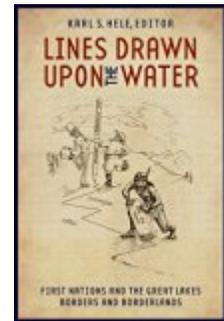


Karl S. Hele, ed. *Lines Drawn upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008. \$85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-55458-004-0.

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Contested Zones: The Imposition of Borders and Borderlands and the Voices Within

Stemming from a February 2005 workshop, *Lines Drawn upon the Water* (2008) is a series of twelve essays edited by Karl S. Hele examining the relationship between colonial and national boundaries and First Nations within the borders and borderlands of the Great Lakes region. Identifying the Great Lakes region as an area of lived experiences and “a contested zone of interaction between Native residents, non-Native authorities, and national interests” (p. xv), the collection demonstrates the multiple ways of understanding what the border meant in the daily lives of First Nations peoples. In doing so, the work calls for a new approach toward native history concerning the Great Lakes borderlands, one in which transcends the limitations of national frameworks and the artificial “lines drawn upon the water.” As Hele makes clear in his introduction, the importance of such an approach is vital because “one cannot truly speak of, for instance, Iroquois or Ojibwa pasts, presents, and futures without exploring the nature of their relationship to the international border and those relationships that transcend it” (p. xix).

Taken as a whole, the essays successfully fulfill the objective set out in the introduction, which was to deconstruct the perception of the Great Lakes borderland as a clear-cut international division. Considering the collection’s multidisciplinary focus, each author’s historical interpretation is woven into their specialized area, effectively making for a thought-provoking read. For example, Ute Lischke’s combination of historical analysis and

literary studies brings an attention-grabbing perspective to the collection by examining the work of the acclaimed Anishnabeg novelist and poet Louise Erdrich and how it reflects the uneasy relationship between the border and First Nations peoples. Offering a variety of topics, time frames, and aboriginal groups under consideration (such as the Haudenasaunee, Anishnabeg, and Métis), each essay demonstrates the variety of borderlands and the lived experiences within them. More often than not, First Nations have transcended the imposed borders in order to maintain group and family kinship ties as well as their economic and political sovereignty despite opposition from the British, Canadian, and American governments. Moreover, the assortment also reveals, mainly within the last four chapters, the metaphysical boundaries that framed the Great Lakes borderlands, making them more than just a simple geographical space.

Together with Hele’s introduction, Edmund J. Danziger Jr.’s opening essay provides an excellent foundation for the collection by introducing the reader to the history of the Great Lakes borderlands and the First Nations within them. Danziger argues that despite the “winds of change” that battered native communities during the nineteenth century on both sides of the international border, “Native community leaders and individual families valiantly and creatively defended their cultural traditions, as well as their economic and political independence” (p. 3). Citing numerous examples of policies carried out by the British, Canadian, and American gov-

ernments, Danziger demonstrates how First Nations successfully responded to the challenges brought by outside forces. In one of the more compelling examples of the collection going against the grain of the historiography, he examines the development of native boarding schools on both sides of the border and argues that the positivism of the schools has been obscured by the scholarly focus on victimization. Furthermore, the author states, the acceptance of boarding schools by native communities in the nineteenth century constituted a realization of the importance of formal education. “Whether fathers and mothers supported or resisted the day or boarding schools, they exercised far more control over the influential educational process than heretofore given credit” (p. 12). Though they resisted the culturally transforming programs set out by Washington and Ottawa, Danziger describes how the First Nations supported the development of schools and encouraged activities that they believed would help their youth confront a challenging future.

Further focusing on the artificial division presented by the international border concerning First Nations peoples, Hele’s essay, “The Anishinabeg and Métis in the Sault Ste. Marie Borderlands,” demonstrates how the Anishinabeg and Métis subverted the international division to carry out their own interests before 1870. As Hele describes, “[t]he scale of the borderland itself and the Anishinabeg community’s place within it can best be appreciated by recognizing that borderlands are as much human context as they are geographical space—the borderlands’ true scale tracks the interests and imperatives of individuals and groups within the Native, Métis, and White, British North American, Canadian, and American communities” (p. 66). Identifying four transitions—the creation of the border, the development of governmental policies of area control, First Nations subversion, and the impact on the First Nations economy—Hele explores the historic difficulties in imposing and maintaining the border in the Sault Ste. Marie region and the impact it has had on both natives and non-natives in the area.

This collection is part of a growing trend of scholarship in native studies attempting to shed the national

blindness while successfully moving beyond a simple comparative approach. Aside from the significant impact the imposed borders had on First Nations communities, the collection also reveals the national metaphysical sectioning of Western scholarship. As Catherine Murton Stoehr explains, “[n]ot only did the lines that the Europeans drew upon the waters of the Great Lakes divide the once-united Anishinabeg into the categories of American and Canadian, and subjugate the divided peoples to the politics of different colonial powers, but the lines that separated the water of the Great Lakes also separated the stories retold in Western scholarship. As a result, the internal logic of First Nations responses to French, British, and American colonialism has been lost to non-Native scholars” (p. 179).

The collection, as identified in the introduction, is heavily focused on the Anishinabeg and could have served itself well to include a community-focused essay concerning the eastern Great Lakes Haudenosaunee and their experiences on the “frontline” of the border. Michelle A. Hamilton’s investigation of First Nations and anthropology demonstrates how the Haudenosaunee from the Grand River in Ontario, influenced by the cultural and social exchange within the borderland region, responded in a variety of ways to Victorian anthropological activity. In doing so, the essay extends the borderlands concept from a geographical place to an intellectual one and complements the metaphysical focus on the Anishinabeg. The same cannot be said about the geographical focus of the first eight chapters, however. There is a noticeable exclusion of a Haudenosaunee community analysis relating to the imposition of the border. Mark Meuwese’s essay introduces the reader to the experiences of the Haudenosaunee but is more narrowly focused on an individual, the Flemish Bastard, rather than a community. Despite its minor limitations, the collection is effective in what it sets out to do and will appeal to a wide range of academics and a general audience. Not only does it serve as an excellent collection of essays concerning the borderland experiences of the First Nations people in the Great Lakes region, its collective argument sets a standard for all future native borderland studies.

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