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DEMARCATED WEST

Representations of the Territorial Boundaries and
Orientation of Space of the American West in the
Western Novels of Larry McMurtry and Cormac
McCarthy

ABSTRACT

Juuso Kinnunen: Demarcated West - Representations of the Territorial Boundaries and Orientation of Space of the American West in the Western Novels of Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy
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The landscape of the American West has long been privileged and mystified in the national imagination of the USA. Above everything else, this seems to be predominantly the consequence of the overwhelming abundance of the various Western stories in North American fiction in the first half of the 20th century. In other words, the West produced in the Western stories seems to have functioned as a mythical space — a conceptual extension of localised values and beliefs — for the USA. Therefore, the turn within the genre during the latter half of the 20th century toward reevaluation and subversion of the traditional imagery presents an intriguing shift in the representation of the West. Incidentally, this turn also coincides with the increased academic interest in the borders and borderlands i.e., the emergence of the border studies in America, to which the south-western United States has been an important area of interest.

This thesis analyses the representation of the space in the American literary Westerns on the basis of texts from Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy. The material consists of three novels by Larry McMurtry called *Thalia Trilogy* and three novels by Cormac McCarthy called *Border Trilogy*. Concepts of social space from a French neo-Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre and *Thirdspace* from an American urban geographer and social theorist Edward W. Soja are applied in the analysis to examine representation the territorial boundaries and spatial orientation as well as the idea of the institutionalisation of regions from Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi. The assumption is that the pressure on the Western formula to change between the 1960's and the 1990's is reflected in the authors' methods of representing space in the novels and that this change is achieved through the means of othering the preceding models of representing space present in the Western formula.

The analysis is done by first identifying the representations of territorial boundaries and spatial orientation in the Western novels of Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy. Then the possible differences in the representation of the boundaries and spatial orientation between the novels are compared to each other and the preceding examples in the Western formula. Finally, an attempt is made to explain the changes in the Western formula and the potential causes for them.

There is an abundance of descriptions of social space in the novels and in particular the amount of the instances of lived space depicted stands out. Nonetheless, the authors seem to have their own methods of representing space that differ from each other and offer a tentative picture of the development of spatial representation of the West in the Western in the late 20th century.

Keywords: Social Space; Thirdspace; the West; the Western; Representation of Space.

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Juuso Kinnunen: Demarcated West - Representations of the Territorial Boundaries and Orientation of Space of the American West in the Western Novels of Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy

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Amerikan länsiosat ovat pitkään olleet Yhdysvaltojen kansallisen mielikuvituksen keskiössä. Ennen kaikkea tämä näyttää johtuvan erilaisten lännenkertomusten suuresta määrästä pohjoisamerikkalaisessa fiktiossa 1900-luvun alkupuolella. Toisin sanoen lännenkertomuksissa tuotettu kuva Yhdysvaltain länsiosista näyttää toimineen myyttisenä tilana eli paikallisten arvojen ja uskomusten konseptuaalisena näyttämönä Yhdysvalloille. Sen tähden lajityypin sisällä tapahtunut käänne kohti perinteisen kuvaston uudelleenarviointia ja uudistamista 1900-luvun lopulla on mielenkiintoinen murroskohta Yhdysvaltain länsiosien kuvauksessa. Mielenkiintoista on myös, että akateeminen kiinnostus rajoja ja rajaseutuja kohtaan heräsi samoihin aikoihin Yhdysvalloissa ja johti niin sanotun rajatutkimuksen syntyyn.

Tutkielma analysoi tilan kuvauksen muutosta yhdysvaltalaisessa lännenkirjallisuudessa Larry McMurtryn ja Cormac McCarthyn lännenromaanien pohjalta. Aineisto koostuu yhteensä kuudesta romaanista: McMurtryn *Thalia* –trilogiasta sekä McCarthyn *Raja* –trilogiasta. Ranskalaisen neo-marxilaisen filosofin ja sosiologin Henri Lefebvren kehittämää sosiaalisen tilan käsitettä sekä yhdysvaltalaisen maantieteilijän ja yhteiskuntateoreetikon Edward W. Sojan näkemystä kolmannen tilan käsitteestä sovelletaan tutkielmassa alueellisten rajojen sekä tilallisen orientaation kuvauksen analyysiin. Niin ikään suomalaisen maantieteilijän Anssi Paasin teoriaa alueiden institutionaalistumisesta sovelletaan analyysissä. Oletuksena on, että perinteisen lännenkertomuksen kaavaan 1900-luvun lopulla kohdistunut uudistus paine on vaikuttanut kirjailijoiden tilallisen kuvauksen tapoihin ja että tästä johtuva muutos on saavutettu vieraannuttamalla edeltävistä lännenkertomuksista tuttuja tilan kuvaamisen tapoja.

Analyysissä pyritään ensin tunnistamaan alueellisten rajojen ja tilallisen orientaation kuvauksia McMurtryn ja McCarthyn lännenromaneissa. Tämän jälkeen kuvausten eroja verrataan sekä toisiinsa että aiempiin kuvauksen tapoihin lännenkertomusten kaavoissa. Lopuksi tutkielma pyrkii selittämään tilan kuvauksen tapojen muutoksia romaanien välillä sekä tarjoamaan mahdollisia syitä muutoksille.

Romaaneista löytyy runsaasti tilan ja rajojen kuvauksia, mutta ennen kaikkea eletyn tilan ja subjektiivisen tilakokemuksen kuvausten suuri määrä on silmiinpistävä. Yhtymäkohdista huolimatta, kirjailijoilla vaikuttaa olevan omat tilallisen kuvauksen tapansa, jotka eroavat selvästi sekä toisistaan että edeltävistä malleista. Tutkielman tulokset tarjoavat alustavan kuvan Yhdysvaltain länsiosien tilallisen kuvauksen kehittämisestä lännenkertomuksissa 1900-luvun lopulla.

Avainsanat: Sosiaalinen tila; Kolmastila; Yhdysvallat; Lännenkertomukset; Tilan kuvaukset

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Table of Contents:

1. Introduction	1
2. Theories of Space, Borders, and the Definition of the Western	3
<i>2.1. Spatial Theories: Lefebvre's Social Space and Soja's Thirdspace</i>	4
<i>2.2. Border Theory: Of Boundaries and Territories</i>	13
<i>2.3. The Definition and Elements of the Western</i>	20
3. West, Bound: Analysis of Space and Mobility in American West	28
<i>3.1 Places of Abode: Inhabited Space</i>	29
<i>3.2 Accessible Space: Permitted Mobility</i>	38
<i>3.3 Boundaries and Forbidden Territories: Restriction of Mobility</i>	45
<i>3.4 Junction Points: Places of Encounter and Passage</i>	53
<i>3.5 Demystification of the West: Reflection on the Western Formula</i>	59
4. Conclusion	61
Works Cited	64

1. Introduction

The landscape of the American West has long been privileged and mystified in the national imagination of the USA. Above everything else, this seems to be predominantly the consequence of the overwhelming abundance of the various Western stories in North American fiction in the first half of the 20th century. In other words, the West produced in the Western stories seems to have functioned as a mythical space — which Tuan characterises as a conceptual extension of localised values and beliefs (85-7) — for the USA. Therefore, the turn within the genre during the latter half of the 20th century toward reevaluation and subversion of the traditional imagery during the latter half of the century presents an intriguing shift in the representation of the West. Incidentally, this turn also coincides with the increased academic interest in the borders and borderlands, or in other words, the emergence of the border studies in America, to which the south-western United States has been an important area of interest. Thus, this thesis analyses the spatial representation of the West in the Western. The primary material consists of three novels by Larry McMurtry called the Thalia Trilogy and three novels by Cormac McCarthy called the Border Trilogy. The novels have been chosen as they depict the American West and have been associated with the tradition of the literary Western (Vasser; Scarnhorst 1193). In addition, the novels chosen from McMurtry are situated at the beginning of the period of reevaluation and reimagining of the Western formula while McCarthy novels are situated at the end of the century several decades later.

As the focus is on the representation of space, the Western, and territorial boundaries and orientation, the theoretical apparatus used in this thesis is a synthesis of three different points of view. The spatial theory used in the paper is primarily a combination of two theorists. The first theorist is a French neo-Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre and the second is an American urban geographer and social theorist Edward W. Soja.

Lefebvre's theory of social space provides a solid foundation for the analysis of spatial representation but as it is fairly old it is supplemented with the more recent additions from Soja. As Soja was heavily influenced by Lefebvre's work (Latham), their ideas should combine without difficulty. As the frame of the spatial representation in the novels is presumed to come from the tradition of the Western, the elements and definitions of the story type are used as a frame of reference. There is ample information available about the American literary Western and the Western in general, its features, elements, and history. In particular, John G. Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance – Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (1976), Richard Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century* (1998), and Jane Tompkins' *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (1992) used here are good examples. Studies focusing specifically on the spatial representation on the level of the genre seem a somewhat scarce, however. The main focus appears to have been on the characters, themes, and narratives. Some examples of spatial approach can nonetheless be found. For example, Kevin S. Blake's "Zane Grey and Images of the American West" (1995), Cawelti's "Reregionalizing America: A New View of American Culture after World War II" (2002), or Steven Frye's "Naturalism and the Literature of the American West" (2020). As noted, the southwestern USA and the Mexican borderlands have been an area of interest in the border studies. However, the application of the ideas of the border theory to the Western seems to have been meagre, even though the genre often employs the geographical region in question as a setting. By comparison, there seems to have been some attention on specific writers and novels in the genre. For instance, Pauline Sarll's "Boundaries, Borders and Frontiers: A Revisionary Reading of Larry and McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By*" (1994). Same applies to the Western novels of McCarthy to which Adam Morton, for instance, has already applied the idea of the social space, although more from the point of view of the socio-economic production of space, in his articles "The

Warp of the World: Geographies of Space and Time in the Border Trilogy by Cormac McCarthy” (2015) and “A Geography of Blood Meridian: Primitive Accumulation on the Frontier of Space” (2021). Therefore, there is ample background information available on the topics but bringing all these different points of view together — the Western, spatial theory, and the ideas from border theory — to analyse the texts of these writers can potentially generate new insights to the subject matter.

The thesis will then analyse how the representation of the territorial boundaries and the spatial orientation of the American West has developed in the American literary Western in the late 20th century. This will be done by first identifying the representations of territorial boundaries and spatial orientation in the Western novels of Larry McMurry and Cormac McCarthy. Then the possible differences in the representation of the boundaries and spatial orientation between the novels are compared to each other and the Western formula. Finally, an attempt is made to explain the changes in the Western formula and the potential causes for them. The assumption held in this thesis is that the pressure on the Western formula to change between the 1960’s and the 1990’s is reflected in the authors' methods of representing space in the novels and that this change is achieved through the means of othering the preceding models of representing space present in the Western formula.

2. Theories of Space, Borders, and the Definition of the Western

The spatial theory used in this thesis is primarily a synthesis of the ideas of two theorists. The first theorist is a French neo-Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre whose theory of social space, based on the analysis of the differences of the urban and rural life, is presented in *The Production of Space* (1991) and provides a solid picture of the structures of human space. The second theorist is an American urban geographer and social theorist Edward W. Soja whose trialectical models of spatiality and being articulated in *Thirdspace:*

Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places (1996) provide a useful model of the individuals' role and agency in the production of space. Since the settings of the primary materials portray borders, borderlands, and boundaries in various ways and degrees of focus some ideas from border theory are used to supplement the spatial theory. Especially the excellent overview in the book *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness - The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border* (1996) by Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi is used to achieve this. Similarly, since the primary materials by the novelists Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy have been associated with the tradition of the American literary Western (Vasser; Scarnhorst 1193) the common spatial features of the Western stories are briefly examined with the help of various sources. These materials form the theoretical core of the thesis although it is supplemented with additional sources whenever appropriate or necessary. Additionally, the theoretical background is filtered through and presented with the terminology of the spatial theory in mind whenever possible in order to maintain cohesion and clarity.

2.1. Spatial Theories: Lefebvre's Social Space and Soja's Thirdspace

In *The Production of Space* (1991; the original French edition published in 1974) Henri Lefebvre posits that “(Social) space is a (social) product” (26) in opposition to the preceding geometrical and mathematical conceptions of space that he feels were too reductive (1-3). Instead Lefebvre thinks that the spatial reality is produced by complex dialectical relationships between physical, mental, and social elements of space (11-12, 31-33, 46). The elements are interconnected by the bodies of the subjects in space or in other words the spatial experience of the human actors (ibid. 40). In theory the subject could perhaps be any self-aware social creature but in practice Lefebvre is always referring to human actors and subjects. In turn, the embodied spatial actors, both as individuals and as collectives, reproduce and alter these

dimensions of space through their actions (ibid. 33-34). Thus, space is produced and reproduced in a continuous process by the subjective human experience and existence which welds the boundaries of the physical, mental, and social space together (ibid. 26-27, 33-34). Experience of space produces the conception of space, and since the former is fundamentally social it seems to entail that the latter is also social in nature. This is what leads Lefebvre to claim that all space is social space.

In opposition to social space produced by the human subjects that inhabit space, Lefebvre positions natural space (70-71). According to Lefebvre, natural space is physical space that has not been incorporated into the system of signs or modes of production that maintain social space of humans (70-71, 83). Or as Lefebvre puts it: “Nature's space is not staged” (70). The central difference seems to be the fact that natural space has no self-aware subjects that would deliberately create or organize it “by abstraction, by signs and images, by discourse, as also by labour and its products” (ibid. 71). Instead, natural space merely exists. By contrast, then, social space is characterized by varying degrees of artifice. Lefebvre notes that “[s]pace is conceived of as being transformed into 'lived experience' by social 'subject', and is governed by determinants which may be practical (work, play) or bio-social (young people, children, women, active people) in character” (190). Another important difference between the two categories is the potential multiplicity of the social space as “the places of social space are very different from those of natural space in that they are not simply juxtaposed: they may be intercalated, combined, superimposed — they may even sometimes collide” (ibid. 88). Technically there is, then, a distinction between local places and universal space but in practice Lefebvre prefers to speak of spaces, instances of interconnected social space on different levels of scale be it regional, national, or international (ibid.). Lefebvre illustrates this well with the following figure 1, where G denotes global or public places, P denotes private places, and M denotes the intermediary places between the two.

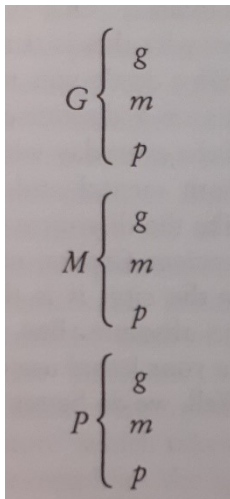


Figure 1. Overlap of Spaces from Lefebvre, Henri. *Production of Spaces*.

Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell Publishing, 1991, p.

155.

Partly due its complexity Lefebvre notes that “a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (83). The other reason is the fact that due the continuous reproduction of the social space, “it is also a means of production; networks of exchange

and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it” (85). Thus, social space where human subjects exist and act both individually and collectively is a product of their existence and actions that is approximately as stable as the sum of their existence and actions. Lefebvre refers to these abstract and concrete means of spatial reproduction as modes of production (31-33) and the systems of signs that govern the coding and decoding of space as spatial codes (16-17, 25-26, 46-48).

Edward W. Soja retains most of this theoretical foundation of the social space developed by Lefebvre. For example, he shares the ideas of the conceptual triads and the interconnectedness of social space (Soja 65-66). In addition, however, he also adds to the theory of the social space by taking influence by several other spatial theorists such as bell hooks, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Gloria Anzaldua, and Gillian Rose and thus develops the theoretical framework the theory in *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996) (Latham 384). The most visible additional elements seem to be the influences from Homi Bhabha and bell hooks.

The concept of Third Space originates from Bhabha who explains his concept as

The general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious” and stresses the importance of interpretation in ambivalent cultural situations. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation. [...]

The intervention of the Third Space enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. (53-4)

That is, the purpose of Bhabha's concept is to make visible the inherent ambivalence of cultural knowledge. By comparison, Soja's reinterpreted term Thirdspace is reserved relatively strictly to the spatial context, but does contain the element of subjective interpretation and reinterpretation in the idea of othering space (Soja 81-82). Similarly, spatial knowledge can certainly also be considered cultural knowledge. While Soja does not indicate direct link between the terminology he does admit influence of Homi Bhabha in general (ibid. 92). The influence of bell hooks shows especially in the subjectivity of Soja's interpretation of the concept of thirding-as-Othering which denotes the de- and reconstruction of the spatial knowledge through the subjective spatial experience (ibid.). As a result, Soja's interpretation of the theory focuses more on the individuals' role and agency in the production and reproduction of the social space and thus manages to better describe the process at individual level compared to Lefebvre's approach which focuses more on the structures of the production.

Lefebvre apprehends his triad of physical, mental, and social aspects with twofold terminology. The locus for the differentiation lies within what viewpoint is adopted in relation to the body of the human subject (ibid. 40). The terminological apparatus could then be presented simply as the following table 1:

Spatial point of view	Dimension of space	Psychological point of view
Spatial practice	Physical	Perceived space
Representations of space	Abstract/Mental	Conceived space
Representational spaces	Social	Lived space

Table 1

Lefebvre's terminological triad of social space.

Source: Lefèbvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell Publishing, 1991, pp. 33-9.

When the viewpoint is external to the body, or as Lefebvre writes spatial, the terminological triad consists of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces (38-40). When the viewpoint is internal to the body, or as Lefebvre writes psychological, the corresponding terms consists of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space (40). In the physical dimension, the terms of spatial practice and perceived space refer to the physical locations, objects, structures, and spatial actions that contribute to the social space (ibid. 33, 38). The mental or abstract aspects are referred to with the terms of representations of space and conceived space that denote the abstract conceptualization which represents knowledge about the spatial codes and the modes of production (ibid. 33, 38-39). The social dimension is covered by the terms of representational spaces and lived space which designate the spaces under the direct influence of the subjects in space and which are consequently overlaid with subjective abstractions (ibid. 33, 39). By contrast, Soja emphasizes the trialectical nature of the triad and articulates the terminology slightly differently. Soja splits the interconnected terms into two distinct models shown in figure 2 depicting the trialectic of being and figure 3 depicting the trialectics of spatiality:

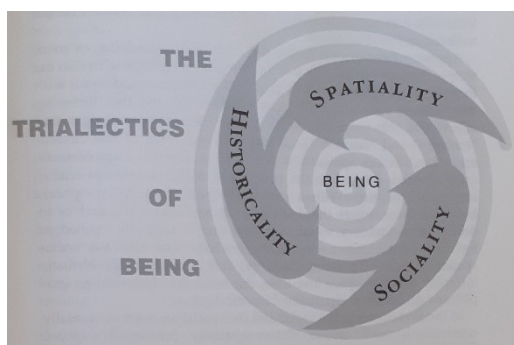


Figure 2. The trialectics of being from Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Blackwell, 1996, p. 70.

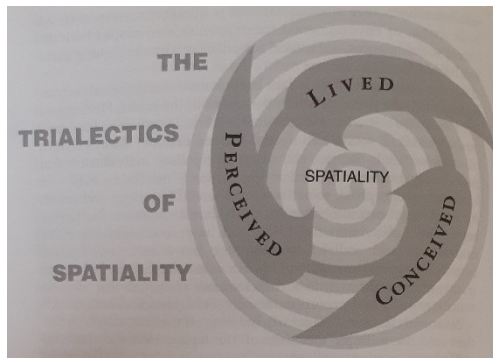


Figure 3. The trialectics of spatiality from Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Blackwell, 1996, p. 74.

The trialectics of being consist of the concepts of spatiality, historicity, and sociality which are, according to Soja, “summary terms for the social production of Space, Time, and Being-in-the-world“ (71). According to Soja, the model is an ontological assertion that illustrates that the being-in-the-world, is simultaneously historical, social, and spatial creature that participates in the production of our histories, geographies, and societies (71-73). Or in other words, that as the being-in-the-world exists simultaneously in all three dimensions, it is affected equally by the forces in all three of them. Thus, the trialectical model of the being illustrates the formation of the being-in-the-world, which again refers in practice to the human subjects and actors in space. The second model, trialectics of spatiality, is, according to Soja, an epistemological model that illustrates different methods of accumulating spatial knowledge (73-74). This triad consists of the concepts of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space that seem for the most part correspond to the similar concepts posited by Lefebvre (Soja 74). On the basis of the model Soja presents three categories of different epistemological methodologies that illustrate the ways beings-in-the-world, that is humans, comprehend spatial reality. Soja refers to the methods that privilege the visible physical material world denoted by perceived space as Firstspace epistemologies (74-78). Methods that privilege the imagined abstract representations denoted by conceived space Soja calls in

turn Secondspace epistemologies (78-80). Predictably, then, Thirdspace epistemologies refer to the methodologies of accumulation that focus on the various aspects of direct experience of social reality denoted by lived space (ibid. 74-82). Soja admits that the model is "deceptively simplified" (74) and that each of the accumulating models might be better described loosely as "mentalities" (ibid.). As the trialectical model of spatiality attempts to illustrate how human individuals comprehend space it can also be considered in combination with the trialectics of being a rudimentary model of how they in turn as subjects in space influence the space surrounding them.

According to Lefebvre, the triad should always be approached whole and applied holistically as it "loses all force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'. If it cannot grasp the concrete (as distinct from the 'immediate'), then its import is severely limited, amounting to no more than that of one ideological mediation among others" (40). Thus, the importance of the concrete physical dimension and elements therein gain somewhat special importance in Lefebvre's interpretation of social space. Still, every aspect contributes to the production of social space and as a consequence lack of one or more will eventually lead to the dissolution of a space as the space fails to be reproduced (ibid. 53, 83). Thus, physical space or spatial practice, depending on the viewpoint of the analysis, is merely the anchor or the lynchpin of the social space. By contrast, Soja considers focus on only one of the dimensions of social space severely limiting (74-83). Paradoxically he does, however, favour Thirdspace epistemologies which focus on the lived space of the trialectics of spatiality. In his own words:

No one of the three forms of spatial knowledge is given a priori or ontological privilege, but again there is a strategic privileging of the third term, in this case Thirdspace, as a means of combating the longstanding tendency to confine spatial knowledge to Firstspace and Secondspace epistemologies and their associated theorizations, empirical analyses, and social practices. (ibid. 74)

This is feasible, in his opinion, because the being-in-the-world or subject in space or simply human body is simultaneously connected to all three dimensions of the social space and is also the locus for the subjective socio-spatial experience which characterizes the lived space (ibid. 73-74). Thus, Soja's conceptualization of Thirdspace seems to be remarkably reminiscent of Lefebvre's concept of differential space.

Lefebvre presents a brief list of historical socio-spatial types or stages that illustrate the development of the modes of production (46-53). First Lefebvre mentions absolute space which the subjects in space appropriate from natural space (48). It is thus characterized by the predominance of the appropriated natural physical elements (ibid.). Second type is historical space which Lefebvre notes to resemble absolute space but where artificial physical elements have replaced natural physical elements as the primary means of signification (48-49). Third type is abstract space where abstract systems of signs associated with space form the dominant modes of signification (49-52). Lefebvre notes abstract spaces to be reductionistic and homogenizing, striving to limit the variety of social and spatial experience (51-52). Finally, Lefebvre posits the emergence of differential space in modernity, which originates from individual subjects taking advantage of the contradictions in social space to subvert the predominant abstractions of and in space:

[Lefebvre calls] that new space 'differential space', because, inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences. It will also restore unity to what abstract space breaks up — to the functions, elements and moments of social practice. It will put an end to those localizations which shatter the integrity of the individual body, the social body, the corpus of human needs, and the corpus of knowledge. (52)

When compared to Soja's description of Thirdspace, the resemblance is evident. However, the concepts differ in that by reconceptualizing the triad into trialectics of being and spatiality, Soja emphasizes the physical spatiality of the being-in-the-world or the human subject in space. Thus, in Soja's theory the subjective experience that forms in lived space

and enables the emergence of Thirdspace is distinctively spatial rather than abstract. Soja refers to this as *thirthing-as-Othering* and describes it as follows:

Thirthing introduces a critical 'other-than' choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. That is to say, it does not derive simply from an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering, deconstruction, and tentative reconstitution of their presumed totalization producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different. Thirthing recomposes the dialectic through an intrusive disruption that explicitly spatializes dialectical reasoning ... Stated differently, asserting the third-as-Other begins an expanding chain of heuristic disruptions, strengthening defences against totalizing closure and all 'permanent constructions. (61)

By permanent constructions Soja seems to refer to the supposed hegemony of First- and Secondspace epistemologies in the West in the preceding centuries (74-82). Still, he also warns against treating the concept of Thirdspace as an easy stable solution — the process is meant to “continuously expand the production of knowledge beyond what is presently known” (ibid. 61). In other words, the subjective spatial experience of the human subjects that emerges in lived space can cast doubt upon the spatial codes and the modes of production that govern space, potentially leading to the alteration of the perceived and conceived spaces.

Spatial theory employed in this paper is a combination of Soja's and Lefebvre's ideas. The conceptual triad as delineated by Lefebvre is adopted on the grounds that seems more flexible as it does not needlessly insist on the rule of three and allows objects and concepts to occasionally occur in pairs or oppositions. However, the theory formulated by Lefebvre is considerably old and there have been developments in spatial theory since its conception, as is noted by Rob Shields (283). In particular, the idea of dialectic “has been surpassed by theories of alterity as complexity rather than contradiction or negation” (ibid.). In addition, Lefebvre's theory has been noted to be somewhat patriarchal in approach, gender blind, and focused on heterosexuality (ibid.). Nonetheless Lefebvre's theory provides a useful theoretical foundation for the analysis. Similarly, Soja's theory Thirdspace has some problems when presented in isolation. In particular, Alan Latham notes that the concept of

Thirdspace has been criticized as ill-defined, too wide and loose as well as too privileged in Soja's thinking when compared to the other two methods of conceptualizing space (384). In addition, while accepting a variety of influences “Soja seems to completely de-anchor himself from any established intellectual tradition” (ibid.). That is to say, his views can apparently be rather idiosyncratic at times — such as his pronouncedly Marxist and spatial view of postmodernism (ibid. 382). As Soja seems to have worked on the foundation of Lefebvre's ideas (ibid. 381-5) applying some of Soja's concepts to Lefebvre's theory should not be too difficult as there should be sufficient theoretical overlap. Similarly, fusion with the rather detailed theory of Lefebvre should help with the ontological generality of the Soja's concepts. Thus, from Soja, the concept of Thirdspace as far as it is compatible with Lefebvre's theory of social space as well as the notion of thirding-as-Othering are adopted under the assumption that the concepts supplement Lefebvre's theory by articulating the functions of representational spaces and the role of the individuals' agency in the formation of the social space in greater detail.

2.2. *Border Theory: Of Boundaries and Territories*

Lefebvre discusses briefly the importance of boundaries. In particular he notes that “[vi]sible boundaries, such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity” (Lefebvre 87). Nonetheless, boundaries seem to be important to Lefebvre as indications or manifestations of the relationships within social space and between its places: “Every social space, then once duly demarcated and oriented, implies a superimposition of certain relations upon networks of named places, of *lieux-dits*” (ibid. 193). According to Lefebvre, this results in four types of space that orient and demarcate the social space (*italics added for emphasis*):

1 *Accessible space* for normal use, routes followed by riders or flocks, ways leading to fields, and so on. Such use is governed prescriptively — by established rules and practical procedures.

2 *Boundaries and forbidden territories* — spaces to which access is prohibited either relatively (neighbours and friends) or absolutely (neighbours and enemies).

3 *Places of abode*, whether permanent or temporary.

4 *Junction points*: these are often places of passage and encounter; often, too, access to them is forbidden except on certain occasions of ritual import — declarations of war or peace, for example. (ibid. 193)

As mentioned above, Lefebvre's discussion of boundaries specifically is brief. Nonetheless the typification is helpful when trying to approach boundaries in relation to social space.

Anssi Paasi describes the demarcation and orientation process in greater detail in *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness - The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border* (1996). According to Paasi, boundaries have been understood in political geography primarily as the geographical limits of the political processes of sovereign states (25). Similarly, he notes that traditionally in geographical thought boundary has been understood to represent “typically a line (or a vertical level) of physical contact between states” that manifests itself as “physical existence, which results from its demarcation and the construction of the buildings, defences and systems of communication” (Paasi 27). Thomas Hall notes that the concept of a boundary as a precise line originates from two sources: “First is the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which established the modern nation-state system under which a state had full sovereign control of the lands and peoples within its borders. The second source is the development of private property as a concept, in which one individual, or state, had exclusive rights to land or territory” (239). Interestingly, Lefebvre regards the treatment of space as commodity, its endowment with exchange value, and subsequent interchangeability, as a prime example of spatial abstraction (334-35). Additionally, boundaries can be understood, in Paasi's opinion, “from a broader, socio-culturally grounded perspective” that “stresses the production and reproduction of the idea of territories and boundaries and their symbolic meanings in various institutional practices” (27). In fact, the

existence of a territory seems to almost entail the existence of boundaries and vice versa as Paasi notes that “to establish and institute something, giving it a social definition or identity, means at the same time the establishment of boundaries” (ibid.) and that “[t]he construction of spatial boundaries is always a part of the construction of territorial units in space” (32). Essentially the definition of territories and boundaries seems to stem from various social processes in which the “power-holding actors, groups and classes within social systems define and symbolize the social and spatial limits of membership” (ibid. 27). According to Paasi, these processes are properly termed social construction of space and social spatialization:

The social construction of space and territorial representations typically exploits the basic idea of one of the 'social binary oppositions' [...] Thus the production and reproduction of boundaries and territoriality are two sides of the same coin, two parts of the process of social spatialization. In the control of territories the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' is typically transposed to the enveloping physical reality and devoted to constructing an antagonism to other groups. (28)

It should be noted that even though boundaries separate social groups they also function as points of contact between them (ibid.). Similarly, Hall notes that even “barriers that did constitute explicit boundaries, were primarily used to control movements of peoples and goods. They were seldom intended as absolute barriers” (240). This would in Lefebvre's terms turn boundaries potential points of junction that facilitate passage and encounter in controlled manner. In terms of social space, the processes in general would seem to correspond to the establishment or emergence of social practices and perceived space in the case of social construction as well as representations of space and conceived space in the case of territorial representations. It is crucial to note, however, that the purpose of the social spatialization process seems to be to create an appearance of separation in the abstract reality of conceived space in addition to physical realm of perceived space to further mask the

ambiguous continuity of space. This would then lead to afore mentioned apparent reality of multiple social spaces

Paasi refers to the more intricate process of territorial acquisition and construction as the institutionalization of regions (32). Specifically, the term denotes “the process during which specific territorial units — on various spatial scales — emerge and become established as parts of the regional system in question and the socio-spatial consciousness prevailing in the society” (ibid.). This happens through four significant and distinct but near simultaneous stages: “(1) the constitution of territorial shape, (2) symbolic shape and (3) institutions [institutional shape], and finally (4) the establishment of the territorial unit in the regional structure and social consciousness [established role]” (ibid. 33-34). Territorial shape is achieved through the localization of social practices by which the boundaries of the territorial unit are defined (ibid. 34). According to Paasi, the severity of the boundaries varies: “In case of nation-states they are commonly strictly defined, symbolized and sanctioned, but in the case of smaller localities they can be much more diffuse and less influential — hardly visible in everyday life” (34). Symbolic shape refers to the sets of specific symbols that are used to code and mark territory and membership in the related communities (ibid.). According to Paasi territorial symbols are

often abstract expressions of supposed group solidarity, embodying the actions of political, economic, administrative and cultural institutions in the continual reproduction and legitimation of the system of practices that constitute and demarcate the territorial unit concerned. [...] Symbols are 'keywords' in the dominating story of a territorially based community. (ibid.)

Paasi notes that names are a prime example of a territorial symbol (35). By institutional shape Paasi means the sets of institutions that socialize individuals and groups into the prevailing territorial memberships (ibid.). These memberships then “connect the inhabitants with the symbols of the region in various practices — and simultaneously demarcate the Other” (ibid.). Finally, the established role of a region refers to “any continuation of the

institutionalization process after the region has an established, but not necessarily administrative, status and a specific regional identity in the spatial structure and social consciousness” (ibid.). Or in the terms of social space, the space has been assimilated to the modes of production and spatial codes and contributes to the reproduction of the social space. Or perhaps rather the human inhabitants of the space do as “territory is not; it becomes, for territory itself is passive, and it is human beliefs and actions that give territory meaning” (Knight, D. qtd. in Paasi 32). All in all, a certain correspondence between Paasi's conceptual stages of the institutionalization of regions and Lefebvre's terminological triad of social space can be observed. Especially the symbolic shape seems to correspond to the concept of conceived space fairly well. Similarly, there are some similarities to found between the institutional shape and lived space and territorial shape and perceived space. This is perhaps not that surprising since Paasi discusses Lefebvre's ideas briefly while presenting the preceding developments concerning the theories of geography and space (Paasi 17-19). Thus, a theoretical link seems to exist and combining concepts from these sources should not be too difficult.

It is perhaps useful to briefly define the term sovereign state. According to Paasi, in rudimentary terms, state is a “set of institutions which aim at production and reproduction of the society at the level of the economy, administration, politics, culture etc.” (40) In a sense, then, sets of modes of production and spatial codes that mean to maintain the structure of the perceived and conceived space as well as the continuation of spatial practices and representations of space. To this end the political organization that maintains a specific territory employs surveillance capacity and monopoly over the means of violence within that territory (ibid. 41). This assemblage is called “the repressive sub-apparatus” (Dear, M. qtd. in Paasi 41). The sub-apparatus can be further differentiated into the mechanism of external enforcement of state power that control its international boundaries and the mechanism of

internal enforcement of state power that control the inhabitants (41). In other words, usually a form of armed forces for the former function and a form of a civilian police for the latter function (ibid.). According to Paasi, states employ these entities to maintain the basic functions of the state:

The first is to secure social consensus, whereby all the people in its territory accept specific rules for action in society, the second is to ensure adequate conditions for production, which points to the provision of an infrastructure within which production and exchange can take place, and the third is to guarantee social integration by ensuring the basic welfare of all citizens. (41)

Additionally, Paasi notes that the involvement of a nation or nations in the territorial frames of state structures is prominent enough in the modern world for the term nation-state to be near synonymous with the term sovereign state (39). A nation, according to Paasi, is a “community of people with common identity, which is typically based on shared cultural values and attachment to a particular territory” (ibid.). In the combined assemblage of a nation-state, the state attempts to associate the state and one or more nations together in order to justify and legitimize its existence to the state's inhabitants (ibid. 42-47). Still, there also exist so-called plural states, states made up of many nations, and conversely nations can also exist without association with a specific state (ibid. 39). This potentially complex reality is well accounted for in the multivalent nature of social space as a network of relations between entities and objects. In particular, Lefebvre claims that “every society — and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (i.e. all those societies which exemplify the general concept []) — produces a space, its own space” (31). Thus, it is not necessary to presuppose that social space is always subordinate to a state structure or an entity, but it is a useful concept to typify the modes of production. That is to say that stateless communities, nations, societies, are able to have their own independent modes of production and produce their own social space without any problems — perhaps even when submerged within another distinct a system of social space.

Finally, let us specify terminology concerning some of the exact types of boundaries. Hall defines boundary as “a demarcation indicating some division in spatial terms”, border as “an international boundary line”, and frontier as “a zone of contact with or without a specified boundary line” (239). According to Hall borderland is often used as a synonym for frontier or to refer to border as a zone (ibid.). However, he notes that in North American context the definition of frontier is different, as the term “typically but not exclusively, refers to a historical boundary between expanding European settlements and indigenous settlements” (ibid. 238). Similarly, Paasi defines frontier as “a zone between states” that is “generally considered to be a historical phenomenon” (26). Additionally, while Paasi does use the term boundary in a general sense, most of the time the context clearly refers to the international borders between states. Thus, in this paper, boundary is used as a general term for any spatial demarcation. Border is used to refer to boundaries between the social spaces subordinate to different state structures. Frontier refers to a zone where the influence of a state governed social space dissipates, either into natural space or into a social space of a non-state entity. Finally, borderland is employed to refer to a border as a space or a zone between states. Additionally, the concepts of state and nation as well as social spatialization and institutionalization of regions as delineated by Paasi are adopted in this thesis to better describe the socio-spatial practices and abstractions of space that may define boundaries beyond mere physical barriers.

2.3 The Definition and Elements of the Western

There seems to be some variance on what is meant by the Western. The definition provided in *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* under “Western” emphasises the spatio-temporal setting of the 19th century American frontier. Andrew P. Vassar offers a similar definition but notes also the use of clear, melodramatic and formulaic plots. In

addition, John G. Cawelti focuses on the importance of the symbolical use of geography and landscape in the Western stories (1976 192-4). Still, neither the novels of McCarthy's *Border Trilogy* or McMurtry's *Thalia Trilogy* are set in the appropriate era and yet both seem to be regarded as Westerns (Vasser; Scharnhorst 1193). Indeed, William Bloodworth concludes that a Western can denote either stories about the American West or a type of popular stories that employ conventional elements of the so-called Western formula (43-45). Furthermore, Richard Aquila notes that the American West can be difficult to describe and that it often transcends its geographical location in people's perception (1-3). That is to say, the representations of the American West do not necessarily correspond well to its contemporary or historical referents. Thus, it is perhaps useful to briefly examine the historical development of the Western.

Gary Scharnhorst notes that historically the Western or the Western stories have their roots in the frontier histories and romances of the early 19th century (1190). According to Vassar, the character prototype of the frontier hero, narrative elements of the duel and Indian villains, as well as the plots of chase, capture, escape, and rescue were introduced to the Western formula specifically in the *Leatherstocking Tales* of James Fenimore Cooper. The next stage in the development of the Western occurred in the middle of 19th century when writers with immediate experience of the western frontier began to employ its local colour in their stories, the leading examples being Mark Twain and Bret Harte (Scharnhorst 1190). According to Cawelti, the story type developed at this point a new more acute sense of setting and locale as well as a certain sense of humour (1976 216-9). In particular, the focus of the formula was not anymore on the depiction of the frontier wilderness but in the representation of the frontier society and its characters (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, Scharnhorst notes that the more authentic depictions of the West were eclipsed, at least in print, by the popularity of the sensational and simplified Western stories that appeared in the dime novels (1190-1).

According to Cawelti, these were usually “a form of adolescent escapism, complete with the simple moral conflicts and stereotyped characters and situations usually found in such literature. The western setting, instead of being the place where advanced civilization confronts the virgin wilderness, gradually developed a new set of connotations” (1976 211). Scharnhorst notes that especially the character archetype of the cowboy originates from the texts of this type as well as the oversimplified opposition between the heroic West and the civilized but corrupt East (1911). In contrast, Richard Slotkin argues that the Western stories in the dime novels represented the struggle between the labour and the capital by transposing stories about outlaws and detectives on the frontier setting (125-55). Even then, Slotkin does not refute the varying literary quality of the stories as “sensationalism was the key to their commercial success, [and] publishers of popular books also continued the tradition which saw popular literature as an occasional instrument of propaganda for moral and patriotic causes” (126-127). Still, Slotkin claims that the Western stories in the dime novels managed to develop a shared language that would function as the basis of the Western formula in the 20th century (154-155). Among these common features Slotkin mentions especially

an agreement that the American social struggle be seen not as a class war of proletarians and capitalist, but as a struggle between the 'free labour' values of the old agrarian/artisan/entrepreneurial order and the monopolistic tendencies of the corporation; an acceptance of the language of racial difference as the best way to interpret social and political difference; and an affirmation of the 'virile Anglo-Saxon' as hero of the American myth and exemplar of its primal values. (155)

Thus, it seems that what would become the Western developed in the USA during 19th century as a subtype of a frontier adventure story.

At the turn of the 20th century the American naturalism and realism emerged which, according to Slotkin, idealized virility as a virtue and disliked the preceding “sentimental and idealistic tradition that had dominated the market for 'serious' or 'genteel' popular fiction” (156) which they perceived as effete and emasculated (156-157). According to Slotkin “[t]he

virilist realism of the 'red-blooded' writers rejects both idealism and sentimentalism for a more 'tough-minded' view of the world. They espoused one or another of the varieties of Social Darwinism, which saw life as a struggle between differently 'gifted' individuals and groups for social mastery and (limited) control of the amoral force of natural law” (157). Among the writers of this style is Owen Wister whose novel *The Virginian* (1902) is considered to be the first proper Western novel that synthesised the elements of the preceding Western stories into a coherent formula (Scharnhorst 1191-2). Although, *The Virginian* has also been considered “a mere character sketch” due to the meandering extended plot and variety of narrative features that appear seldom in its imitators (Vassar). According to Slotkin, the novel also reorients the preceding elements of the escapist Western frontier stories to suit the ideas of Social-Darwinism and produces an anti-democratic interpretation of its source material (169-183). Slotkin also claims that “[t]he writers of 'red-blooded' fiction brought respectability to the materials and themes of the dime novel adventure story, and their achievement was exploited in its turn by the writers of 'pulp fiction'” (194). Or as Vassar puts it: “*The Virginian's* commercial success prompted a torrent of popular Western novels and pulp magazines in the early part of the 20th century”. At this point the American frontier adventure was also re-named as the Western to distinguish it from the other types of stories set in borderland settings (Slotkin 194). The most influential imitators and developers of Wister’s formula appear to have been Zane Grey and Max Brand, the pseudonym of Frederick Faust (Bloodworth 51-7). Other notable names are Clarence Edward Mulford and B.M. (Betty Muzzy) Bower (ibid. 47-51). In these hands, the overt ideological dimension inserted by Wister into the Western formula gave again away to escapism and melodrama through gradual variation of the formula’s narrative elements (ibid. 47-57). In addition, Vassar notes that from Grey onwards the formula Westerns began to emphasize the image of the gunfighter and developed the tendency to mystify the landscape in the narrative. Finally,

it should be noted that while the literary Western seems to have been the dominant form in the early 20th century America, Ray White claims that the movie Western began to eclipse the print in volume and influentially towards the middle of the century (White 135-59). By the middle of the century, the so-called classical Western that originated from the silver screen had become the dominant iteration of the formula in terms influence (Cawelti 1976 242-51). According to Cawelti, the classical Western focused on the arrival and establishment of civilization in the American West and the subsequent passing of the frontier, trying to discuss the contemporary changes by transposing them into the perceived past (ibid.) Thus, it seems that at least historically the Western and the Western stories were defined as a type of a frontier story characterized by their setting and several thematic and narrative conventions. Similarly, it is rather clear that the stories have at times been used and exploited to maintain and manipulate the conceived space or the symbolic shape of the USA, especially during first half of the 20th century.

It seems that by the middle of the 20th century a coherent formula for Western stories had been developed and established. According to Vassar, strict rules govern the form of the formula Western: The stories are set in the American West in about 1860-1890, the plots of the Western arise from the environment of the frontier and are thus limited, and the plots are presented unambiguously and have an absolute resolution (Vassar). Jane Tompkins provides a more specific and detailed inventory of the typical narrative elements of the Western. According to Tompkins, the core elements of the Western formula stem from the delineation of the formula at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries along the emergence of the realist and naturalist approaches of American literature that shunned the values and features of the American Victorian sentimental novel (28-32, 37-39, 42-45). These values and features are the prevalence of female characters, private or domestic spaces as the dominant setting, focus on the abstract internal struggles of the characters, communality, and religion (ibid. 38).

According to Tompkins “[t]he elements of the typical Western plot arrange themselves in stark opposition to this pattern, not just vaguely and generally but point for point” (ibid.). As for the pattern of the Western formula Tompkins notes that “[t]hese are the classic oppositions from which all Westerns derive their meaning: parlour versus mesa, East versus West, woman versus man, illusion versus truth, words versus things” (48). Thus, the Westerns favour the masculine over the feminine, the outdoors or the public as the setting, focus on the concrete action and material over abstractions, and emphasize independence (ibid.). From the spatial viewpoint the most prominent feature of the typical formula Western is, then, the construction and juxtaposition of several different sets of oppositional spatial categories. Westerns favour the masculine over the feminine and thus code the public spaces as masculine domains while the private and domestic settings are associated with the feminine and are thus often out of focus (ibid.). Urban and rural spaces are also often juxtaposed in the Western formula in a similar although less stark manner (ibid. 85-87). Another element of the Western is the tendency to portray nature and landscapes as sublime and monumental and use them metaphorically to express what the ethos of the Western cannot or will not articulate with words (ibid. 69-83). According to Tompkins this stems from the Western's distrust of all abstractions, including language. Tompkins claims that Westerns privilege action and concise expression over abstract language and code silence as an act and symbol of control (49-58). Specifically, Tompkins claims that “[n]ot speaking demonstrates control not only over feelings but over one's physical boundaries as well. The male, by remaining 'hermetic', 'closed up', maintains the integrity of the boundary that divides him from the world” (56). According to Tompkins, this need for control extends also to the self and suppression of the inner life (64-7). This element is again gendered, and silence and control are coded as masculine while the feminine is associated with abstract language and lack of control (ibid. 55-67). Due to this apprehension, it seems, Westerns describe the

landscapes compulsively and focus on the interaction between the hero and the nature attempting in this manner to represent the inner life of the characters (76-85). Finally, Tompkins also observes that spatial bodies have great importance as metaphorical and metonymical symbols in the Western (89-123). Cattle and other livestock act as metaphors for the subordination of the nature and the instrumentality of the living flesh, which is extended even to the human bodies of the Western heroes:

[T]he body of the hero is the analogue of the horse he rides. What happens to the horse happens to the rider, and vice versa. The politics of the horse-rider relationship, in which the horse is the subordinate to the rider, is reflected in the intrapsychic politics the Western sets up between the body and the will. The body is an instrument, designed to do the will of its master ... This model is reproduced in even starker form in men's behaviour toward cattle [...] (ibid. 113)

It thus appears that the Western formula itself is a significant model of abstraction. A model that seems to advocate for the suppression of the inner life, the externalization of the inner abstractions on the concrete visual world, and the subordination and consecutive instrumentalization of that physical reality and perhaps of those inner abstractions along it. It is also striking how spatial its various representations, symbols, and metaphors are. As Slotkin notes, the Western has been historically used as popular literature to further political and ideological agendas (125-93). Tompkins notes similarly that the Western has been a significant reinforcer of socialization: "In the course of providing a set of master images that tell men how to behave in society, Westerns teach men that they must take pain and give it, without flinching. The education of the hero and of the hero's audience moves in the direction of induration, hardening" (121). This would have made the publishers, producers, and distributors of various Western media part of the institutional shape of the USA. That is to say that the representations of space and spatial practice depicted in the Western have potentially been significant tools of maintaining of the symbolical shape of the USA.

Perhaps due to the Westerns insistence on simplicity and clarity, these abstractions inherent to the Western stories are notably fragile nominal oppositions. As Tompkins notes “[w]hat is most characteristic of these oppositions is that as soon as you put pressure on them they break down [...] It's as if the genre's determination to have a world of absolute dichotomies ensures that interpenetration and transmutation will occur” (48). That is to say that the oppositional pairs are presumably apt to change or break in any even a little longer or complex depiction of a scenario. Perhaps this allowed for the variation and transformation of the formula in the latter half of the 20th century, despite the oversaturation of the Western works within the genre from the mid-century onwards (Vassar). Vassar notes the surge of anti-Western Westerns that subverted and parodied the formula in the 1950-1970's among which he notes McMurtry's debut novel *Horseman, Pass By* (1961). According to Vassar “[w]hat is remarkable about these anti-Westerns is not that they parody the formula Western but that in exploiting its devices they represent extensions of the genre as much as departures, proving the formula is still very much alive”. Similarly, Slotkin notes several attempts to revise the Western, albeit in cinema, following the Vietnam War and the association of the traditional formula with the unpopular government and conservative values (628-33). Attempts, that according to Slotkin, managed to “substantially [alter] the visual style and ideological burden of the genre” (633). In particular, according to Slotkin, “Westerns made after 1976 are far more likely to follow an 'alternative' scenario in respect to race or class relations than to revert to the 'progressive' model of Dodge City or Rio Grande” (ibid.) or in other words the model of the formula developed in the classical Westerns made following the World War 2. Cawelti makes similar notes about the developments of the Western in the late 20th century, granted again mostly on the basis of examples from cinema. In particular he notes that “[s]ince the middle 1960s it has been difficult to speak of a single western formula” (1976 253), “the diversity of contemporary westerns reflects a quest for new themes and

meanings to revitalize the traditional western formula” (ibid. 252), and “[t]hus many of the traditional meanings of the western are reversed” (ibid. 259). Specifically, ethnic peoples are portrayed more often and usually in better terms than before (ibid. 257-8), representations of violence are more graphic and less glorified which also extends to the portrayal of the human capacity to violence (ibid. 253-9), and the influence of Westerns made outside the USA has grown more significant since while the cultural importance and the volume of production of the Westerns in the USA has decreased (ibid. 252-6). In addition, Cawelti has also noted a trend of regional redefinition and re-evaluation of the romantic myths of the West, a process which he calls re-regionalisation (2002, 135-43). In particular, he notes McMurtry as well as McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses* in connection to this trend (ibid. 139-42).

As has been noted above, there exists a strict definition of the Western that involves the temporal setting and the locale as well as the formula. In practice, rather than a strict definition or a model this seems to be a flexible prototype that could be articulated as a historical adventure story set in the American frontier during the 19th century and the narrative elements of which are supposed to stem from the conditions of the setting and are presented in a clear and simple manner. Although it seems that often the narrative elements depend more on the preceding conventions of the story type. None of the part seems to be mandatory although two major points of emphasis seem to be prevalent. Either the conventional narrative elements and structures are followed, or the conventional setting of the American West is emphasised. As noted above, the first entry of McMurtry's Thalia Trilogy has been situated within the subversive wave of anti-western stories in around the middle of the 20th century. The subsequent entries of the trilogy maintain much of the style of the Western formula but forego the traditional plot structure and character archetypes leaving the northern Texas setting as the primary Western element. Thus, especially the last entry of the trilogy, *The Last Picture Show* (1966), is very much a Western in the regional sense. By

contrast, McCarthy's Border Trilogy seems to belong to the later waves of revisionist or alternate Westerns of the late 20th century discussed by Slotkin and Cawelti. McCarthy employs many overt features of the Western formula in his novels such as the extensive symbolical and metaphorical use of the landscape as is noted by Ashley Bourne. Still, much of the narrative in the Border Trilogy takes place in the borderlands of the northern Mexico rather than in the USA. Thus, it is clear that the Western formula functions primarily as a prototype and a foundation for Western stories of the latter half of the 20th century rather than a strict model, which most likely will inform the treatment and representation of space and its orientation in the novels as well.

3. West, Bound: Analysis of Space and Mobility in American West

The primary material consists of novels from the writers Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy. From Larry McMurtry the Thalia Trilogy consisting of the novels *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), *Leaving Cheyenne* (1962), and *The Last Picture Show* (1966) is chosen for its depiction of the American West. From Cormac McCarthy the Border Trilogy consisting of the novels *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1992), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998) is chosen for its depiction of the southern-western USA and the USA-Mexico border.

Horseman, Pass By, presumably set in the late 1950s or early 1960s, depicts the spread of a deadly disease to a ranch's cattle, rodeo in a small town, and the death of the protagonist Lonnie's grandfather. *Leaving Cheyenne* depicts a love story between a rancher's son Gideon Fry, cowboy Johnny McCloud, and their childhood friend Molly Taylor White in a rural community over the first half of the 20th century. *The Last Picture Show* depicts the town of Thalia in the early 1950's through the eyes of two high school students in a coming-of-age story. *All the Pretty Horses*, set in the late 1940's, depicts young John Grady Cole's escapist trip to Mexico as he tries to avoid the divorce of his parents and the subsequent loss of family

property. *The Crossing*, set in the late 1930's and early 1940's, depicts young Billy Parham's unlucky trips to Mexico as he attempts to reacquire lost property. *Cities of the Plain*, set in the 1950's, depicts older Billy Parham and John Grady Cole working on a ranch in New Mexico while the latter falls in love with a Mexican prostitute. The novels provide an interesting body of material as both have been associated with the genre tradition of the Western (Vasser; Scarnhorst 1193) but represent different ends of the latter half of the 20th century when the Western formula was in the process of re-imagining. They are an interesting choice also in the sense that for McMurtry's novels are his debut work while McCarthy was already an established writer before the publication of the Border Trilogy.

In the analysis representations of the orienting types of social space are identified and classified. The significance of space to the territorialization of regions is examined and possible contributions of othering and Thirdspace are explored. Finally, the representation of the spatial elements in the novels are compared to each other as well as to the preceding tradition in the Western exemplified by the Western formula.

3.1 Places of Abode: Inhabited Space

The most prevalent type of the orienting and demarcating types of space suggested by Lefebvre in the texts are the places of abode. There are many different types of places of abode in the novels of McMurtry and McCarthy. Primarily they can be classified by four main features: urban, rural, permanent, and temporary. Prime example of permanent rural place of abode is the ranch. In addition, ranches function very clearly as modes of production as they create and orient both the physical surroundings as well as their social reality. The basic structure of a ranch that seems to consist of a main building, bunkhouse, barn, and other animal enclosures can be found in the novels of both writers. As an illustration, McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain*:

It was still dark when John Grady woke him. He was up and dressed and had already been to the kitchen and back and had spoken to the horses and he stood in the doorway of Billy's bunkroom with the canvas curtain pushed back against the jamb and cup of coffee in one hand. Hey cowboy, he said. [...]

John Grady walked back out up the barn bay toward the house. The horses nickered at him from their stalls as he passed. [...]

They were all at the table eating when Billy pushed open the door and came in. (McCarthy 750)

While these various constructions are the most visible part of the spatial ranch assemblage, the spatial practice also affects the structure of the lived space. The spatial separation of the owners, foremen, and the employees into different living quarters reflects the abstract social hierarchy on the ranch. In addition to separation, there seems also to be uniting elements. In particular, eating seems to be a communal occurrence or very least take place in a communal space that brings together the social hierarchy of the ranch. For example, McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By*: “‘Fry your eggs,’ I said, dragging a package of Post Toasties from the cabinet. Granddad and Jesse were already sitting in the table, eating eggs and bacon and sipping coffee from their saucers. I missed Lonzo, and remembered he was out on the range again” (40-1). It is also noteworthy that in McMurtry's novels the oilrig seems to be competing with the ranch as the primary mode of production. The exchange in *Horseman, Pass By* between Old Man Bannon and the County Veterinarian illustrates this well: “‘What good's oil to me,’ he said. ‘What can I do with it? With a bunch a fuckin' oil wells. I can't ride out ever day an' prowl amongst 'em, like I can my cattle. I can't breed 'em or tend 'em or rope 'em or chase 'em or nothin'. I can't feel a smidgen a pride in 'em, cause they ain't none a my doin'. [...]” (105). Similar observations can be made in McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* (303-6). Interestingly this competition seems to also create a sense of general animosity and opposition between the people subsiding from cattle raising and agriculture and the workers of the new industry. For example, McMurtry's *Leaving Cheyenne*:

There wasn't but one other passenger, a damn greasy oil-field hand, who looked like he'd got on the train about Burkburnett. He was asleep on the bench. [...]

"I tell you what," Johnny said. We took off his shoes real careful and his them over in a corner and got his shoelaces and tied his ankles together with them. We left a little play in the laces, but we tied about a dozen real hard knots and then spit on them to make them slippery.

"It'll take him a solid hour to get loose," Johnny said.

"It serves him right. It's what he gets for being an oil-fielder."

(McMurtry 232-7)

By comparison, in McCarthy's Border trilogy a free roaming cowboy is portrayed as already anachronistic figure, at least in the context of the social space of the USA (26, 646-7, 793, 1009). Nonetheless, in the texts of both novelists the institutional and symbolic shapes of the American West seem to be in a major flux as the relative importance of the cattle and agriculture diminishes.

The multiplicity of social space is especially noticeable with cities which appear to be a multitude of nested and adjacent places and spaces. Lefebvre does note that social space can contain several different and distinct social spaces within itself and that a place is essentially a specific instance of a social space (86-8). Although, due the inherent interconnectedness of space, Lefebvre claims this specificity of space to be ultimately only an illusion (ibid.). Nonetheless, the multitude of spatial levels and dimension affect the individuals' sense of space and place. In fact, as Yi-Fu Tuan notes that there is not necessarily a limit to the size of a place which depends more on the human ability to sense, discern, and abstract boundaries out of space (161-78). In other words, if the inhabitants of a location manage to develop a stable shape for their location, whether a structure or a geographical area, in the physical, conceived, and lived space. Interestingly, urban spaces are thus a mosaic of various types of places and spaces for individuals while primarily conceived as places of abode collectively. Permanent urban places of abode are thus found on various dimensions of the social space in cities of different size. This is illustrated well in McCarthy's description of the town of Deming in *The Crossing*: "He walked across the street and untied his horse and mounted and rode back up Silver Street and up West Spruce, holding the papers in his hand. [...] He tied

his horse in front of the Manhattan Cafe cattycorner from the bus station. Next to it was the Victoria Land and Cattle Company [...]“(650). But for individuals the places of abode would primarily appear to be their private own apartments. For instance, the living arrangements of the protagonists at the beginning of *The Last Picture Show*:

Duane took the pickup and went to the rooming house where the two of them had roomed since their sophomore year. People thought this a little strange, because each had a parent alive, but the boys liked it. Sonny's father ran the local domino parlor and lived in a room at the little hotel, and Duane's mother didn't really have much more room. His grandmother was still alive and living with his mother in their two-room house; his mother took in laundry, so the house was pretty full. The boys were actually rather proud that they lived in a rooming house and paid their own rent; most of the boys with real homes envied the two their freedom. (McMurtry 488)

Hotels are an interesting example as they are permanent places but occupied only temporarily. Thus, they seem to be a sort of a halfway point between permanent and temporary urban places of abode. For example, this description from *Leaving Cheyenne*:

About an hour before dark I went through the Exchange building and walked on back to the Longhorn Hotel. [...]
[...] And it was such a cold lonesome ugly little old bare room that I didn't feel like going to sleep in it, even if I was about to drop. The bed never had nothing on it but a little thin green counterpane anyway, and that wouldn't have kept a midget warm. (ibid. 242)

Or this passage from the epilogue of *Cities of the Plain*: “In the spring of the second year of the new millennium he was living in the Gardner Hotel in El Paso Texas and working as an extra in a movie. When the work came to an end he stayed in his room. [...] His money ran out. Three weeks later he was evicted” (McCarthy 1010). Martin Heidegger makes a distinction between a building as a construct and a building as an inhabited dwelling (245-9). This idea would seem to explain the differences in the representation of hotels and motels that are temporary places of abode but permanent structures. Compare the above passages to McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses* where the temporary place of abode provided by the hotel seems to function like a Thirdspace as it enables the othering of spatial practice concerning sex (254). Similar examples can also be found from McMurtry’s *The Last Picture Show* in

the affair of Duane and Jacy Harrow in California (637-42) and the affair of Sonny and Lois Harrow in a highway motel (699-701). On the basis of the novels the default representation of the hotels as a spatial location seems rather drab. The defining trait for a hotel as a space seems to be that the person in the space has only limited opportunity and time to alter or orient the space they occupy. A place of abode but not one's own place, a place inhabited only in a technical sense. On the other hand, the hotels and motels do seem to also provide spaces for actions that can not necessarily be done in ordinary places of abode. Nonetheless they do not appear to demarcate or orient their surroundings in any meaningful manner, affecting instead the spatial practice of individuals.

While the larger, more complicated spatial assemblages such as the ranches and cities are easily interpreted as representational spaces reflecting the dominant representations of space and spatial practice, it is more difficult to do this with the smaller and simpler abodes of fewer people. Granted, there are also representations of smaller permanent rural abodes such as the cabin of the old trapper (McCarthy 323-5) or the house the old brujo is staying at (ibid. 348-56) in *The Crossing*, or the Taylor's house in McMurtry's *Leaving Cheyenne*. These places are similar to larger ranches on surface level, but they do not orient their surrounding space in any major manner. In many ways they are perhaps comparable to the nest and dens of animals in that they are significant only as loci of human presence not as vehicles of some organized or substantial abstraction. That is to say the sphere of influence for such place of abode is markedly local even on a regional scale. The internal space of the place of abode is another matter. Heidegger's distinction between a building as a construct and a building as an inhabited dwelling (245-9) emphasizes the individual human experience of space and spatial practice. That is to say that human presences and experience transform a mere structure, a shelter, into something more. Similarly, Tuan's discussion about homes as intimate places (136-48) would suggest that such places are representational spaces infused with subjective

individual experience and thus prime candidates for thirding-as-othering to bring forth Thirdspace. The portrayal of spatial othering in its various forms is evident in the texts. In McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By* the othering is prompted by a cattle disease that threatens to decimate the ranch's livestock and forces the characters to re-evaluate their spatial practices. In *Leaving Cheyenne* the cause is a complex extramarital affair between the protagonists that others the domestic spaces in the novel. Finally, in *The Last Picture Show* the othering of the places of abode is most prominent in the spatial reinterpretation of the Popper household through the affair of the Sonny and Mrs. Popper. McMurtry's narrative focus is, then, clearly on the mundane and local representational spaces that are the primary setting in his three novels.

By contrast, in McCarthy's Border trilogy examples of othering space into places of abode abound. These temporary places of abode have, in the end, very few spatial elements in common between each other. Instead, spatial practice appears to cause and regulate their formation. Heidegger posits that dwelling as occupation of space precedes a dwelling as a place (254). Similarly, Tuan describes camps as temporary homes and as components in the process of structuring the world through the means of mobility (179-183). The rural temporary places of abode are exemplified in the plethora of camp sites, the specific elements of which depend largely on their surroundings. For example, McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*:

Late afternoon they crossed a road that ran to the south and in the evening they reached Johnson's Run and camped at a pool in otherwise dry gravel bed of the watercourse and watered the horses and hobbled them and turned them out to graze. They built a fire and skinned the rabbit and skewered it on a green limb and set it to broil at the edge of the fire. John Grady opened his blackened canvas campbag and took out a small enameled tin coffeepot and went to the creek and filled it. They sat and watched the fire and they watched the thin crescent moon above the black hills to the west. (McCarthy 36)

Similar descriptions of similar places can be found across McCarthy's Border trilogy. As can be observed, the place is structured from natural space through mundane spatial practice transforming the site into representational space, lived space. For a brief moment the campsite becomes a place of abode. The only reoccurring spatial feature appears to be the campfire, but the influence of that element appears to linger only faintly after the immediate human presence is absent. Temporary places of abode might then have an ability to enable reorientation and -structuring of space as they facilitate greater mobility of human subjects than permanent places of abode. By comparison temporary urban places of abode seem scarcer in the material. There are only few good examples set in the USA. There are two mentions in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show*: "While Penny was counting the new change into the cash register old Marston came dragging in. He looked as though he had just frozen out of a bar ditch somewhere, and Penny was on him instantly" (485) and "Old Marston had died in February of pneumonia — he had gone to sleep in a bar ditch in the wrong season" (708-9). The lack of temporary abodes and the apparent hazards of the few examples serve to emphasize the importance of permanence of places in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show*. In McCarthy's *The Crossing* there similarly one rather brief example in the context of the USA's social space:

He spent the night in the bus station at the corner of Spruce and Gold, sleeping on the tile floor wrapped in the filthy serape with his warbag for a pillow and the stained and filthy hat over his face. The sweatblackened saddle stood against the wall along with the shotgun in its scabbard. He slept with his boots on and he got up twice in the night and went out to see about his horse where he'd left it tethered to a lampstandard by the catchrope. (647)

While there are not very many good examples of temporary places of abode in urban areas there are some examples of temporary abodes in otherwise built environments. In *The Crossing*, for instance, the protagonist camps in an abandoned waystation (737-41) and sleeps under an overpass in *Cities of the Plain* (1010). These repurposed spaces are nonetheless

othered from their original intended spatial practice and the lived space of the individuals becomes Thirdspace. Still, it should be noted that in all of these examples the space is at least temporarily unoccupied so there is no conflict of interest between different conceptions of space or spatial practice. It might be concluded from the relative lack of urban temporary places of abode that the forms of temporary inhabitation are regulated more in the urban settings which is reflected in novels. Equally it might also be that the Western as story type favours rural settings which then limits the possibilities of representation of urban spaces and places.

The representation of space and spatial practice is also connected to the representation of genders in the novel. In McMurtry's Thalia Trilogy women are associated with the indoors and men with outdoors through the division of labour. In *Horseman, Pass By* and *Leaving Cheyenne* men work outside with the cattle or maintaining the various structures of the ranch while women take care of the domestic work indoors. Interestingly this is not coupled with public-private distinction as could be expected on the basis of the Western formula. Outside their occupations both men and women appear in public spaces in similar amounts. This is even more pronounced in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show* where the public spaces of the movie theatre and the diner are maintained and eventually owned by women. By comparison, in McCarthy's Border trilogy this binary association does not appear, although outdoor work is still coded as masculine. Instead, there is perhaps a slight coding of the American as the masculine and the Mexican as the feminine through the family relations and romantic subplots in the three novels. Similarly, all the American characters that appear in Mexico in McCarthy's Border Trilogy seem to be male. The ethnicity or nationality connotation is not very strong, however, as it is not depicted consistently in all social spaces. In particular, it does not seem to be followed in the depiction of the social space in the USA. Thus, the construction of binary oppositions concerning the genders in the novels does not seem to

particularly follow the conventions of the formula apart from the association of the outdoor work with the masculine which is in turn reflected in the coding of the space.

A common feature shared by both urban and rural permanent places of abode is that they are named places and thus fixed points in space. In junction with accessible spaces such as roads and other transport networks, they orient the social space, especially the representations of space. For example, this McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By*:

He'd been to practically ever town in Texas, big or little, Lubbock and Amarillo and Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas and San Antoine, Alpine and El Paso, Snyder and Olney, Vernon and Dumas and Newcastle and a hundred more, and then on into New Mexico and Colorado, to Tucumcari and Clovis and Gallup and Cimarron, Raton and Walsenburg and Denver, on up to Cheyenne and Pendleton and Pierre and Calgary, over to St. Louis and Sioux City, Chigago and Kansas City and New York, and hundred more I couldn't even remember. (93)

These webs of named places contribute to the symbolical shape of the territory not only as symbols but also as networks of meaning and as anchors in the perceived space. This they facilitate by the virtue of their relative permanence.

In conclusion, it could be noted that for the most part the permanent places depicted in the novels appear to follow the dominant spatial codes. Even when the permanent places of abode are othered, it does not seem to affect the wider orientation of space or boundaries in any significant manner. By comparison, temporary places of abode, both rural and urban, seem to include an element of appropriation or re-appropriation which is especially clear in the repurposing of man-made spaces. Collective presence whether temporary or permanent would perhaps, then, other social space even further which might explain the presence and effect of varying collectives of drifters in the US-Mexico borderlands in McCarthy's novels. These include Native Americans in *The Crossing*, Mexican migrant workers in *The Crossing* and *Cities of the Plain* (McCarthy 339-40, 772-9), Gypsies in *The Crossing* (ibid. 715-29), as well as few odd Americans exemplified well in the main characters of the trilogy. That is to say the presence of people or peoples where they are not expected or supposed to be

undermines the abstract systems of spatial categories represented by the conceived space and the lived space, and especially the difference represented by the border.

3.2 Accessible Space: Permitted Mobility

As mentioned above, it seems that accessible space orients the internal space of a territorial unit in accordance with named places. Different routes such as roads and train tracks connect these definite points of space to each other and orient the surrounding space in process. In fact, as Tuan notes that even larger geographical units can be construed as places as long as clear boundaries for them can be discerned (161-78), it can be presumed that accessible spaces connect even the larger separate instances of social space such as cities and regions. For example, the prologue of *Horseman, Pass By*: “A highway ran alongside the horse pasture, a mile to the east of our house, and from the porch we could watch the cars zoom across the plains — north to Amarillo or Raton, south to Dallas or Houston or Fort Worth” (McMurtry 5-6). A route does not necessarily entail a constructed path, however. The repetitive movements of the ranch-hands on the pastures in McMurtry’s *Horseman, Pass By* and *Leaving Cheyenne* are a good example of this sort of occupation of space. Lefebvre emphasizes the role of spatial body as a medium between the human subject and their surroundings (194-203). Thus, direct occupation of space through spatial presence of living aware bodies seems to be the most effective method of dominating and assimilating space. While assemblages involving physical constructions alongside bodies may be more substantial and even an abandoned structure may facilitate movement in the future, a construction is a mere echo of the living presence while not in active use. The remote stretch of road depicted in McCarthy’s *The Crossing* is a good example of such diminished hold over space due lack of use: “[He] took the old road east past the Santa Rita mines and on through San Lorenzo and the Black Range. [...] The country was all catclaw and creosote on a gravel

plain and there were no fences and little grass” (737). Here the social space is clearly dissolving back into natural space, not necessarily from lack of maintenance but due desolation. Still, Tuan notes that navigation and wayfaring skills are essential methods of structuring space, of turning a world of unfamiliar space into a network of familiar places (80-3). A path as a physical construction is in a sense secondary to the knowledge of a route as a trajectory of movement. Constructed paths of accessible space may then perhaps be regarded as attempts to inscribe representations of space directly unto the physical space. It is not surprising, then, that representations of accessible space appear in McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses* as an oil-company roadmap (35) and in *The Crossing* as drawn on dirt directions (493-5). Both representations are faulty, however, as their information is either incomplete or outdated. Accessible spaces as routes facilitating movement between named places seem to thus be the crucial interconnecting element in social space and their representations equally important.

As has been noted above, in an urban setting social space contains a multitude of places of abodes. Similarly, in an urban setting social space is more clearly a construction of nested, adjacent, and intersecting places in general. These places are in turn enveloped and connected to each other by the accessible space of streets and other public spaces.

Description of Thalia in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show* illustrates this well:

They walked north from the jail, past the Masonic lodge and the Jehovah's Witness church. [...] They circled past the cemetery and Sonny waited in the road while Billy swept the cattleguard. [...] Billy swept the cattleguard and got it very clean — from the pastures to the north they heard the moan of a coyote and when Billy was satisfied they walked on, past the rodeo pens and back to the dark poolhall. (McMurtry 706)

Named places by no means have to be places of abode. Tuan supplies a brief inventory of the components that produce a place (136-48). Paraphrasing Tuan, one could then describe a common place to be a locale which enables or causes a pause in movement (ibid.). Thus, it

seems that any landmark or spatial feature, natural or artificial, might suffice. This is illustrated well with the description of animal movements in *The Crossing*:

The wolf had crossed the international boundary line at about the point where it intersected the thirtieth minute of the one hundred and eight meridian and she had crossed the old Nations road a mile north of the boundary and followed Whitewater Creek west up into the San Luis Mountains and crossed through the gap north to the Animas Range and then crossed the Animas Valley and on into the Peloncillos as told. [...]

She would not return to a kill. She would not cross a road or a rail in daylight. She would not cross under a wire fence twice in the same place. These were the new protocols. Structures that had not existed before. Now they did. (McCarthy 330-2)

Animals do not necessarily follow the norms of human spatial practice. As can be seen from above, the wolf does not respect and most likely does not even realize the existence of national and property borders of any kind. Conceived space, representations of space, have no direct influence over an animal's use of space. Neither would they hold any meaning to anyone unfamiliar with the conventions of a specific social space, that is to say members of other cultures. In fact, a metaphorical allusion could be construed between the border crossing wolf and the Native Americans that traverse the northern borderlands of Mexico in McCarthy's *The Crossing*. Neither seem to fully acknowledge the dominant spatial practices of their locations and thus maintain their own distinct social spaces. Similar allusion to the out-of-placeness of Native Americans in the USA is also made in McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, although here the metaphorical link is to the up-rooted protagonist (26, 305-6). By comparison, Native Americans are completely absent from Larry McMurtry's Thalia trilogy which depicts a small town in 20th century northern Texas rather than the southern Texas, New Mexico, and the northern Mexico of McCarthy's Border trilogy. Diana Turken has noted the frontiers potential as a Thirdspace that allows for individual subjectivity. Borderland can be considered an equivalent to frontier and there is no particular reason to expect it to function differently as a Thirdspace for collectives as collectives are made of individuals. Thus, the borderland seems to enable the othering of space and the formation of

the sense of Thirdspace for the various individual drifters and collectives in McCarthy's Border Trilogy. By comparison, McMurtry's chosen setting lacks a sufficient unstructured space — a Thirdspace — to enable a large group of people to subsist of an alternative way of life. Although McMurtry's aversion for the Western genre (Frye 12) and presumably by extension to its overt features might also explain the absence of the Native Americans from his narratives. Nonetheless, abstractions conceived by one group of people can affect outsiders only through the concrete means of active spatial practice. That is to say, for example, the construction of physical barriers and the occupation or surveillance of the space. In general, the spatial practice of the ranches depicted in the novels achieves this by spreading humans and barrier structures over the property and pastures. More drastic methods could include the deportation or elimination of the unwanted in the territory the occupiers claim as their own. The wolf hunt in McCarthy's *The Crossing* (326-59) and the extermination of wild dogs in *Cities of the Plain* (897-914) are good specific examples of this.

It is also noteworthy that accessible space can also be a boundary or even a barrier according to the individual's means of transport and mobility. The epilogue of *Cities of the Plain* is a good example:

When he looked across the overpass to the far side of the turnpike he saw another such as he sitting solitary and alone. [...]

He descended the concrete batterwall and crossed the roadway and climbed over the guardrail and crossed the median between the round concrete pillars and crossed northbound lanes and climbed up to the where Billy was sitting and squatted and looked at him. (ibid. 1011-2)

It is clear that what is accessible space for a motorist with car may in fact be a considerable barrier for a pedestrian on foot. Thus, the accessibility of accessible space depends to some degree on the means of transport one has available and the spatial codes the surrounding space has been constructed with. In fact, both novelists depict a proliferation of cars and

subsequent reorientation of space to the detriment of general mobility. In McMurtry's *Leaving Cheyenne* the swiftness of the change is shown fairly well, the transition from the mostly horse-based transport at the novel's beginning to the car-based infrastructure of at the end of the novel occurring between 1920's and 1960's. By comparison, McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* which is set in the late 1940's manages to depict the severity of the change for the orientation of space:

By sunset they could hear trucks on a highway in the distance and in the long cool evening they rode west along a rise from which they could see the headlights on the highway going out and coming back random and periodic in their slow exchange. They came to a ranch gate. They sat the horses. They could see no gate on the far side of the highway. They watched the lights of the trucks along the fence both east and west but there was no gate there. (32)

The change in the spatial practice of the accessible space of the roads in the USA is clear and rather drastic. The machine replaces the animal as the primary means of transportation. The by-product of this is the increased structurization and artificiality of the space at the expense of natural space at least in the vicinity in the human social space.

It seems that by the virtue of being space between places, accessible space may enable the formation of Thirdspace. While spatial practice governs the use of accessible space, individuals moving between places also move away from the centres of social space. As far as places can be understood as the focal points of social space, moving between places will take individuals to the periphery of social space. If the movement occurs between places, the trajectory will eventually take the individuals back towards another centre but briefly the mobile individuals may experience the diminishment of spatial and social control.

Presumably this experience may be either individual or collective, examples of both can be found in the texts. In McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By* Old Man Bannon's dubious euthanasia occurs on the side of a road (149-58) and in *The Last Picture Show* being in between places such as on the road seems to frequently facilitate promiscuous behaviour (542-4, 688-701). In

McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Crossing* the acts of escapism and vigilantism pursued by the main characters are enabled mainly by them being on the move and away from home. The separation from the social control of the familiar collective and the state apparatus is arguably even more drastic when the characters on several occasions forsake the constructed paths and established routes in the Mexican borderlands. That is to say that the characters lose the trajectory between places and get momentarily stuck in the in between, the unstructured wilderness of the borderland. The trajectories of the characters in *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Crossing* are also good examples of the differing senses or experiences of space as, to some degree, this impression of unobstructed physical and social freedom depends on the viewpoint of the American protagonists of the novels as the different social norms, hierarchies, and spatial codes do appear to limit the lives and actions of the locals considerably. This subjectivity of conceived space is articulated rather well by the Mexican brothel proprietor in McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain*: "That is what has brought you here and what will always bring you here. Your kind cannot bear that the world be ordinary" (998). The implication is that the interpretations surrounding the conceptions of social space exists primarily within the heads of the characters and perhaps by extension within the heads of the readers that share the point of view of the protagonists.

Finally, it should be noted that the othering of space involved in the conception of Thirdspace needs not to be an intentional act. Neither does it seem that the reorientation of spatial knowledge needs to be a positive experience. Traffic accidents portrayed in the novels are fairly good examples of this. For instance, the death of Billy in McMurtry's *The Last*

Picture Show:

Suddenly there was a loud shriek, as the driver hit the brakes for all he was worth — the stoplight was always turning red at the wrong time and catching trucks that thought they had it made. [...]

Billy was lying face up on the street, near the curb. For some reason he had put both eye patches on — his eyes were completely covered. There were just four or

five men there — the sheriff and his deputy, a couple of men from the filling stations, one cowboy, and a pumper who was out early. They were not paying attention to Billy, but were trying to keep the truck driver from feeling bad. (McMurtry 716-7)

Thus, it is clear that othering of accessible space occurs when somebody, intentionally or not, does something unexpected against the prescriptive rules and norms that govern the use of the space. For a more positive example, consider McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain*:

They drove through the mountains. About a mile past the intersection with the highway 166 there was a truckload of Mexicans pulled off onto the grass. They stood almost into the road waving their hats. Billy slowed.

[...]

What is it. Some sort of religious thing?

No. It aint nothin like that. It's just that the worst day of my life was one time when I was seventeen years old and me and my bud — my brother — we was on the run and he was hurt and there was a truckload of Mexicans just about like them back yonder appeared out of nowhere and pulled our bacon out of the fire. I wasnt even sure their old truck could outrun a horse, but it did. They didnt have no reason to stop for us. But they did. I dont guess it would of even occurred to em not to. That's all (McCarthy 772-9)

The passage shows well some of the differences in the conceptions of the rules and norms individuals might have about the use of space. In McCarthy's novels the social space in Mexico as a whole is often contrasted with the social space in the USA. In general, the social space in the USA seems more stratified with structures and rules while the social space in Mexico appears more often open and unimpeded, at least physically. While this facilitates the freedom of mobility noted above in relation to the boundaries it also makes other concrete and abstract structures of social space more malleable. As noted, this can be a negative experience. McCarthy's characters often find themselves in the receiving end of the disruptive othering of spatial practices in Mexico. A good example is the assault and robbery of the main character in *The Crossing* (708-713). The othering of the spatial codes is by no means always positive and there are good reasons why societies attempt to maintain the stability of their social space. In other words, that they attempt to maintain security and social consensus within their territories.

Nonetheless, it seems that accessible space can be othered rather easily as there exist guiding norms if not even strict rules that govern the use of such space to be broken. Such actions of othering are more or less disruptive from the point of view of the dominant spatial practice whether they are negative or positive, intentional or accidental. Under such conditions these spaces seem to be rendered into a place like condition — the disruption endows the space with specificity for the duration of the disturbance. Individuals may seek to regulate such a place in order to return a semblance of normalcy and to assimilate the place back to the system of social space. When the disturbance is unintentional it is also difficult to say whether a space has been othered in a manner that counts as Thirdspace since the subjective intent and interpretation are not necessarily immediately present. What is certain is that the space is at least temporarily cut from the collective network of meaning and signification that is inherent to social space.

3.3 Boundaries and Forbidden Territories: Restriction of Mobility

While not as prevalent as other types of orienting space, the most prominent type of such a space in the novels is the boundary. And the most visible of the boundaries is the international border, specifically the US-Mexico border. It is depicted in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show* as well as in all of the Border Trilogy novels by McCarthy. In McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show* the border seems to be rather mundane barrier consisting of a bridge and a river. The border crossing is depicted twice. First from the USA to Mexico: “They drove straight on through Brownsville and paid a fat, bored tollhouse keeper twenty cents so they could drive across the bridge. Below them was the Rio Grande, a river they had heard about all their lives. Its waters were mostly dark, touched only here and there by the yellow bridge lights” (McMurtry 624). The second time that the crossing occurs, the directions are reversed: “By some miracle Sonny managed to wind his way through Matamoros to the Rio

Grande — in daylight the water in the river was green. The boys stood groggily under the customs shed for few minutes, wondering why in the world they had been so foolish as to come all the way to Mexico. Thalia seemed an impossible distance away” (ibid. 632). While the assemblage of the river, bridge, and the tollhouse are presented as mundane, McMurtry does employ the colour of the river metaphorically to reflect first the feelings of excitement and mystery and later the nausea and isolation of the hungover protagonists. Overall, it could be noted that the border crossing as a physical entity incorporates both the natural element of the river as well as the artificial man-made constructions of the bridge and tollhouse. At the same, in its apparent mundanity no great abstractions seem to be applied to its representation apart from the sense of remoteness for the North-Texan protagonists. It seems to be outermost boundary for both the physical and conceptual shapes of their home region. Mexico itself is presented with a certain amount of exoticism: “Evening finally came, coolness with it, and the boys got a second wind. The trip ceased to seem like such a fiasco: after all, they had been to Mexico, visited whorehouses, seen dirty movies. In Thalia it would be regarded as a great adventure, and they could hardly tell wait to tell about it” (ibid. 633). By contrast, a fair amount of border crossings are depicted in McCarthy's novels *The Crossing* and *Cities of the Plain*. In *Cities of the Plain*, they mostly share the same assemblage of spatial elements, the river, the bridge, and the toll:

The trolleys had quit running and the streets were all but empty of trade and traffic. The tracks shining in the wet lamplight ran on toward the gateshock and beyond to where they lay embedded in the bridge like great surgical clamps binding those disparate and fragile worlds and the cloudcover had moved off down from the Franklins and south toward the dark shapes of the mountains of Mexico standing against the starlit sky. They crossed the bridge and pushed through the turnstile each in turn, their hats cocked slightly, slightly drunk, and walked up south El Paso Street. (McCarthy 749-50)

It is clear, then, that McCarthy's representation of the border emphasizes the border's significance in visibly marking the boundaries of different national spaces and thus the

spheres of different social spaces. It could also be noted that the limited human mobility and the unlimited movement of the clouds and the starlit sky are contrasted with each other. Similarly, the American mountains are named while the Mexican mountains remain nameless in the description. The border is thus a concrete manifestation of the divide between two distinct social spaces of the USA and Mexico but for the natural space, however subsumed to human artifice, the difference is only abstract. Similarly, the urban setting of the border cities of El Paso and Juarez also blends the national spaces to some degree which serves to diminish the practical spatial importance of the border. After the initial depiction of the border, McCarthy does not even necessarily acknowledge the change of location explicitly in *Cities of the Plain*. In McCarthy's *The Crossing* the crossings depicted are not embedded to an overtly urban space but the sense that the border is a boundary between two social spaces does exist: "In the evening they rode through the main street of Douglas and halted at the gateshock on the border. The guard stood in the doorway and nodded at them. He looked at the dog. [...] The guard watched them go, the dog trotting after. They crossed the little bridge. The Mexican guard looked up at them and nodded them on and they rode into Agua Prieta" (ibid. 486). The physical space of the border as a barrier is merely a visible manifestation of abstract difference between the conceived spaces of Douglas, America and Agua Prieta, Mexico. All in all, descriptions of borders as official barriers and markers seem rather technical in the texts of both novelists although their importance to the regulation of the boundaries of the social spaces seem significant.

By contrast, unofficial and undocumented, that is to say illegal, crossings of borders are depicted differently. In McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* there are two depictions of this, second of which that happens from the direction of the Mexico to the USA illustrates this well:

He crossed the river just west of Langtry Texas in a softly falling rain. The wind in the north, the day cold. The cattle along the breaks of the river standing gray and still. He followed a cattletail down into the willows and across the carrizal to where the gray water lay braided over the gravels.

He studied the girthstraps and undressed and stogged his boots in the legs of his trousers as he'd done before in that long ago and he put his shirt and jacket and the pistol after and doubled the belt in the loops to draw shut the waist. Then he slung the trousers over his shoulder and mounted up naked with the rifle aloft and driving the loose horses before him he pushed Redbo into the river.

He rode up onto Texas soil pale and shivering and he sat the horse briefly and looked out over the plain to the north where cattle already beginning to appear slouching slowly out of that pale landscape and bawling softly at the horses and he thought about his father who was dead in that country and he sat the horse naked in the falling rain and wept. (ibid. 289-90)

Similarly in McCarthy's *The Crossing* there is a good illustrative example of McCarthy's depiction of illegal and unattended crossing:

He rode past the first of the white obelisks marking the international boundary line west of Dog Springs and he crossed the ancient dry reservoir there. [...] There were prints in the clay of cattle and antelope and of coyotes that had crossed after some recent rain and he came upon a place that was runed over all about with the random trident of cranetracks where the birds had glided in and stalked about upon that barren mud. He slept that night in his own country and he had a dream wherein he saw God's pilgrims labouring upon a darkened verge in the last of the twilight of that day [...] (ibid. 735)

In physical terms the river of appears to be strongly associated with the representation of the border, although it is sometimes supplemented with artificial markers. McCarthy puts here far more emphasis on the physical act of crossing, however, than he does with the legal crossings. He describes the spatial process as well as the surroundings in greater detail. Here his symbolical use of the environment is also evident. Certainly, in the crossing to the USA in *All the Pretty Horses* the feelings of sadness and dejection of the protagonist are reflected in the cold and rainy weather (ibid. 289-90) while in *The Crossing* McCarthy makes an allusion between the dishevelled and humiliated protagonist and the animals in the borderlands (735). It is also even more clear from these examples that the difference between the spaces separated by the border is ultimately abstract. The physical environment hardly changes at all, but the words and names of things and places shift languages. Although this is somewhat

complicated by the fact that Spanish speakers do appear in and are depicted to belong to the USA throughout the novels. While the borderland seems to be located in Mexico, the southwestern parts of the USA could be viewed in connection with it. Certainly, at least historically, the regions have been connected and a distinction became relevant only after the expansion of the USA into the region as noted by Light Cummins (225-7). The characters own sense of space and belonging are also noted by the narrative, as in the examples from the *All the Pretty Horses* the narration does not make value statements about the space, using instead only proper nouns and implying feelings of alienation. By comparison, in *The Crossing* narration notes that the protagonist sleeps “in his own country” (McCarthy 735). It could also be noted that McCarthy’s representation of the border is rather porous outside the designated areas of crossing. By contrast, McMurtry’s portrayal of the border in *The Last Picture Show* is extremely mundane and even boring but also completely stable. Absolute barriers seem almost non-existent in McCarthy’s representation of the US’s southern border. This contributes to the sense that the US-Mexico border as an area of transition, a borderland, rather than a finite line in McCarthy’s Border Trilogy. The othering of the associated spatial practice, the lack of documentation associated with the illegal crossings, does get the protagonists of McCarthy’s novels in trouble with the oppressive sub-apparatus of the Mexican officials. In *All the Pretty Horses* the lack of credibility gets the protagonists complicit in a murder accusation and in *The Crossing* the lack of documents stops the protagonists from properly reacquiring their lost property. The othering of the border and the depiction of the borderland as an othered space — a Thirdspace — does extend beyond the protagonists as well. McCarthy depicts several groups of Native Americans existing somewhat separately from the surrounding social spaces in the Mexican borderlands (441, 501, 697-700). Similarly, some illegal crossers are depicted in addition to the protagonists such as the drifter in *The Crossing* (312-20). The proximity of the border is also implied to

have contributed to the robbery and murder of the protagonist's parents in *The Crossing* (ibid. 474-9). A severe othering of space and good example of how it is not necessarily a positive thing. Thus, both writers depict an international border that while visible is not necessarily very significant as a barrier, although McMurtry does not question its function as one. By contrast the significance of the border to the symbolical shape of the USA seems more significant as some of abstractions such as the language are keenly associated with it.

As noted above, there are not many depictions of international boundaries in McMurtry's Thalia Trilogy. Instead, boundaries delineating property are especially prominent. These seem to be the primary type of boundary that demarcates space within territories in the sense of limiting mobility as the internal borders of the various regional entities are seldom depicted. There are some examples of course, for instance the division of federal states in *The Crossing*: "Some time midmorning they crossed the boundary line into the state of Arizona" (McCarthy 484). But most of the time, neither novelist depicts a notable break or a pause when representing space internal to a major instance of a social space. That is to say, within the contexts of the novels, the space bound by the shape of a national territorial unit. Instead, the space is presented as a continuum and the journey as a continuous trajectory between places of the same space. For example, the depiction of a cross-state school trip in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show*:

The bus left Thalia at midnight and when dawn came was crossing the Pecos River, a dry winding rut cutting through the naked flats of West Texas. [...] and his eyes kept leaking tears all the way to Van Horn [...]

They got to San Fransisco in the middle of the night [...] (636)

The lack of detail is not exactly surprising as boundaries can be rather unnoticeable within larger territorial entities. The need to demarcate space as property seems to be the primary principle that informs the spatial practice involving boundaries in McMurtry's novels

Horseman, Pass By and *Leaving Cheyenne*. In fact, the one major activity of ranchers and by

extension the employed cowboys in addition to animal care seems to be the creation and maintenance of fences and other barriers to limit the mobility of livestock. For example, this remark in *Horseman, Pass By*: “We might as well astayed an' fenced,' Jesse said. 'I don't know what help we'll be here’” (McMurtry 29). Similarly, the activity is present in *Leaving Cheyenne*: “When we got to the working place, Gid began to tamp the posts and I began to dig. The damn ground was so hard it took me half a dozen licks to get through the top crust, and then the sandrock started. I don't know how long we worked, but after a while I looked up and seen the old red sun sitting right on top of Squaw Mountain, ten miles away” (ibid. 408). The effect of demarcating space as property with fences is also represented in McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*:

Crossing the old Mark Fury ranch in the night where they'd dismounted at the crossfences for John Grady to pull the staples with a catspaw and stand on the wires while Rawlins led the horses through and then raise the wires back and beat the staples into the posts and put the catspaw back in his saddlebag and mount up to ride on.

How the hell do they expect a man to ride a horse in this country? said Rawlins
They dont, said John Grady. (31)

Similarly, the demarcated property is represented as forbidden territory with limited access in McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain*:

He crossed the highway and crossed through the western-most section of the McGregor ranch. He rode through country he'd not seen before. In the early afternoon he came upon a rider sitting his horse with his hands crossed loosely over the pommel of his saddle. [...] The rider was chewing tobacco and he nodded as John Grady rode up. Can I help you? he said.

John Grady leaned and spat. Meanin I aint supposed to be on your land, he said. (ibid. 975-6)

McCarthy also contrasts the demarcation of space in the USA with the demarcation of property in Mexico which for the most part seems to lack the extensivity of its USA counterpart. Instead, natural barriers such as rivers and mountains seem to primarily demarcate space and limit movement in McCarthy's representation of Mexico:

The Hacienda de Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion was a ranch of eleven thousand hectares situated along the edge of the Bolson de Cuatro Cienagas in the state of Coahuila. The western sections ran into the Sierra de Anteojo to elevations of nine thousand feet but south and east the ranch occupied part of the broad barrial or basin floor of the bolson and was well watered with natural springs and clear streams and dotted with marshes and shallow lakes or lagunas. In the lakes and in the streams were species of fish not known elsewhere on earth and birds and lizards and other forms of life as well all long relict here for the desert stretched away on every side. (ibid. 99)

There are of course lesser boundaries consisting of smaller barriers depicted in the novels, but they occur in conjunction with the places of abode — enclosures of various kinds of the inhabited spaces of ranches. Thus, they orient the space of the places of abode rather than the whole of the social space akin to the wider territorial boundaries even if their physical elements are similar.

It is clear that unsolicited border crossings other the borders in a significant manner. Not only do the characters go where they are not supposed to be, but they also subvert the control and surveillance of the state apparatuses. The disregard of property boundaries resembles this in a smaller scale. It seems that the abstract damage done by transgression of this kind might actually be far more significant to the symbolical shape of a territory, to the representations of space, than to security of its territorial shape or internal security. On the other hand, the blurriness of abstract spatial categories and spatial codes that guide the use of space might also just be a consequence of the border as an extended zone of transition or in other words a borderland. The isolation and opposition between the contesting modes of production and systems of signification represented by the state structures create an area where there is no clear status quo. The social space is to a degree vague, which allows for a multitude of answers — modes of production and systems signification. Thus, borderlands can certainly be described as kind of a Thirdspace.

3.4 Junction Points: Places of Encounter and Passage

While the other terms referring to the types of orienting space suggested by Lefebvre are fairly transparent, junction point is somewhat opaquer. To reiterate, junction points are “often places of passage and encounter; often, too, access to them is forbidden except on certain occasions of ritual import” (Lefebvre 193). In other words, junction points are places for passage and encounter, access to them is restricted in some manner, and they are of ritual that is symbolical importance. It seems that similar to places of abode these places of passage and encounter can be classified into permanent and temporary variants. Permanent junction points would be the places of encounter and passage that are not dependant on any outside conditions such as time for their existence or function. Temporary junction points would, then, be places of encounter and passage that depend to some degree on outside conditions for their existence or function.

An obvious example of a permanent junction point from the novels are the various permanent border crossings. They are designated areas for movement, entry, and exit to and from a territory. They are points of concentrated control with which the states attempt to regulate the mobility of people and goods — membranes between different territories (Hall 240). Or in other words, membranes between different social spaces. The basic structure of the crossing has already been described — a gate and a guard often paired with artificial a natural barrier such as a river. The control of goods can in turn be observed in McCarthy’s *The Crossing*: “He signed the horses through the Mexican customs at Berendo and folded the stamped entry papers into his saddlebag and gave the aduanero a silver dollar. The aduanero saluted him gravely and addressed him as caballero and he rode south into old Mexico, State of Chihuahua” (ibid. 668). It should be noted that the apparent ease of movement shown here and above is associated primarily with the American characters. Other nationalities, most

notably Mexicans, need additional documentation to cross into the USA. This need for documentation is shown well in McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain* where the primary conflict of the novel consists of the troubles of getting the protagonists Mexican sweetheart into the USA. There is, thus, a clear division into us and them, a social binary opposition, depicted between the US and Mexico nationals associated with the border. Although there seems to be degrees to this as at least some of the characters do not conflate ethnicity, culture, or nationality with each other:

Yessir. Well. For one thing she's Mexican.
 Mac nodded. I've known that to work, he said. He pulled on the boot.
 So I got the problem of gettin her over here.
 Mac put his foot down on the floor and put his hands on his knees. He looked at the boy. Over here? he said.
 Yessir.
 You mean across the river?
 Yessir.
 You mean she's a Mexican Mexican?
 Yessir.
 Damn, son. (ibid. 887)

Similar opposition and association with the border or a borderland can be observed in McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By*: "Hud had done everything he could to keep Granddad from buying the Laredo cattle — he hated the whole South Texas area, and especially the Mexicans that were in it" (44). It is evident that the border crossings function as junction points. They are clearly defined places, they are places of passage, and the access to or rather through them is clearly restricted. Similarly, it is clear that they are associated with larger abstractions and spatial practices connected to the maintenance of the territorial and symbolical shapes of the nation.

Other instances of permanent junction points can be found in the novels as well. An example involving the law can be found in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show*:

He and Duane stood beside one another at the police desk, and to their surprise were no longer particularly mad.

“Don't know what happened,” Duane said. “Never meant to hit you with that bottle. Reckon we got enough money to pay our fines?” (683)

Granted the depiction of the place is brief but the police desk with its ritual of a fine and restricted access would seem to qualify as a junction point. A lengthier example of similar description can be found in McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*: “He rode the border country for weeks looking the owner of the horse. In Ozona just before Christmas three men swore out papers and the county constable impounded the animal. The hearing was held in the judge's chambers in the old stone courthouse and the clerk read the charges and the names and the judge turned and looked down at John Grady” (McCarthy 291). The example also depicts the spatial practice surrounding such an encounter in in greater detail. In short, the process seems very abstract in nature, relying on language in both the challenge and defence of the property rights of the horse. Indeed, the protagonist John Grady proves his rights by recounting in length how he came by the horse, although the story is ultimately proved by visible scars in his body (ibid. 291-3). An additional example found in McCarthy's *The Crossing* would be the army recruiting offices: “It was a cold and blustery day in El Paso. He found the recruiting office and the clerk filled out the same forms over again and he stood in line with a number of men and they undressed and put their clothes in a basket and were given a brass chit with a number on it and they stood in line naked holding their papers” (McCarthy 653). Again, the physical spatial practice is reinforced with abstractions, written numbers and language. All the examples above happen to be instances connected to the state's oppressive sub-apparatus. It is perhaps not surprising that the entities tasked with maintaining the stability of social space would create and maintain junction points as well. Neither is the involvement of abstractions in the structure or spatial practice of these places. Their function after all seems to be to maintain the dominant abstractions of the social space. In the first example it is about state's monopoly on violence and the security of accessible

spaces, the second example concerns property rights, and the last induction to the sub-apparatus itself. In other words, these junction points seem to facilitate the maintenance of the territory's symbolical and institutional shapes. The importance of such permanent junction points for the stability and integrity of the social space of a territorial entity would then seem to be significant.

By comparison, the temporary functions points seem to function differently. While they may be housed in physical manifestations such as buildings, they do not embody the functions of encounter and passage indefinitely. Neither do they seem to be active at all times. In this manner, they seem to some degree similar to the places of abode that they rely directly on the presence and actions of human subjects for meaning. In contrast, the permanent junction points seem to be coded and physically structured with their function in mind to invoke that function even in the absence of the active participation of human subjects. In temporary junction points, then, the spatial practice of human subjects seems to be the emphasised part of the assemblage. In the novels places of sporting events are a good example as when they are in use they function as junction points and when vacated they seem to no longer fulfil this function. As an illustration the description of the rodeo in McMurtry's

Horseman, Pass By:

The rodeo people began to move into Thalia the before the show actually began. That day they brought in the rodeo stock, and the contestants came to town, some of them off circuit, and some just of the ranches. The poor boys came with nothin but their rigging and a change of clothes, but the winners drove in in big white Lincolns, with fancy horse trailers hitched on behind. The cowgirls came too, wearing big hats, and britches that fitted them like skin fits a snake. I don't guess they ever slept from the time they hit town until the rodeo was over four days later. During all that time there was nothing but beer drinking and rodeo talk, courting and dancing, and even the merchants in Thalia came out in Western wear. Rodeo was the one big get-together of the year. (McMurtry 98)

In fact, here the spatial practice seems to extend outside its immediate location affecting the composition of the surrounding urban space of the town of Thalia. The subtle restrictive or

exclusive nature of junction points exhibited in these social gatherings as well as the ritualistic side are better illustrated in the football game in McMurtry's *The Last Picture Show*:

Show:

When the band played the Thalia school song it was a little thrilling: it touched something in Sonny and made him feel as though he was part of it again, the high school, football, the really important part of life in the town.

It would have been better if he had not ever felt that way, because as soon as the game started he realized he was not part of it at all. Bobby Logan was part of it, and Coach Popper was very much part of it. He strode up and down the sidelines, scowling fiercely at the referees — everyone knew the coach was there. Even the linesmen were part of it, even the freshmen and sophomores on the bench — at least they were suited out. But Sonny wasn't part of it, and neither was Jerry, who had been out of school so long that he was used to not being part of it. [...] He kept wishing he was out on the field playing. (ibid. 704)

Whether concrete or abstract, there are boundaries that limit the participation to the event, the access to the encounter element of the junction point. In the football game, the locus of the junction point is the field, and in the rodeo, it is the arena, but in both the participants are in the centre, and the spectators partake to their best capacity. Other very prevalent example of a junction point are the various instances of where space in one manner or another is commodified. Then the access is restricted with the currency and either the encounter or the passage is the commodity. The trains as locations seem to function in the latter manner (McMurtry 232-7, 276; McCarthy 250-2, 257) while the restaurants and bars seem to at least include an element of the former (McCarthy 660-2). The brothels depicted in McCarthy's *Cities of the Plain* (745-9, 808-14) and McMurtry's *Last Picture Show* (628-9, 712) are perhaps even better example as they are places of commodified encounters. Here the ritual is connected to the monetary transaction and the access is restricted, if not absolutely then at least relatively, in accordance with people's ability to pay. Although the symbolical importance of the transaction seems to vary from example to example. Potentially the ritual involved in the function of such a junction point merely facilitates the transaction, being essentially mere politeness. The examples are nonetheless temporary as they do not continue

indefinitely even if they are reoccurring. The place is in a manner left to fallow, so to speak, to wait for another instance of spatial practice and another set of spatial actors.

The junction points seem to be instances of representational spaces similar to places of abode but function differently. That is to say that as representational spaces they involve the individuals in a space and in a spatial process of signification. Permanent junction points seem to function in a more structured manner, seem to be housed in constructed structures, and presumably attempt to recreate the dominant abstractions and subject the participating individuals to them. By contrast, temporary junction points seem to be more flexible and permitting of a subjective interpretation of the abstractions. They also seem to rely on the voluntary participation of the subjects. Nonetheless, whether strict or loose in their spatial practice the junction points do seem to follow some sort of a script for their proceedings. Above, for example, the rules of a sport, the rules of general social conduct, or the protocols of the officials. Thus, othering of such a place would seem rather easy as there are delineated rules but potentially no enforcement of them. The failure to participate in the rodeo after signing in in *Horseman, Pass By* illustrates this well:

I ran around behind the chutes, wondering where in the world Jesse was. Surely he hadn't gone off without making the final performance. Then I found the colt, saddled and ready, tied to a fence. But no Jesse anywhere. I was almost ready to ride the colt myself, when I heard the announcer scratch the horse. [...]

Before I got near the horse, I heard Jesse talking. He was sitting spraddle-legged against the fence, talking to the horse. There were three or four empty beer cans scattered around his feet. (McMurtry 139-43)

The effect is not particularly significant to the surrounding space, but it certainly does disrupt and reorient the sense of space of the individuals involved perhaps constructing a subjective interpretation of the space and abstractions associated with the sport therein. Jesse all but admits the intentionality of the act: “‘I knew this mornin' I was gonna do all this,’ [...] ‘I guess I done had it planned,’ [...] ‘Because I don't intend to ride in another arena agin. Only

reason I go to rodeos is to chase after the prettiest tail I can find, and I know beforehand I ain't gonna catch that” (ibid. 145).

3.5 Demystification of the West: Reflection on the Western Formula

At this point it is important to remember that as literary texts the novels cannot be anything else than representations of space. By their very nature as products of language they are mental abstractions and thus distanced from the concrete physical world (Lefebvre 14-6).

Lefebvre himself stresses that thus “[d]istinctions must be drawn between discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space” (132). There is no physical space or lived space to be found in the texts, although representations of them abound. The representations of space found in these novels can be then presumed to represent the wider developments of the models of conceived space in the Western formula at the moment of their publication.

The novels of McMurtry’s *Thalia Trilogy* appeared over the course of the 1960’s. In the preceding 1950’s the dominant form of the Western formula was the classical Western developed in the cinema that emphasized the importance of the frontier in the national history of the USA focusing specifically on its passing and the development of cities (Cawelti 1976 242-51). The preceding half a century had also imbued the formula of the literary Western with a sense of romanticism and melodrama and the genre developed a reputation of escapist fiction (Bloodworth 47-51; Cawelti 1976 241). By contrast, the representations of space in *Thalia Trilogy* focus mostly on the representational spaces on individual personal scale. McMurtry’s emphasis on the domestic lived space and mundane spatial practice stands in stark contrast to the more dramatic conventions of the established formula Western.

Ironically, they also resemble the conventions of the Victorian novel in opposition to which’s American variant the modern Western formula was originally invented. The resemblance has been previously noted and discussed by Roger Jones. It is noteworthy that McMurtry has

both apparently embraced the description of a regional writer in the past (Crawford 43) and was also known for his dislike of the Western formula (Frye 12). Thus, it seems that McMurtry's divergence from the formula in the Thalia Trilogy is not only intentional but also deliberate. Ironically, the resulting stories still conform to the prototype of the Western if one chooses to emphasise the location over the other facets of the definition. In fact, with this point of view, McMurtry's novels are excellent Westerns as the narratives arise from the setting rather than from the conventions of the genre. McMurtry's novels seem to also anticipate a wider trend of demystification within the Western which Cawelti calls re-regionalisation (2002 135-43). It seems that at least the American Western began to focus on more authentic representation of the setting and the locale again in the late 20th century. Similarly, Gary A. Yoggy notes the success of the "domestic" or "family" TV-Western in the 1960's and 70's that focused on the everyday life of its mundane characters in a frontier setting (176-80). In a way, McMurtry's novels seem to do this same adaption in print.

By contrast, McCarthy's Border Trilogy was published in the 1990's. By then the popularity of the Western had waned in America in general (Bloodworth 180-4; Cawelti 1976 252-3). The more serious Westerns were dominated by the revisionist trend that held a disillusioned view of the West while the more formulaic B-Westerns relied increasingly on stylized depictions of violence (Cawelti 1976 252-9). Influence of the evolving formula or formulas can certainly be seen in McCarthy's Border Trilogy in the graphic descriptions of violence, cynical worldview, and seemingly clear spatial and thematic oppositional pairs. Similarly, the fascination with the disappearing West embodied by the occupation of the cowboy harkens to the classical Western. Adherence to the preceding formulaic elements is most likely intentional as the novels were conceived following the writer's own relocation to the West "to research a novel he initially called his 'Western'" (Frye 14). Thus, McCarthy seems to also have a sense for the authenticity of the setting. Similarly, there is noticeable

focus on the lived space and mundane spatial practice in his novels. Furthermore, the melodramatic presentation of the narrative including the spatial elements relies on the narrative focus that is centred on the American protagonists. The narrative events and descriptions are subtly presented through their position and thus the spatial representation is structured on the basis their sense of space. While McCarthy makes use of the formulaic plots typical to Westerns, such as “the Revenge tale” and “the Outlaw story” (Vassar), they are not set in America but are transposed to the borderlands of the northern Mexico. That is to say that in the absence of a frontier, McCarthy relocates the narrative to an acceptable alternative rather than reimagine the setting to suit the story. In other words, the social space of Mexico and the borderlands is represented are influenced by the characters’ and by extension the readers’ preconceptions of the frontier and the Western. In spatial terms, then, it could be observed that McCarthy employs the conventions of the formula but excuses and justifies the conventional modes of representation by the means of focal characters and shift to the locale.

4. Conclusion

In summary, then, it can be noted that the representations of the orientation of social space are abundant in the novels of Cormac McCarthy and Larry McMurtry. The most visible example of a boundary in the novels examined is the international border between the sovereign states of the USA and Mexico. By comparison, boundaries within territories do not receive the same amount of attention, although they are more prevalent, and consist mainly of property boundaries. Similarly, places of abode and accessible spaces seem to orient space especially within the territories. While all types of orienting space contribute to the integrity and continual reconstruction of the territorial shape, the role of junction points seems particularly pronounced in the maintenance of the symbolical shape of the territory.

On the basis of the evidence, it can be concluded that McMurtry as a writer consciously writes against the conventions of the formula, while McCarthy shows what manner of adjustments could be made into the formula to maintain its basic shape. On the basis of the two writers, two observations can then be made. The first is indeed the re-regionalisation of the Western. Both of the writers seem to attempt to represent the settings in their correct geographical and historical contexts. As a result, the influence of some of the conventional elements of the Western formula seem to diminish. In spatial terms, this refers to the construction of binary categories of space and especially their association with gender or race, which do not seem to be formed deliberately in any of the novels. The second observation is that the re-regionalisation does not entail the complete abandonment or deconstruction of the Western formula. For example, the symbolical use of space as a metaphor for abstractions such emotions can be observed in the texts of both novelists. It seems that to use the formula, one needs to merely hedge it by either readjusting its representation of spatial location or lean into the subjectivity of the sense of space to produce an accordingly frontier-like feel to the setting.

McMurtry's *Thalia* novels show a clear attempt to contest the methods of spatial representation found in the preceding Western formula in addition to the other conventions of it. Ironically, the choice to emphasize representational spaces and mundane spatial practice in lived space may have anticipated a similar shift in the Western formula from which the writer sought to distance himself and his regional setting. McCarthy's *Border Trilogy* novels exhibit some of this regionally aware shift as well, but he does not shy away from the other elements of the Western formula either. For example, the graphic depiction of violence and the lack of revitalisation show the influence of the revisionist school of the Western and possibly the Westerns made in Europe (Cawelti 1976 252-9). Nonetheless, the prominence of the lived space and depiction of individual spatial practice in the representation of space is a clear and

shared feature between the novels of the novelists. Considering the time difference between the publication of the novels, the attempts to ignore the Western formula in the representation of the West seems to have influenced even the more formulaic examples of the Western, at least if McCarthy's novels are of any indication.

It is interesting that while McMurtry's approach to spatial representation can be viewed as othering of the models of representation that existed in the formula, McCarthy's method is perhaps closer to a change in a point of view of the narrative viewpoint. Essentially, this would be more along the lines of othering the reader's position in relation to the representation rather than visibly altering the elements of the text. Nonetheless, the outcomes of the methods seem similar in that both reorient the representations of the space in the novels.

Still, even if McCarthy combines the more recent demystified view of the Western with the conventional elements of the Western formula such as the melodramatic plots, he is not exactly a writer of B-Westerns or even specifically a writer of Westerns. Neither are the novels exactly new anymore, the most recent of them being about twenty-five years old. Thus, it could be interesting to analyse the representation of space in more recent American Westerns or alternatively examine the spatial representation in the Westerns originating outside the USA.

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