

boundaries, boundaries intersect it everywhere, passing through each of its constituent features."¹

This paper is based on the premise that Canada cannot be understood apart from the United States, that is, outside the continental context. Hence what follows is situated, as it were, on the boundary between the two states, the International Border, as it is called, that divides and connects Canada, which is the world's second-largest country after Russia, and the United States, the world's sole remaining superpower. This exalted position of the U.S. was foreshadowed as early as 1836 when the Nova Scotian T.C. Haliburton, in his popular Sam Slick sketches, had his protagonist, an itinerant Yankee peddler, say: „I guess we are the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and the most enlightened too.”² In a complex manner, where Canada is concerned, such concepts as „nation,” „state,” and „continent” intersect with the major constant in its history, its relationship with the U.S. „State” refers to a legal and political organization; „nation” designates a community of people sharing certain values and interests. Evidently, the United States is both a state and a nation. It has always benefited from a civic nationalism sustaining faith in America's unique democratic mission in the world as the champion of universal human rights. American nationalism and exceptionalism, which often strike the observer as naive, have no counterpart in Canada. This should not surprise us. The U.S. came into being through a revolutionary act, whose ideological premise were English parliamentarism and the enlightenment view of man. Canada took an evolutionary course. To the present day, its head of state is the English king—or queen. To

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 38; M.M. Bakhtin, „The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art,” *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 257-325; 274.

² Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *The Clockmaker; or, The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville (First Series)*, New Canadian Library (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), 24.