbia Public Hearings, Volume 16*, p. 1733. For more on the Alaska Highway see, Kenneth Coates, *The Alaska Highway : papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1985); Kenneth Coates and W.R. Morrison, *The Alaska Highway in World War II : the U.S. Army of occupation in Canada's Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

> Forgetting about the actual limits of the highway, what you find instead is that the Alaska Highway itself reflects a watershed boundary or a height of land that for a significant portion of its course, until it hits the Sikanni Chief River, it was constructed, presumably to avoid major river crossings, up to the height of land that divides two watersheds. So we can forget about the Alaska Highway and concentrate instead on watersheds and what we find here is that internally, within Bands, people have a sense of their land, a sense of which hunting lands they hunt on, which lands they fish on.[40]

The culturally- associative qualities ascribed to the height of land idea are made apparent. The Alaska Highway had become, in some sections, another height of land. The route did indeed follow the transcontinental height of land for portions of its journey but even more compelling here is the assumption that the highway *itself* has become a height of land, at least in function if not in form. Making matters even more complex was that if local indigenous hunters used the highway to demark land use boundaries, one cannot assume that this was the case *before* the highway's construction in 1940. First Nation perceptions of land use were constantly changing so their construction of boundaries that conformed to a built material landscape was not out of the ordinary. Indeed, the establishment of boundaries on the limits of the highway may have been a response to animal migration changes due to the highway obstruction. Consequently, it was more than likely that indigenous bands traversed heights of land regularly, which throws the immutability of height of land boundaries, "The Great Divide" particularly, into a new light. Nonetheless, discourses of contestation change when questions of landscape boundaries are removed from their localized settings and debated far from the site of contestation and in a wholly different environment.

The height of land idea remains a contentious landscape, currently at the centre of a dispute that brings together provincial, federal and band perceptions of geological and

[40] *Northern Pipeline Agency: Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline—British Columbia Public Hearings, Volume 16*, 1733.

hydrological landforms. The medium for such an exchange is the British Columbia Supreme Court, and the past weighs heavily upon all involved parties. One may surmise that the contemporary legal and jurisdictional conflict over the western boundary of Treaty 8 is best understood as an example of the constitution of the present in the colonial past.[41] Further, relying upon the colonialist discourse of defending "traditional indigenous landscapes" such as the height of land in a contemporary Euro-Canadian medium of conflict resolution can be interpreted as the appropriation of indigenous voice. Nonetheless, litigating the height of land is also an instructive example of the constant negotiation necessary for the maintenance of indigenous identity.[42] First Nations groups are fully part of this process. First Nations bands are using the legal language of the Canadian state to further their own interests, in the process ensuring cultural survival in the short and long term. Indigenous peoples are also cognizant of the cultural capital inherent in the height of land idea but are also destabilizing "The Great Divide" as the *sole* medium for defining heights of land, to the extent that this particular landscape reading is no longer ascendant.[43]

If in the past First Nations communities in northeast British Columbia demonstrated no particular attachments to "The Great Divide" interpretation of the height of land, recent years have shown a reluctant acceptance of this space as a framework for boundary making. First Nations bands now use the Canadian court system to position themselves in relation to other

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[41] Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2004)

[42] Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indian: Episodes of Encounter from the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[43] The Kootenay-Shuswap/Stoney confrontation of the 1890s has resonance but is also different in specific yet fundamental ways. The height of land hegemony is consistent across the majority of indigenous cultures involved in the legal process: First Nations communities understand how this landscape is the framing language of debate as it concerns the treaty boundary. The question of concern for First Nations litigants, then, is not necessarily the privileging of one culturally constructed landscape over another; an associative landscape quality for indigenous and Euro-Canadian interests has now been ascribed to the height of land.

bands and claims – as well as the provincial and federal governments. Since 2006, several councils have joined their provincial and federal counterparts in filing litigation in British Columbia's Supreme Court. The unresolved nature of the conflict illustrates that the height of land remains a living landscape subject to social and ecological process.

First Nations communities are cognizant of how the Euro-Canadian court apparatus can be engaged with to maintain territorial and cultural viability. Court documents show that indigenous groups in northeast British Columbia continue to adapt to changing circumstances on the land and in evolving ideas of band membership/leadership in order to maintain their identity and way of life. Furthermore, band members are using their leverage as citizens of the Canadian state to position themselves as interested individuals and members of cultural collectives. These processes have left their mark on landscape perception in general and the height of land idea in particular.

Indigenous plaintiffs' actions are nonetheless not framed solely by the scope of the provincial-federal conflict. The first instance by which the height of land idea served as a marker for exchanges in landscape perception came at the interband level. In *Willson v. British Columbia* [2007] 1 C.N.L.R. 386, the chief of West Moberley First Nation, as well as his counterparts at Halfway River, Salteau, Prophet River, Doig River and Fort Nelson First Nation, took action against British Columbia, Attorney General of Canada and Kaska Dene Council (KDC). Complicating the apparent hegemony of the "Great Divide" interpretation is the subtext to the plaintiffs' action which suggests that some bands were—and remain—beyond the scope of the discussion by virtue of their location both *outside* and *inside* contested treaty boundaries, further complicating the *two* transcontinental height of land boundary perceptions already framing the Treaty Eight boundary question. In other words, the abstracted universal

transcontinental height of land that is either the Atlantic/Pacific "Great Divide" or Arctic/Pacific watershed is challenged as various parties construct identities through negotiation with other cultural groups and the fluidity of these landscapes attendant to these constructions. The wording of the BC Supreme Court action is spelled out in these terms:

> The plaintiffs' action seeks declarations establishing the western boundary of the part of Canada covered by Treaty 8. The plaintiffs are the Chiefs, or were at the time the action was commenced, of First Nations identified in the style of cause. Those First Nations are some, but not all, of the First Nations that signed Treaty 8, adhered to it, accepted treaty annuities under it, or were admitted into it. The plaintiffs say the western boundary of Treaty 8 is the Continental Divide to the west of which water flows to the Pacific Ocean and to the east of which water flows to the Arctic Ocean. [44]

The inclusion of 'The Continental Divide" into the legal language suggests a normalization of "The Great Divide" idea. The deposition pointed out that Canada agreed with the plaintiffs as to the location of the western boundary of Treaty 8. British Columbia, however, disagreed with the plaintiffs over the location of the western boundary of Treaty 8, arguing in return that that boundary is the height of land running along the spine of the Rocky Mountains to the west of which water flows to the west and to the east of which water flows to the east, but it is not the Continental Divide.[45] A superficial reading of this section, therefore, does not overtly suggest that any other height of land outside "The Great Divide" exists within the regimes of power. Neither does there seem to be any consideration of landscape boundaries within these regimes of power that contest the height of land idea. The subtext of the litigation, however, is more complicated.

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[44] For the entire text of *Willson v. British Columbia* [2007] 1 C.N.L.R. 386, see <http://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2007/2007bcsc1324/2007bcsc1324.html> (accessed January 22, 2010).
[45] Ibid.

This case may indeed have spelled out in clear terms the interpretive positions of plaintiff and defendant but these became more complicated with respect to the Kaska Dene Council. In 2005 the KDC applied to be added as a party to this action. The basis for their application was that the KDC had embarked on treaty negotiations with British Columbia *and* Canada, and that those negotiations concerned or related to, in large part, land *between* the two versions of the western boundary of Treaty 8. As a prerequisite to engaging in the British Columbia treaty process, the KDC was obliged to enter into an agreement, one of the terms of which was that it would resolve any overlap between claims advanced by the KDC and any competing claims of other First Nations, including any claims that might arise under Treaty 8 by or on behalf of signatories or adherents to Treaty 8. The application of the KDC to be joined as a party to this action was opposed by the plaintiffs and by Canada. That application was granted, but the terms on which the KDC were added to the action that formed part of the basis for this application were struck down. In effect, the BC Supreme Court respected the sovereignty of the KDC but was either unable or unwilling to look beyond the two height of landscape options.[46]

The KDC position was premised on a different 'reading' of the landscape, one not necessarily bounded by any particular height of land notion—but to no avail. Once again the height of land idea, in particular "The Great Divide," was the framing landscape by which fundamental questions of space and power were discussed. In the previous and subsequent application the plaintiffs maintained the position that their action called upon the court to interpret the provisions of Treaty 8 relating *only* to the location of its western boundary, and as such was a relatively straightforward issue. The plaintiffs argued that their action did not require the court to embark upon questions relating to Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title, treaty rights or

[46] Ibid.

the rights of the signatories and adherents to Treaty 8 in general. The plaintiffs argued that their action, as originally framed, raised no issues or questions beyond the location of the western boundary of Treaty 8 as described in the treaty itself.[47] In rejecting the wider contextual concerns of the KDC, the plaintiffs were also tacitly accepting the height of landscape hegemony irrespective of where the western boundary actually lay.

The KDC counterclaim should be seen in this light: An attempt to extend and transform the spatial question through the consideration of Aboriginal rights. Clearly there are limits to how far this challenge may go. The rejection of the counterclaim by the B.C. Supreme Court hinged on the interpretation of where aboriginal rights impeded upon the boundary dispute question, but in the process the height of land constitution was upheld. The height of land/central range of the mountains discourse, and the (divided) hydrological process that characterized both, transcended any other socio-ecological relationship. The Court's striking out portions of the KDC counterclaim attempted to establish the height of land idea—regardless of its ultimate location—as the sole arbiter of inter-band relationships. The counterclaimant position *between* both plaintiff and defendant suggests, however, that the height of land boundary interpretation, whether 'east' or 'west' remained porous—as both a socio-political boundary and a 'natural' landform. The interstices created by such a fixed landscape perception did not just create fissures between bands.

The height of land hegemony had a further effect on intra-band relations and the negotiation of individual identity within these regimes of power. It also fashioned new questions to ask about the past. In *West Moberley First Nations v. British Columbia* [2007] B.C.J. No. 1929, application was initiated by plaintiffs to amend the previous statement of claim which

[47] Ibid.

sought a declaration establishing the location of the western boundary of land encompassed by Treaty 8. The previous statement of claim named the plaintiffs as six individual chiefs of six of the B.C. First Nations signatory or adherent to Treaty 8, "on their own behalf and on behalf of all beneficiaries of Treaty 8."[48] The Plaintiffs sought to amend pleadings to delete the phrase "on their own behalf and on behalf of all beneficiaries of Treaty 8", and to add as plaintiffs the six First Nations of which individual plaintiffs were chiefs. This request was significant for two reasons. First, it brought to light an understanding of how the height of land idea was not universally shared. Second, it suggested that such an idea at the time of treaty may not have been universally shared either. The application was allowed.[49] The height of land idea was not only a source of friction between bands but also faced challenges from within as band members who may have read land patterns differently engaged with the powerful pull of this landscape abstraction.

The question of landscapes and boundaries once again had direct bearing on the future ways in which people could negotiate power. The court document noted that there were 39 Treaty 8 bands, with approximately 47,000 members. At issue was the effect such an amendment would have on substantially reducing the parties represented by plaintiffs, and whether First Nations were capable of suing or being sued in their own right. The judge determined that deleting the phrase "on their own behalf and on behalf of all beneficiaries of Treaty 8" would not result in limiting effect of any boundary determination only to parties to this action.[50] This

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[48] For the entire text of *West Moberley First Nations v. British Columbia* [2007] B.C.J. No. 1929, see <http://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2007/2007bcsc1324/2007bcsc1324.html> (accessed January 22, 2010)
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid. "Non-party signatories or adherents to Treaty 8 were still privy in interest to parties in this action;" thus they would be bound by result of this decision due to an issue already decided by the court (*res judicata).* Notice was to be given to those non-party signatories or adherents whose rights would be affected by any determinations made in this action. If non-party signatories or adherents were not given notice, the precedence established by a lower court

consideration made it all the more important, as a matter of fairness, that all whose interests would be affected be given an opportunity to be heard. Contesting the height of land, regardless of its ultimate location, not only represented a direct challenge to the predominance of this landscape but served as a facilitator for discussion centering around the politics of decision making on reserves. In challenging the height of land ascendancy, individuals were also questioning the power structures of the Band Council system.

The Court concluded that Indian bands had capacity to sue and be sued in British Columbia. Nevertheless, it was not necessary for all bands signatory or adherent to Treaty 8 to be added to action, provided they were given formal notice of action; nor was it necessary to provide notice to Treaty 11 signatories or adherents whose land commenced at the western boundary of Treaty 8 lands, because "those signatories and adherents were not privies in interest to plaintiffs in this litigation."[51] The western boundary of Treaty Eight has yet to be determined but the limits by which the individual or the band can take action against any future decision have already been firmly established. Landscapes are hardly apolitical notions, and neither, apparently, are the individuals that claim these spaces on behalf of the membership.

The history of the height of land debate in British Columbia has turned the "ca plus change" cliché on its head. The height of land remains a central icon in regional and national narratives but like any landscape, is continuously subject to the politics of culture and nature. The discussions framing each of the three height(s) of land cases are guided by the unconscious

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(*stare decisis)* would not prevent them from re-litigating interpretation of boundary, because this would be largely a finding of fact (i.e. "what"), and not a statement of law (i.e. "why or "how"). Further, the declaration sought in this action would result in a decision concerning proprietary title to property (*in rem)*, which would be good against all persons, whether or not they were parties to action.

[51]Ibid.

acceptance of fluid movements of peoples through complex landscapes that resisted simple categorizations and reduction. The consequences of this admission are twofold. First, the height of land ascendancy is challenged and, in the process, regimes of power were put to the test. Second, the textual discourse by which the height of land debate has travelled from its interpretation as an article of the HBC Deed of Surrender through its reading in the wording of Treaty 8 and the legal discourse of the Provincial Supreme Court, has constantly shifted in light of the ways in which communities see themselves as a part of changing political contexts. The ascendancy of any singular reading of the height of land (such as "The Great Divide") which prevailed in the second half of the 19th century is no longer applicable early in the 21st century.

The human proclivity to categorize, bound and reduce spaces is entrenched and yet still receptive to the open and ongoing process of negotiation with a myriad of agents—human and nonhuman—that give shape to these spaces. Heights of land are not, indeed do not, make for universal boundaries outside of their social and ecological contexts. The rise and fall of "The Great Divide" idea is a testament to this argument. Still, heights of land exert a powerful attraction on the human social imagination. The height of land idea that spawns the "central range of the Rocky Mountains" and "Water-Divide"/"Watershed Ridge" image is a powerful conception but cannot exist separately from the ecological and social processes that extend beyond the space to encompass contiguous areas.

In the first chapter of this thesis the height of land boundary concept in British Columbia was an important and legitimizing frame of reference—especially as it applied to Indigenous-Newcomer relations. The topics discussed in this chapter are similar to the height of land configuration (and contestation) in the East Kootenays but is also related to other chapters through the ways in which the fallacies of a singular *Nature* or *Culture* preclude any simple

separation of the former from the latter. Nowhere is this misleading notion more pronounced than in the ways in which various governmental agencies and, to a lesser extent, band councils have conceptualized the height of land as a natural boundary in mountainous regions since the late 19th century. The three cases examined here demonstrate the difficulties in establishing the universality of the height of landscape as a permanent boundary above and beyond its socio-ecological contexts. People, cultures and communities change as sure as the ecologies with which they are a part transform too. The plurality of voices throughout this chapter is matched by the de-centering of a singular landscape vision. Yet these places, as places of fluidity and flux, also transformed people. The geophysical and human elements that shaped the height of land were, in and of themselves, in a constant process of change and exchange.

# CONCLUSION

The height of land, Continental Divide and Great Divide ideas are taken for granted as geographical descriptions and figures of speech. One rarely considers these terms as anything other than neutral and universal. The notion of a singular unbroken linear "height" overlain on to the "land," has been normalized as a value-neutral system, a singular formulaic landscape. This conception becomes problematic, however, when it is studied over time and is attentive to using a different spatial scale. Height of land watersheds, irrespective of scale, are not only geographical objects but also landscapes—subject to contestation and change over time—multiple in location and in meaning. They can exist literally anywhere where water, rock and movement intersect yet some become privileged when used in the creation of modern nation state boundary making narratives. The height of land/Continental Divide/Great Divide ideas are more accurately the product of a cultural project of modernity, one which attempts to master nature in the name of the nation state and normalize human relations of inclusion and exclusion.

This thesis has attempted to argue that the Continental Divide, and the Rocky Mountain landscape commonly known as the "Great Divide," were historically specific terms contingent upon social, cultural, political and economic forces to effect meaning to different peoples at different stages of Canada's history between 1890 and 1980. In effect, this thesis studies how a particular landscape mediated on-going social and cultural relations in a specific region even as the meaning of that landscape changed over time. The ways in which these ideas have been molded to shape these ends is instructive. Both indigenous and Euro-Canadian cultures were (and remain) cognizant of these words as powerful shapers of landscapes and boundaries but where the former saw heights of land as one of several landscapes, all of which were subject to a

variety of circumstances and events that gave these places meaning, the latter were intractable in seeing the transcontinental height of land (in the singular) as *the* authoritative landscape.

It is within this contested colonial context that the three landscapes could be conflated into one in the name of knowledge and possession. Height of land watersheds were ascribed capital only insofar as they furthered the continental aims of both powers—proving durable as a way of framing North American political geography which placed the nation state as a *continental* body. The relatively recent establishment of environmental history, however, compels one to explore the cultural landscape of the height of land/Continental Divide from a different angle and scale. In this framework, individuals situated in specific locations produce different interpretations of a common area. Further, the physical world has greater agency in affecting these perceptions. Working from these connected paradigms, the accepted "heritage" of "natural" spaces such as the Canadian Rocky Mountain "Great Divide" is unravelled when brought under the rubric of colonialism and the intermingling of landscape with geography.

One of the first conflicts over spatial practice in post-Confederation Western Canada was not just fought over who controlled these spaces but how these spaces were to be conceptualized as boundaries. The hunting dispute in the East Kootenays in the 1890s pitted the Shuswap and Kootenay against the Stoney but when provincial and federal counterparts became involved, the control of these spaces linked up with how these spaces were to be defined. Both the British Columbian and territorial governments claimed to speak for “their Indians” but in the process revealed how both Euro-Canadian governments resembled each other despite their adversarial roles. Indeed, both the Stoney and Kootenay-Shuswap groups were reluctant to see the height of land separating the Atlantic and Pacific waters as the border—much less a fixed boundary—because their ways of ‘seeing’ the land had been a product of a longer period of time

and reflective of a fluid process grounded in reciprocity—a practice hitherto unknown to the provincial and territorial counterparts. Consequently, the first compromise, a verbal agreement between parties delineating hunting territories, was promptly nullified when Stoney hunters continued to cross the height of land, travelling as far west as the Elk River Valley. The subsequent compromise, shaped as a written document, re-established the Columbia River Valley and first range of the Rockies as the western and eastern hunting ranges for the Stoney and Kootenay respectively, a far cry—both in a geographical and landscape sense—from the height of land boundary previously agreed to by all parties. The height of land became, in essence, a contested idea—one seemingly resolved in favour (for a time) of an indigenous interpretation of landscape.

Such resolutions proved the exception to the rule in the 20$^{th}$ century. The establishment of the province of Alberta in 1905, and differing perceptions of the land as settlement frontiers, resources, and recreation sites, compelled Alberta, British Columbia and the federal government to establish a fixed, permanent boundary that would link up with the previously established Dominion Boundary Survey and harmonize National Parks boundaries. The height of land defining the numerous watersheds of both East and West was a ready-made landscape for such a process. The Alberta-British Columbia Interprovincial Boundary Commission (1913-1924) extended the singular, unified and universal height of land idea, applying it towards creating a border that would eventually extend almost 1000 kilometres from the U.S. border to where the 120$^{th}$ latitude intersected with the height of land. Through the scientific methodologies attached to surveying and cartography, the consolidation of the height of land into "The Great Divide" ushered in a new era where the nuanced (and localized) height of land that characterized the former was subsumed under the expressive (and nationalized) latter depiction, and any local or

regional idiosyncrasies were obscured by a national narrative whose reach was all-encompassing. "The Great Divide" became an icon of national unity and symbol of the harnessing of nature.

A considerable amount of time and planning was put into normalizing the landscape during the four decades that the height of land became, in essence, "The Great Divide." The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) held "Great Divide Summer Camps" along the height of land in the Rockies. These gatherings proved useful in the dissemination of the ACC as the premier mountaineering leisure club. Further, these camps also allowed for the Interprovincial Boundary Commission to find a forum for describing its field work in the yearly ACC Journal. A.O. Wheeler and others also found "The Great Divide" landscape as fruitful ground for promoting the National Park ideal—still in its infancy in the years before the automobile and increased access to the mountains. "The Great Divide Summer Camps" also became useful staging grounds for the importation (and re-inscription) of urban lifestyles defined by gender, class and racial prescriptions and proscriptions. Camp participants came to feel right at home at the same time they expressed a feeling of being in a wilderness place bearing a measure of national continental meaning.

"The Great Divide" also proved fruitful as a source of imaginative artistic expression—all the while reinforcing a particular 'separate-but-unified' essentialist narrative that such landscapes seemed ready made to provide. The height of land had already been used as a convenient trope for the separation of civilization and wilderness, indigenous and newcomer, but "The Great Divide" greatly magnified such methods of inclusion and exclusion. An intensive process of writing into the land marked this period of landscape depiction. Intertwined with these narratives were popular stories of how Man (and it was always male) conquered Nature when a crossing of "The Divide" was made. These sexualized crossing allusions came in many

different ways—government literature promoting the railway and auto routes carried numerous references to 'cleaving' the mountains or 'penetrating' the ranges—but at the heart of these narratives was the suggestion that the final height of land frontier—"The Great Divide"—had been breached and the nation's identity forged in the process. The most effective way of conveying these images came through verse. Such compositions could be simultaneously evocative in imagery and authoritative in voice.

"The Great Divide" was also easily adapted into visual imagery. The train and car became useful medium in shaping the experience of crossing the height of land. In most instances, the traveler had already been conditioned towards a process of anticipation and impression through a range of promotional literature offered by a host of private and public agencies. Further, the establishment of "Great Divide" monuments—the archetypical 'photo-op' moment—at both Kicking Horse and Vermillion Pass, in conjunction with the knowledge of passing through two National Parks straddling that line, could combine to create a feeling in the traveler that she was passing through a landscape laden with national importance. The ubiquitous (and formulaic) "Great Divide" postcard was widely circulated. Indeed, one could even acquire a "Top of the World: Great Divide" stamp.

These recurring narratives proved durable over several decades, but by the middle decades of the twentieth century were increasingly challenged through the written word and the image that detailed alternative visions of "The Great Divide." In some cases, allusions to the fallacy of "The Great Divide" narrative as national icon were made directly through the name itself but in many cases, writers pushed back against these images using indirect references and localized story settings. Howard O'Hagan and Sid Marty drew upon prose and poetry to provide alternative readings of the height of land, framed by different temporal-spatial

configurations. O'Hagan and Marty worked from the belief that humanity was not separate from nature and that the social worlds of man did have bearing on the natural world just as the workings of the natural world could have unforeseen affects on the individual and collective lives of men and women. Further, O'Hagan and Marty were sensitive to the ways in which their work could affect the identities of *local* readers—people with whom the novelist and the poet identified most closely.

One could argue that this countermovement against "The Great Divide" height of land hegemony was largely relegated to the margins, either an intellectual ivory-tower discussion or high culture debate. Assigning a hierarchy of place to certain landscapes was an important consideration, however, in any public relations battle—even more acutely when the issue concerned the consumption of these landscapes in an increasingly environmentally sensitive age. These kinds of concerns most often started at the local or grass-roots level. The Great Divide Trail and Howse Pass Highway proposals of the 1970-1980s and 1980s-1990s respectively were both conceived in enthusiasm out of what were perceived as economic and recreational necessities. The Great Divide Trail was meant as a long distance hiking route and the Howse Pass Highway was envisioned as a high-speed auto route. The differences between the two with respect to the intended audience are apparent but here is where the dissimilarities end. Negotiating the height of land was manifest in both schemes. Not only did both projects fail as initially conceived but were continuously recast, with periods of inaction, only to be met with frustration again. Most significantly, however, is the centrality of the height of land to both projects. In both name and location, the height of land figured prominently. Project supporters used the height of land because of its universal currency, yet unlike the railway and auto routes of a previous era that also drew heavily on the same iconography, the Howse Pass Highway

never got off the ground and The Great Divide Trail continues to struggle three decades later. The transcontinental height of land idea in general, and "The Great Divide" in particular, seemed to have lost their hierarchies of place early in the 21st century.

It is more accurate to say that *multiple* heights of land remain but the idea of any singular hegemonic height of land (as represented by "The Great Divide") is now in decline. The current litigation in British Columbia Supreme Court contesting the western boundary of Treaty 8 is an instructive case in point. The singular transcontinental height of land ascendancy took shape in the years immediately following the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Canadian state, to the point where there was little room for alternative interpretations of what comprised the western boundary of the treaty. Defining the height of land as the primary western boundary was accomplished through the essentialism inherent in distinguishing between natural and artificial boundaries vis-à-vis indigenous-newcomer relations, yet this discussion was carried out largely without indigenous involvement. Consequently, local indigenous groups continued to engage in land use patterns largely outside (and across) the scope of how provincial and federal officials perceived the western boundary—not entirely new given the East Kootenay hunting dispute of the 1890s. Currently, two transcontinental heights of land are being contested and while it would not be untrue to see both as "Great Divides" it is more accurate to conclude that there is no longer a single or dominant height of land. Indeed, given the uncertainties that Indian Affairs Officials expressed in 1898-99 and continuous indigenous land use since, there has never really been only one transcontinental height of land—much less one that can be reduced down to a single straight line that begins in one place and concludes several hundred kilometers away in another place.

The height of land idea, and its related continental-scale descriptors, remains a testament to both the ways in which the living world maintains a hold on the human imagination, and the complex, and at times provocative, ways in which that creative process is expressed and given meaning through human interaction. Along the height of land, however, the story remains one of negotiating our culturally-conditioned geographical understanding with the embodied experience that shapes the way we sense landscape.

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