*The Handbook of Comparative North American
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***The Handbook of Comparative North American Literature*, Nischik REINGARD Ed., Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2014, 417 p.**

The Handbook of Comparative North American Literature was conceived and edited by scholar of Canadian Studies Reingard M. Nischik, and it includes contributions by European and North American scholars. The volume puts forward a new paradigm for dealing with American and Canadian — and to a certain extent Mexican — literatures and cultures, from a postcolonial, transnational and global perspective. The North American Comparative method completes other transnational approaches such as Hemispheric studies, which tends to either omit Canada or to consider this country as a smaller version of the US, and Border studies, which usually focuses on the US American/Mexican border.

By reaching beyond traditional political or imaginary frontiers, the North American Comparative approach —Nischik argues — decenters the view of each country without privileging one over the other. It thus breaks up the traditional view of national cultures in an increasingly interlinked world — a world in which transnational organizations, alliances and corporations tend to replace nation-states, and global challenges such as economic crises or terrorism necessitate transnational perspectives and solutions.

The volume uses the Comparative North American approach to explore transnational areas of studies which have had an impact on the literatures of both Canada and the USA. Such areas include multiculturalism, the way both nations deal with their colonial past, the violent displacement of Indigenous populations, and naturalization and citizenship. The *Handbook* also addresses national and transnational symbolic spaces such as the Idea of the North (in English Canadian and French Canadian Literatures) and the City, the major role it has played in US American literature, compared to the way the Canadian imagination until recently drew on the small town and rural spaces.

The comparative method does not discard a national approach but studies local specificities in a transnational and global context. It is based on Canada's experience with cultural diversity and the country's complex intra-national perspective — the fact that Canada had officially two European founding nations and is officially bilingual on the one hand, that it includes the province of Québec as “a nation within a united Canada” on the other. Canada thus provides both “a border-crossing” and “a border-constituting” model of analysis, a model which “oscillates between national and transnational views”. In this light the volume explores literatures of Borders — the US American-

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Mexican border and the US-Canadian border, which has come into focus since 9/11 — and borderland — the Francophone borderlands and the connections between Québécois and US American Literatures.

The last chapter focuses on the concept of deterritorialization, which in a global context has become a central issue. The chapter analyses the shift in interpretative focus the globalization of literature calls for: the question is no longer how literature works in relation to national cultures as much as how postcolonial literatures participate in the formation of deterritorialized contexts. The contributor to the volume argues convincingly that a transnational North American approach to literatures reaches beyond a binary approach — national/trans-or post national — and opens up a triangular mode of thinking — the global connections of both US American and Canadian literatures and in particular the way both literatures deal with wars they have become entangled with (Afghanistan for example). War as a transnational experience points to borders with nations other than the US America or Canada and a deterritorialized space which is also an imaginary and a literary or metaphoric space.

While the volume focuses on literature, the Comparative North American approach contextualizes the literary works under study: it thus reaches across disciplines as it investigates how the regional articulates the national to transnational towards global perspectives.

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