8 Karen Tei Yamashita's Los Angeles, *Tropic of Orange*

8.1 The Global City of Los Angeles

The official slogan by the *Los Angeles Times* that "Los Angeles Brings It All Together" (Soja 1989: 191) captures the paradigmatic and mythological impact of the well-studied 'postmetropolis' (Soja 2000). Once founded on Mexican territory, Los Angeles turned into "one of the most 'Anglo' of all American metropolises" in the 1920s (Abu-Lughod 1999: 134) before it developed into a world city with "extraordinary demographic and cultural heterogeneity" (Soja 2000: 227) and the highest American rate of foreign-born population (33 percent) (Anisef et al 2003: 3). At the turn of the millennium, the global city was, and still is, due to its great ethnic diversity, both, the unofficial Mexican American capital (Ortiz 1996: 247) and the Third World capital (Rieff 1991).

Los Angeles serves as a prototype (Beauregard 2003: 7) of the modern global city (Sawhney 2002: 5). In terms of geography, infrastructure, and size, Los Angeles is considered a "fragmented metropolis par excellence" (Fogelson 1967: 2). The "great big freeway" (Beveridge et al 2003: 49) is the global city's nickname and governing structure, stressing the importance of the automobile. Arising from a desert, the city constantly boosted itself to become the entertainment center of the world (Sudjic 1992: 80). However, the global city's politics, economy, and cultural diversity also supported the development of ethnic clusters and gated communities, lead to it becoming the American homeless capital in the 1980s (Halle 2003: 12), and sparked one of the most violent American interethnic ruptures: the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Los Angeles began to grow in the mid-nineteenth century when Toronto and New York have long been cities of regional or national importance. In 1835, Los Angeles officially became a city with around 1,000 residents, then still belonging to Mexico. With the Mexican-American War following the California gold rush,

the city is controlled by Americans (Abu-Lughod 1999: 54f.). Once Los Angeles was connected to the railway network, the city began its development, soon becoming the most important American industrial city (Scott et al 1998: viii). Thus, from 1,000 residents in the mid-nineteenth century, Los Angeles's population exploded to more than 100,000 by the end of the nineteenth century (Abu-Lughod 1999: 139).

Similar to Toronto and New York, Los Angeles nowadays represents a "heterogeneous mosaic" comprised of various ethnicities of different residence tradition (Soja 2000: 283), quickly developing "from WASP hegemony toward the poly-ethnic diversity" it is characterized by today (Davis 1990: 7).[50] Dominated by the Spanish language since its founding, Los Angeles became "overwhelmingly 'white' and native-born" by the beginning of the twentieth century (Abu-Lughod 1999: 134) when a majority of white middle-class Americans migrated from the Eastern states between 1870 and 1900, shaping suburban Los Angeles and its characteristic 'polycentric sprawl' (Soja 2000: 123). Besides the connection with the railroad, the oil-boom, the growing importance of the harbor, and marketing fostered the city's progress (Abu-Lughod 1999: 134ff.), soon establishing the motion picture, petroleum, and tourism industry (Soja 2000: 128).

Between 1900 and 1930, the population of Los Angeles and its counties grew ten-fold to more than 2.5 million (Abu-Lughod 1999: 142f.). Masses of Eastern and Southern Europeans migrated to the metropolis mainly in the 1920s (Davis 1990: 30). Moreover, following the stock-market crash in 1929, the so-called 'Dust Bowl migration' led to migration from the Southern states, including poor white and African Americans who settled in separate urban areas (Soja 2000: 131). Los Angeles was less affected by the Great Depression than New York (Abu-Lughod 1999: 163), offering better economic and social prospects for migrants and immigrants. To accommodate the rising number of residents, a reliable water supply was established, thereby facilitating the city's further growth and continuous development. In 1913, the California Aqueduct provided sufficient water for the region, its population, and industries (Soja 2000: 128), and the size of Los Angeles stretched ten-fold until 1930 through the annexation of new communities (Abu-Lughod 1999: 154f.).

By the 1960s, due to "racist public administration, housing codes, zoning practices, and police work," Los Angeles had turned into one of the American cities that was most segregated in ethnic, political, and geographic terms (Soja

50 The informal term 'WASP' is the abbreviation of 'White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.' It first appeared in the 1950s as a criticism of the elitist group of wealthy White Americans with an English Protestant background.

2000: 139). Watts, for example, transformed from a mainly white to a largely African American neighborhood in the 1940s, and, after the war, more 'established' Jewish or Mexican immigrants performed the jobs formerly done by African Americans (Abu-Lughod 1999: 248f.). This segregation caused serious ethnic tensions, thereby sparking, among others, the 1965 Watts riots. During the six-day riots, Jewish stores in Los Angeles were destroyed, about 1,000 buildings damaged, 3,952 individuals arrested, 1,032 injured, and 34 killed (Halle et al 2003a: 342).

The period following the Immigration Act of 1965 can be regarded as a 'de-WASPing' of Los Angeles and thus represents a reversal of the period between 1870 and 1900. In 1960, non-Hispanic whites still made up more than 80 percent of the city's population (Soja 2000: 136). After the Immigration Act, which stopped the so-called 'country-of-origin quotas' (Foner 2000: 23f.), massive immigrant waves changed Los Angeles (Soja 2000: 283). While before 1965 the city received fewer non-European immigrants than New York (Waldinger 1996: 1079), after the Act, Los Angeles became the leading immigrant destination and thus, it was home to about one fifth of all American immigrants by the end of the twentieth century (Soja 2000: 283)

Following the 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration Act, the foreign-born population of Los Angeles tripled until 1990 to a proportion of 33 percent (Sabagh et al 2003: 102), of which more than 50 percent were Mexican, El Salvadorian, or Guatemalan (Foner 2000: 10f.). Beginning in 1970, within only two decades, a major shift from an Anglo majority of 70 percent to a non-Anglo majority of 60 percent took place in the County of Los Angeles, transforming the white enclave in a Spanish-speaking region into "America's leading Third World metropolis" (Soja 2000: 141). Between 1980 and 1990 alone, two million immigrants arrived in Los Angeles, of which 40 percent were Mexican (Abu-Lughod 1999: 302). This was half a million more than the number of immigrants that arrived in New York within the same period.

In 1990, the Los Angeles population was 39 percent Latino or Hispanic, 14 percent African American and ten percent Asian. While the percentage of Asians remained the same, the proportion of Hispanic or Latino increased to 47 percent and African Americans decreased to eleven percent in 2000 (Halle et al 2003b: 158). Thus, whereas African Americans were a historically more significant foreign-born group in New York, Los Angeles had only about ten percent. This ten-year trend highlights the growing impact of the Spanish-speaking population in the global city, reconnecting the city to its Mexican roots. In 1990, 40 percent of Los Angelenos spoke a language other than English at home, which was ten per-

cent more than in New York and, in Los Angeles, Spanish was spoken twice as often as in New York (Sabagh et al 2003: 103f.).

Los Angeles, a city with great Spanish influence from its founding and one that 'WASPed' and 'de-WASPed' itself in the course of its history, has again increasingly become a Mexican-influenced city (Waldinger 1996: 1079). In 1990, the 'unofficial Mexican America capital' (Ortiz 1996: 247) featured more than a third of the declared Mexican American population (4.7 out of 13.4 million) (Sabagh et al 2003: 105). In 2000, the proportion of Hispanics was more than 45 percent in Los Angeles, of which more than 80 percent was of Mexican origin (Beveridge et al 2003: 61f.), turning the city into "the world's largest Catholic archdiocese" (Soja 2000: 141). Besides the geographical proximity and better work opportunities, the effect of chain-migration furthers the growing number of Hispanics when ethnic networks facilitate investment and immigration (Keil 1998: 143).

Due to its Pacific Coast location and the relative proximity to Mexico and Asia in comparison to other North American cities, Latin Americans and Asians constitute the two most influential immigrant groups in Los Angeles (Halle 2003: 14). Asians in Los Angeles are of diverse background, of which Japanese constitute less than ten and Chinese 22 percent (Sabagh et al 2003: 107). Although immigrants to New York are the most ethnically diverse in America (Foner 2000: 10), compared to Los Angeles, the New York's Hispanic proportion of only 28 percent was much smaller and featured a different ethnic diversity with a majority of Caribbean and Central and South American origin and Mexicans representing the second to last group in size, with less than ten percent (Beveridge et al 2003: 61f.).

The massive increase of immigrants until 1990, to about four million foreign-born in Los Angeles within twenty years, was the most remarkable in the world, making the West Coast city *the* immigrant region in America (Sabagh et al 2003: 102f.). The new leading immigrant capital became a magnet of national and international migration (Foner 2000: 10f.). As the so-called 'Ellis Island of the Pacific century' (Sawhney 2002: 5), Los Angeles is now considered the most important contemporary destination for immigration to the United States. Thus, by the end of the twentieth century, the global city of Los Angeles is shaped by a "poly-ethnic and poly-lingual society – with Anglos a declining minority" (Davis 1990: 87f.).

Los Angeles, with almost 18 million citizens in the Greater Los Angeles Area, is "indisputably a global city" (Sawhney 2002: 5) and featured in the top ten of several global city hierarchies. Together with New York, Los Angeles is in the top tier of global cities, while Toronto follows up in second tier (Brenner et

al 2006: 3). Whereas New York is cited every time and Toronto eleven times in a comprehensive study of "cities cited in world city research," Los Angeles is cited 13 out of 16 times (Taylor 2004: 40f.). Both, New York and Los Angeles are considered to be 'core primary cities' in the world city hierarchy (Friedmann 1986), significant nodes in the global city network, and America's 'leading immigrant destinations' (Waldinger 1996: 1078). In terms of 'global network connectivity,' Los Angeles is ranked ninth and New York second in the top ten world cities (Taylor 2004: 69).

Whereas New York, the classical haven for immigrants to America, fulfilled the criteria of a global city as early as the 1870s (Abu-Lughod 1999: 40), Los Angeles became a 'prototopos' (Soja 1989: 191) in the late twentieth century, functioning as a "prism of different spatialities" (Davis 1990: 84). Los Angeles is therefore referred to as the 'proto-postmodern city' (Dear et al 2002: 70, Löbbermann 2008: 263), operating as a model urban region. The development of the global city is intrinsically linked to globalization and its effects. The increase in world-wide migration from Asia and Latin America, for example, changed the city significantly and urbanization as such (Soja et al 1998: 3).

One of the distinguishing features of Los Angeles in comparison to New York and Toronto is the urban sprawl of the so-called "monstro-City" (Soja 2006: 181). Although New York and Los Angeles are the two most populous cities in America, the population of about four million Los Angeles residents in 2000 is roughly only half of New York's (Halle 2003: 1). The "hundred mile city" Los Angeles (Abu-Lughod 1999: 358; Sudjic 1992: 80), however, is extremely spread out geographically, with businesses and activities extending over a vast, decentralized hinterland (Halle 2003: 1). This structure of 'the postmetropolis' (Soja 2000) is, for the L.A. School of Urbanism exemplary for how cities developed in the twentieth century and are developing in the twenty-first century.

Although Los Angeles is not one of three examples used to coin the term 'global city' by Saskia Sassen (1991: 4), it is nevertheless considered the 'prototype' (Beauregard 2003: 7) of a modern global city. The Los Angeles School of Urbanism[51] emerged as a result of this uniqueness because the global city "seems to break every rule of urban readability and regularity" (Soja 2006: 181), being unlike previous prototypes such as Chicago and other leading world cities. Inspired by the 'Frankfurt School' (Davis 1990: 84) and developed in the mid-1980s at the University of Southern California in Los Angles (UCLA) and be-

51 For more information on urban studies and the different schools of urbanism, see Chapter 3 on 'Global Cities as Cultural Nodal Points.'

yond, the L.A. School functions as a counter-initiative to the dominant Chicago School of Urban Studies. Main scholars of the L.A. School include Edward W. Soja, Mike Davis, Allen J. Scott, Michael Dear, and Steven Flusty. Although Los Angeles is often criticized as "a city without a past" (Dear 1998: 76), the 'L.A. School' views it "as the paradigm of the future" (Davis 1990: 86).

Los Angeles is exemplary for city building, forming a whole of spread-out towns and villages (Soja et al 1998: 1). Similar to Toronto, which had amalgamated into Canada's largest city by 1998 (Hutton 2010: 119) after fusing several municipalities (Allahwala et al 2010: 210), Los Angeles grew steadily in population and size. By the start of this millennium, the five-county region of Los Angeles encompassed over 170 municipalities (Soja 2000: 141). With 12,561 square kilometers in 2000, Los Angeles was the second most wide-spread city in the world, although it is only ranked twelfth in terms of population size (Bronger 2004: 174). Therefore, the metropolization rate is lower than New York's and very low in comparison to cities such as Soul, Buenos Aires, or Tokyo (Bronger 2004: 174).

From the city's beginning, Los Angeles was characterized by fragmentation and odd infrastructure without a core city (Abu-Lughod 1999: 134). Since Allison Lurie's mid-1960s novel, Los Angeles has been known as "The Nowhere City" (Lurie 1965; Clarke 1988: 126). The "entangled and labyrinthine space" of the 465 square mile city has no single origin and no center (Lehan 1998: 257). Thus, in contrast to the former development of cities around a core, the city is spacious and leveled, reminding one of a doughnut structure. The formerly important downtown has decreased in significance, with many Los Angelenos never having been there (Soja 2006: 180).

Mobility is a key concept of American culture and much more than a necessity for the "great big freeway" (Beveridge et al 2003: 49), Los Angeles. Due to its fragmentation and decentralization, freeways are the global city's governing structure. Mass transportation within the spread-out city was doomed early to failure. Although many attempts were made in the early twentieth century, public transportation by horse-car, cable car, or street trolley was not successful (Abu-Lughod 1999: 143). Due to trains degenerating after the Great Depression, 80 percent of passenger miles in Los Angeles were conducted by car (Fogelson 1967: 274). By the end of the 1930s and as part of the city's industrialization process, the renowned Los Angeles freeway system had been planned, further encouraging the stretched-out infrastructure of today (Abu-Lughod 1999: 253).

The type of living and interaction of the global city's minorities is closely connected to the infrastructural history of Los Angeles. Private transportation mobility in Los Angeles is of more significance than in New York or Toronto

(Perl et al 2010: 194). In contrast to the 'walking city' New York (Beveridge et al 2003: 49) and the major public transportation system in Toronto, Los Angeles is dominated by its freeway system. Ethnic clusters, poor Mexican neighborhood enclaves, so-called 'barrios,' the many diverse unskilled workers (Soja 2000: 227), the rising number of homeless (Halle 2003: 12) as well as the mostly Anglo so-called 'gated communities' of the privileged, which enforce social boundaries in 'the fortress city' (Davis 1990), are symptomatic of the city's structure and sociality. The freeway construction thus led to tremendous infrastructural displacement in the form of ethnic geographical clusters, enforcing "social divisions in ways that were mostly symbolic before" (Monahan 2002: 164).

The population of Los Angeles moving to the city until the 1930s, however, was united by its perception of a new dispersed and heterogeneous suburbanism, sustainably changing the urban landscape into a "fragmented metropolis" (Fogelson 1967: 273). Chinese clusters in Los Angeles, for example, coined the term 'ethnoburbs' (Liu 1998; Hall 2010: 60), relating to specific established immigrants clusters in dispersed patterns. Moreover, in Los Angeles and its greater region, a so-called 'Tortilla-Mercedes Divide'[52] has long existed, describing "the social and economic separation between the more affluent White and poorer Mexican populations" (Allen 2002: 701). This gap and many others enforce the city's development. By the end of the 1980s, Los Angeles had become increasingly polarized by ethnicity and class (Abu-Lughod 1999: 367) in demographic as well as geographic terms. Thus, "the epicenter of globalization" (Sawhney 2002: 5) both captures and highlights the coexistence of the 'First world' and the 'Third world' within one city. Los Angeles therefore visualizes the effect of globe-encompassing migration across borders better than most other global cities.

By the mid-1990s, the former 'black-white boundary' slowly began to vanish in Los Angeles due to massive Latino migration (Soja 2000: 142). Racial boundaries, however, were not erased, as the 1992 L.A. Riots violently illustrated. The six-day movement mainly took place in Los Angeles and was sparked by the unsatisfactory jury's verdict on the police officers who beat up the African American Rodney King. The riots resulted in interethnic uproar, assault, arson, and murder. More than 50 people were killed. A regional economic depression followed when the population started to mistrust the local police force (Kaufmann 2003: 323). This violent explosion is explained as grounded in the very compli-

52 The term 'Tortilla-Mercedes Divide' refers to T.C. Boyle's recent novel *The Tortilla Curtain* (1995), which illustrates the differences between poor (illegal) Mexican immigrants and wealthy Whites in Los Angeles

cations of space and sociality arising from "the exceedingly volatile cityspace produced by new urbanization processes, with its unprecedented cultural heterogeneity, widening social and economic disparities, and multiplying points of tension and confrontation" (Soja 2000: 299).

The city's economic and infrastructural development, however, was intrinsically linked to the commercialization of the unique city culture and the successful myth-making processes. The global city's culturally diverse labor force inspired the region's entrepreneurship and cultural urban life (Soja 2000: 184). Moreover, tourism is a major asset of the global city, supporting its economy. More than five million foreign tourists visited Los Angeles in 2000 (Gladstone et al 2003: 81), which is a bigger share of national visitors and about a million less international visitors than New York.

The city's image and self-conception have changed immensely over time. The global city emerged from the desert and being driven by American capitalism, has grown to one of the most significant urban complexes in the world. Important stakeholders in this process included 'the Boosters,' 'the Noirs,' and 'the Exiles' (Davis 1990: 22ff.), each searching for the "land of opportunities for *all*" (Sawhney 2002: 5; italics original). At the beginning of Southern California's 'Booster Era' between 1885 and 1925, Los Angeles was considered "the most violent town in the West" (Davis 1990: 26). The numerous ensuing, sometimes contradicting legends that arose (Taylor 1983: 33), attracted working-class and middle-class migrants alike. By the 1960s, thanks to the 'Noir' scene and a great number of exile writers from Europe, Los Angeles and the Hollywood 'dream factory' had become specialists in the production of images and myths (Soja 2000: 136).

Hollywood and its huge entertainment industry is *the* symbol for globalization as Americanization. Los Angeles, known as the world's 'entertainment center' (Sudjic 1992: 80) and the culture industry's world capital (Davis 1990: 17), is one of the most mediated American cities (Sorkin 1982: 8; Davis 1990: 20). It is a place where American culture is made, thereby functioning as a marketing machinery of American values. The myth-making in Los Angeles and the proliferation of the ideal of the American dream is commercialized, instrumentalized as a commodity, and then promoted to Americans "like automobiles, cigarettes and mouth wash" (Mayo 1933: 319; Davis 1990: 17).

Global viewers of television and cinema have the images of Hollywood in mind (Clarke 1988: 125), which is the alter-ego of Los Angeles (Davis 1990: 18), and successfully links "the dreamer to the dream" (Lehan 1998: 257). The Hollywood Sign is *the* advertisement as such, promising and signifying the American dream. In addition to Hollywood, the urban image of Los Angeles is

also significantly influenced by Disneyland (Clarke 1988: 125). The global city invented 'urban Imagineering' (Soja 2000: 136), absorbing the identity of other cities and consciousness in general (Lehan 1998: 257). Some critics even claim that it is not globalization that affects Hollywood but that the film industry has an effect on globalization (Shiel 2001: 11).

Well before Los Angeles and Hollywood became the 'American dream factory,' New York was the 'land of promise' (Bell et al 2011: 261). New York, however, still provides the financial network for the proliferation of American culture from Hollywood (Abu-Lughod 1999: 290). Due to geo-proximity and lower costs, however, Toronto's film industry's growth rate is greater than that of Los Angeles (Vinodrai 2010: 105). Los Angeles nonetheless remains the world's 'entertainment center' (Sudjic 1992) with its capital, however, still mostly controlled in the financial center New York.

Los Angeles is one of the rare cities in which words are not the central form of expression and representation. Instead, due to its brief history mainly influenced by the film industry, movies are the city's prevailing form of articulation (Ulin 2002: xiv). In the twentieth century, the city's mythologizers were international filmmakers, American novelists working for the film industry, and European academic exiles who "radically reworked the metaphorical figure of the city" (Davis 1990: 20). Thus, Los Angeles literature did take long to flourish. The writers moving west, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner, or writers looking for political asylum in the twentieth century, such as Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Mann (Ulin 2002: xiv), turned Los Angeles into "the world capital of an immense Culture Industry" (Davis 1990: 17). The growing film industry encouraged national and international work-seeking writers to move to Los Angeles, thereby slowly supporting the development of a literary scene (Ulin 2002: xv).

As Los Angeles is a city of opposites, its literature is also characterized by 'cacophony' (Ulin 2002: xvi). Nevertheless, three recurring themes can be identified with regard to Los Angeles literature: 1) themes of fantasy, dream, and progress, 2) the automobile, and 3) film noir, which constitutes the city's most renowned genre, featuring topics of urban chaos, misery, violence, and apocalypse.

The theme of the American dream and fantasy was linked early to Los Angeles as the most Western frontier of the continental United States. This domination of space, nature, and technology translates into the theme of progress. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon* (1941), for example, is a novel associated with "the frontier movement, Manifest Destiny, California Dreaming" (Lehan 1998: 257).

The theme of the automobile is closely connected to the theme of progress, individuality, and independence. There is a long tradition of fiction describing Los Angeles as a city ruled by the automobile, such as Thomas Pynchon's post-modern fiction *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), Ed Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1962) and *Thirtyfour Parking Lots* (1967), Joan Didion's *Play It as It Lays* (1971), and Hugo Williams' *No Particular Place to Go* (1981). Driving a car, road signs, and moving through the city on the freeway becomes the major perspective on the city[53] because automobiles "constitute the essential icons of Los Angeles" (Ulin 2002: xv).

In literary and cinematic terms, the third theme 'noir' is the most associated with Los Angeles, turning the city into a place that "American intellectuals love to hate" (Davis 1990: 21). Hollywood is strongly influenced by the city's noir culture, acting as a counterculture to the glamour and happy Hollywood ending (Ulin 2002: xvii) and as an antithesis to themes of progress and moving West. In the 1940s, Los Angeles turns into the Film Noir city, portraying the downside of the 'American dream factory,' such as violence, murder, death, intrigues, and the unconscious, reminiscent of Edgar Allen Poe's works (Clarke 1988: 142). The city is portrayed as a 'junkyard of dreams,' representing a simultaneous utopia and dystopia (Davis 1990: 18).

As part of the noir movement, Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1978 [1939]) and Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust* (1983 [1939]) form a new and existential literature of Los Angeles (Ulin 2002: xv). West's *The Day of the Locust* (1983 [1939]), which is considered the "best-known Hollywood novel" (Rhodes 2008: 10), pictures the city as urban hell with "a brutal violence waiting to erupt" (Lehan 1998: 259). Chandler's novel is set in the period of the Great Depression, portraying Los Angeles as "a strange neon world of light and colour" (Clarke 1988: 141) that is full of corruption.

Thus, similar to Los Angeles, a city with 'no unifying center,' its literature is in the same way decentered with no single logic. Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* manages to capture this multi-layered identity of the city, its form, literature, and inhabitants by transcribing it into the novel's structure, narrative, geography, and the characters' cultural diversity and the polyphonic sound. Yamashita's novel is inspired by the city's literary past and post-riot images and challenges. The novel is motivated by the most influential genre 'noir,' featuring an apocalypse-like disaster-movie setting that is ironically caused by an orange,

53 For more information about the history of movement, traffic, and the automobile in Los Angeles and its literature, see Graham Clarke's '*The Great Wrong Place': Los Angeles as Urban Milieu* (1988).

the symbol of California dreaming, American progress, and western capitalism across borders. A reporter reminiscent of a noir detective investigates the illegal drug traffic and organ trade. And, finally, with the imagined Los Angeles freeways functioning as a metaphor of the city's veins, all three identified themes of Los Angeles literature are incorporated in the global city novel, thereby imaging Los Angeles as 'The World City.'

8.2 LOS ANGELES IMAGINED: THE WORLD CITY

Whereas Brand's literary Toronto is expressed as a city with many different, overlapping worlds and Lee's New York as a city, in which language is the governing structure, Yamashita's Los Angeles captures both and the complexity, diversity, and multiplicity of the globe, virtually representing 'the World City.' Similar to the global city, the imagined Los Angeles in Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997) is a fragmented urban world in terms of ethnicity, class, and the freeway (Rody 2009: 130). The different worlds are illustrated by a variety of characters with individually tailored narrative voices, interacting as an interethnic network and collaborating in the end when borders are moving and merging in a 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989). Therefore, the imagined global city of Los Angeles can be regarded as 'the World City,' in which different worlds, such as the 'First World' and the 'Third World,' come together, collide, or cooperate.

Karen Tei Yamashita was born in Oakland, California in 1951. She spent most of her childhood in Los Angeles and returned to the 'city of angels' after a year in Japan and nine years in Brazil to once again become a native in 1984. Yamashita is a so-called *sansei* Japanese American, a third generation immigrant.[54] She is married to a Brazilian, whose family is shaped by Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian influence. She considered herself an immigrant when returning from Brazil to California. She is the Professor for Literature and Creative Writing at the University of California in Santa Cruz.

Yamashita's previous works *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (1990) and *Brazil-Maru* (1992) are mainly set in Brazil and incorporate local-global dialects of the interdependence of the economy and ecology. *Circle K Cycles* (2001) is a patchwork of fiction and non-fiction on a second-generation Brazilian Japanese

54 A *sansei* Japanese American is born from *Nisei* or second generation Japanese Americans, who are the children of first generation Japanese American, also called *issei*, born in Japan

family's struggle to assimilate. Her most recent novel *I Hotel* (2010) was a finalist in the National Book Award in fiction. It manages to capture in a kaleidoscope-like fashion diverse Asian American experiences in a San Francisco hotel in 1968 and the following nine years.

Yamashita is considered 'a global novelist' (Ling 2012: xvi), encompassing and incorporating different 'national' styles, spaces, histories, and characters, creating a global interethnic literature. Transnational travel and research of the Japanese community in Brazil and her bonding with different L.A. communities are mirrored in her writing. L.A. could also function as the abbreviation of Latin America due to the city's huge Latin American community. This influence reappears in Yamashita's writing, including, for example, Mexican American myths and characters. Moreover, she is inspired by international writers and critics, such as Italo Calvino, Toni Morrison, or John Irving (Glixman 2007). With the inclusion of a wide variety of different cultural influences and the rewriting of various literary conventions, Yamashita has played a major role in the redefinition of Asian American literary studies.

Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997) takes place in two countries, includes at least three languages and characters of several different ethnicities. Yamashita goes beyond Japanese American literature, focusing on her characters' cultural diversity and mobility in a globalizing world. She manages to portray characters that transgress borders as well as the concept of 'uni-ethnical' identities. In the light of the 1990s 'paradigm shift' from a national to a transnational focus in Asian American literature, Yamashita further broadened the view to a "transnational space of the Americas" (Rody 2009: 128).

Yamashita's style of writing surprised both publishers and readership as she did not comply with previous Asian American genre conventions. Similar to Chang-rae Lee's experience, one of the two other authors focused in this work, ethnic labeling was an issue for Yamashita. The Japanese American author faced difficulty finding a publisher because the novel's poetics of narrative, space, and code-switching are not associated with Asian American literary traditions. Similar to Dionne Brand and Chang-rae Lee, Karen Tei Yamashita can be considered to an extent as a *regional writer* who is very accustomed to the urban space themed in the novel. In *Tropic of Orange*, the poetics of place focus on the city of L.A. as well as on the U.S.-Mexican border region. Yamashita blends historical persons and places with detailed fiction and elements of magical realism to illustrate the impact of globalization and its effects. Yamashita presents many provocative and ironic statements in her book and enthralls the reader with a well-structured story and the interplay of the various characters, emphasized by the hybrid layout of the novel.

The novel is significantly set in the global city of Los Angeles shortly following the 1992 riots and a time of severe incidents of border conflicts and illegal immigration. The novel displays the local and global challenges of cultural diversity, migration, and socio-political integration, featuring regional, national, and international topics of globalization. Moreover, the changing image of the global city is illustrated, incorporating themes of Hollywood, the rising numbers of homeless as well as Spanish-speaking characters and themes in a city that is restructuring from a former black-and-white divide and has become, once again, a home for many Mexicans.

The poetics of narrative, place, and code-switching equally contribute to the ethnic global city novel, displaying the multiperspectival and network-like structure, character relationships, and the interdependency of the 'First world' and 'Third world,` converging in the simultaneous urban and border contact zone of the global(izing) city. As a result of the collaboration of the different characters, the seven individual worlds are revealed as one in the end, converging in 'The World City.' Yamashita thus creates a 'third space' in and beyond the urban complexity of the cultural nodal point of Los Angeles, one in which interethnic identities are constantly negotiated beyond cultural lines.

The novel is analyzed in five sections, addressing issues of narrative structure, genre and globalization, polyglotism and interethnic collaboration, globalization and the global, the elasticity of time and space as well as the significance of the title and of borders as connecting or dividing lines. The next section explores how the different themes, ethnicities, and cultural elements of the global city of Los Angeles are interwoven into the novel. This translation of the global city's urban space, including its history and closely intertwined ethnic diversity is illustrated in the novel's introductory overview, called 'HyperContexts.'

8.2.1 HyperContexts

As Karen Tei Yamashita's 'HyperContexts' indicates (see Illustration 1), the novel is constructed in a very sophisticated manner. This introductory structure to the book is used as a means of chapter and character overview that manages to capture the multi-layered textuality of the global city, its form, literature, and inhabitants. The author used a Lotus spreadsheet to structure the novel, its time and spatiality, characters as well as the plot and resolution (Glixman 2007). It shows the novel's frame, chapter layout, and different narrative threads at a glance, while simultaneously incorporating different themes of the city of Los Angeles and its history, such as film noir, mass media production, the freeway, and border traffic.

Illustration 1: HyperContexts

	Monday Summer Solstice	**Tuesday** Diamond Lane	**Wednesday** Cultural Diversity
Rafaela Cortes	**Midday** -Not Too Far from Mazatlán chapter 1	**Morning** - En México chapter 10	**Daylight** -The Cornfield chapter 18
Bobby Ngu	**Benefits** -Koreatown chapter 2	**Car Payment Due** -Tijuana via Singapore chapter 12	**Second Mortgage** -Chinatown chapter 15
Emi	**Weather Report** -Westside chapter 3	**NewsNow** -Hollywood South chapter 9	**Disaster Movie Week** -Hiro's Sushi chapter 20
Buzzworm	**Station ID** -Jefferson & Normandie chapter 4	**Oldies** -This Old Hood chapter 13	**LA X** -Margarita's Corner chapter 16
Manzanar Murakami	**Traffic Window** -Harbor Freeway chapter 5	**Rideshare** -Downtown Interchange chapter 8	**The Hour of the Trucks** -The Freeway Canyon chapter 19
Gabriel Balboa	**Coffee Break** -Downtown chapter 6	**Budgets** -Skirting Downtown chapter 14	**The Interview** -Manzanar chapter 17
Arcangel	**To Wake** -Marketplace chapter 7	**To Wash** -On the Tropic chapter 11	**To Eat** -La Cantina de Miseria y Hambre chapter 21

Thursday The Eternal Buzz	**Friday** Artificial Intelligence	**Saturday** Queen of Angels	**Sunday** Pacific Rim
Dusk -To the Border chapter 24	**Dawn** -The Other Side chapter 30	**Nightfall** -Aztlán chapter 38	**Midnight** -The Line chapter 45
Life Insurance -L.A./T.J. chapter 26	**Visa Card** -Final Destination chapter 34	**Social Security** -I-5 chapter 40	**American Express** -Mi Casa/Su Casa chapter 49
Live on Air -El A chapter 27	**Promos** -World Wide Web chapter 29	**Prime Time** -Last Stop chapter 41	**Commercial Break** -The Big Sleep chapter 44
You Give Us 22 Minutes -The World chapter 22	**AM/FM** -FreeZone chapter 31	**The Car Show** -Front Line chapter 37	**Hour 25** -Into the Boxes chapter 48
Lane Change -Avoiding the Harbor chapter 28	**Jam** -Greater L.A. chapter 35	**Drive-By** -Virtually Everywhere chapter 42	**SigAlert** -The Rim chapter 46
Time & a Half -Limousine Way chapter 25	**Overtime** -El Zócalo chapter 32	**Working Weekend** -Dirt Shoulder chapter 39	**Deadline** -Over the Net chapter 43
To Labor -East and West Forever chapter 23	**To Dream** -America chapter 33	**To Perform** -Angel's Flight chapter 36	**To Die** -Pacific Rim Auditorium chapter 47

Yamashita 1997

The 'HyperContexts' is one of the novel's methods of incorporating the textuality of the interconnectedness of time, space, and literary conventions. The chapter subheads thereby function as a telling element of the plot, giving away information about the characters and their situation in advance. Chapter 44 'Commercial Break - The Big Sleep,' for example, alludes to Raymond Chandler's famous 1930s noir work and to Emi's death.[55] Similarly, Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) is included as a chapter subhead (Chapter 15) in the overview to show awareness of the movie's implications because this film noir genre classic is the one "against which Asian American writers of crime fiction must write" (Huang 2010: 8). This unique technique of referencing in the 'HyperContexts' produces an 'encyclopedic novel' that is no longer identified as simply "narrative" (Heise 2006: 212f.).

The HyperContexts functions as the novel's skeleton or frame. It is divided into seven parts, both horizontally and vertically, representing either one day of the week or one character. The days are themed from "Summer Solstice" on Monday to "Pacific Rim" on Sunday. The fact that the story is told in one week gives rise to assumptions of biblical associations of how the whole world was created in the course of one week. In the novel, the world is threatened by the apocalypse of a global orange scare, which is resolved within the week. This apocalyptic setting is a satire of the popular Hollywood disaster movie.

In addition to the themed days of the week, the 49 individual subchapter headlines always refer to a location, highlighting the significance of time and space as a vital part of the narrative. The seven main characters' actions take place between Los Angeles and Mazatlán, Mexico. The novel's structure represents the city's infrastructure because, similarly, there is no original and no center (Lehan 1998: 257) but a wide variety of locations and a complex network of seven characters. Thus, like the geography of the global city of Los Angeles, the narrative in not centralized but seems to be shaped by fragmentation. This approach resembles a postmodern representation of urban structure, global narrative, and ethnic diversity (Raussert 2011: 103).

Although the seven stories that suggest separation and isolation make the narrative appear divided and thus "fragmented" (Lee 2011: 319), in the end, a synergy of narrative is created by the converging of the individual stories. The narrative is evenly focused on the protagonists, who each have one chapter a day to tell their story or world view, thus creating equality in terms of the poetics of narrative and political representation. Thus, vertically, the balanced approach of

55 For more information on the significance of Emi's death, please see Section 8.2.5 on 'These Lines.'

the novel is illustrated in 'HyperContexts' because there is no singular main protagonist from the start but seven characters that evenly contribute to the story line. In the end, as in a mosaic, all pieces of the different and increasingly overlapping worlds come together to form a whole picture. As a result of the characters' interethnic collaboration, seven worlds are established, converging into one in the end. Therefore, the selected characters can serve as a snapshot of the multiplicity of the citizens of Los Angeles, illustrating the diversity of the inhabitants of the global city, the border region, and the world. Thus, a global view composed of seven different but interacting perspectives is created, representing 'The World City" and simultaneously promoting the notion of 'cultural diversity.'

The different individually designed chapter headlines match a description of the respective character. Hence, when reading Emi's headlines (also featured in Illustration 1; read from left to right): 'Weather Report,' 'News Now,' 'Disaster Movie Week,' 'Live on Air,' 'Promos,' 'Prime Time,' and 'Commercial Break,' the audience gains a first impression of her character, interests, beliefs, and flaws. It is revealed from the start that Emi is interested in technology and works in the media industry of L.A. The analysis by chapter headlines works analogously for the remaining six characters. Rafaela Cortes is a Chicana from Mexico, married to Bobby Ngu, and taking care of Gabriel Balboa's house in Mazatlán. Her chapters from 'Midday' on Monday to 'Midnight' on Sunday represent a time-space-compression, reversing the course of a day within a week while travelling from Mexico to Los Angeles. Her husband Bobby is introduced as a hard-working Chinese immigrant, focused on money and social security. Whereas African American Vietnam Veteran Buzzworm is all about music and the radio, Japanese American Manzanar Murakami is crazy about the freeway traffic. Arcangel, the old traveler from Mexico, is primitively described by what he does, such as 'To Wake,' 'To Eat,' or 'To Die.'

Whereas each of the seven characters is narrated with an individual idiolect[56] to emphasize diversity, Arcangel's chapters feature historical facts intertwined with ironic remarks. Called the "messenger" (*TRO* 199), Arcangel is inspired by a short story character of the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez (Heise 2006: 212). While the novel's characters function as a representative of their class or ethnic group, Arcangel significantly represents Latin America as a whole, including its future and its past (Benito et al 2009: 84). As "the voice of the colonized Latin America" (Sadowski-Smith 2008: 66), he speaks up con-

56 For more information on the seven individually tailored narrative voices, see Section 8.2.2 on 'The Polyglot.'

jointly for "the indigenous, the displaced, the exterminated, the poor, and the workers" (Lee 2011: 322). Thus, particular narratological strategies can mirror different forms of diversity and vice versa.

Similar to Mexican performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, who is cited in the novel's prologue,[57] globalization is criticized as Westernization and thus Americanization by Arcangel, who recounts the story of colonization. According to him, the doom of the earth is approaching in 2012, which he relates to Columbus' discovery of America. With this discovery, globalization as a phenomenon began (Reichardt 2010: 31), being the first stimulus of world-wide commerce and migration (Ette 2004: 29). With the incorporation of poetry written in italics, the novel recounts "indigenous Aztec mythologies" (Sadowski-Smith 2008: 66). As Arcangel ironically retells, the reason for Columbus' conquest of America happened solely

because of a lousy bunch of spices
to hide the putrefaction of meat! (TRO: 49; original in italics)

The story of Christopher Columbus' conquest of America is combined with elements of magic realism to illustrate the diverse influence on writing and to parody literary conventions. With a trans-categorical blending of fiction and fact, historical bits of information (e.g. *TRO*: 49-51) are interwoven with autobiographical elements as well as mystical and supernatural elements, thereby creating a Hollywood-like disaster blockbuster with an independent movie's appeal. Magic realism, a typical Chicano style not common among Japanese Americans, is also used in the beginning of the book when Rafaela sweeps different animals from the floor, such as crabs and snakes (*TRO*: 3), although the house is not situated at the edge of the sea. The novel thus manages to enthrall the reader with knowledge about the Mexican past and literary conventions.

Whereas six of the seven characters are narrated in a limited or omniscient third-person style (Rody 2009: 132), the Chicano newspaper reporter Gabriel Balboa is presented in a detective-like first-person narration (Benito et al 2009: 81). Emi compares Gabriel to Raymond Chandler's 1930s noir detective Philip Marlowe (*TRO* 22) when he is investigating the downside of Hollywood (*TRO*: 39). The ending of the story disrupts the cliché of the legendary *L.A. detective*

57 For more information on the novel's inspiration by the work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his concept of a 'borderless future,' please see Section 8.2.5 on 'These Lines.'

story approach[58] because the collaboration of the seven characters is the key to success. Moreover, even though most of the story takes place in Hollywood, the novel ironically does not feature a typical happy Hollywood ending when Emi dies. Nevertheless, the story is staged in a very entertaining apocalypse Hollywood blockbuster style.

Global literature often presents the effects of globalization, such as increased connectivity or the acceleration of global flows. In the novel, the theme of globalization is also translated into the rewriting of binaries and the mixing of genres, such as the immigrant novel, disaster movie, noir, telenovela, magical realism, satire, and detective fiction. Therefore, multiplicity plays an important role in the novel on different levels. Similar to the network-like composition of the seven diverse characters and their stories, different and coexisting forms of genre are mixed. Moreover, myths and metaphors from different cultural spheres are combined. Thus, Latin American *magical realism* is used, for example, translating between the United States and Mexico as well as the Asian American heritage. This mixing of genres supersedes the former standards of ethnic American fiction, and Asian American fiction in particular, paving the road for new narrative leeway in a globalizing age (Rody 2009: 136).

With the combination of different elements of genre, a "transtextual space" (Sturm-Trigonakis 2007: 156) is created. This aligns with the tendency of transtextual elements accumulate in hybrid texts in ethnic writing (Birkle 2004: 231) and new world literature (Sturm-Trigonakis 2007: 143) in a globalizing age. Moreover, binaries are omnipresent in the story. Oppositional elements – old versus new, good versus bad, fiction versus fact, developed versus developing country, or cosmopolitan versus rural areas – are addressed and challenged. In the course of the story, it all comes down to a "showdown between […] North and South, bad oranges and good, virtual and magical" (Rauch 1998: 29), resulting in a clash of dichotomies. In terms of globalization, negative as well as positive effects are displayed, yet, the direction is clear because the convergence emerges from the South as a promotion of globalization as hybridization and not merely as an Americanization force.

Another important element of ethnic, urban, and global literature is code-switching. Multilingualism and code-switching are of major importance in border regions (Anzaldúa 1987) and urban areas (Eastman 1992: 16). Due to its geopolitical position and historical development, the global city of Los Angeles

58 The 'L.A. detective story' is a crime drama or film noir usually staged in Hollywood, such as *Detective Story* (1951) featuring Kirk Douglas.

features both. In the next section on 'The Polyglot', the impact and importance of code-switching in the novel is examined.

8.2.2 The Polyglot

In Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*, the poetics of code-switching functions as a tool to convey the diversity of Los Angeles and its inhabitants on numerous levels and from multiple perspectives. The egalitarian structure of the novel as illustrated by the HyperContexts,[59] the multi-ethnic cast, and the individually tailored narrative voice of each of the characters transcend former Asian American genre classifications, pointing towards a representation of the global. The story is told in a 'polyglot' fashion (Murashige 2006), aiming at a realistic articulation of the characters' culturally diverse identities. By giving every character an individual narrative voice, seven perspectives are featured to envision seven different worlds coexisting and later collaborating in Los Angeles. Thus, a 'narrative polyphony' (Raussert 2011: 100) is created, echoing the chorus of ethnic diversity and multiplicity in the global city of Los Angeles.

In the novel, specific language is used as an indicator for ethnic diversity when, as Yamashita states in an interview, the "rhythmic sound sensibility" is translated into the seven protagonists' different narrative voices (Glixman 2007). While speaking through the main characters, the style of writing is altered from, for example, simple and basic (Bobby Ngu), to street-talk (Buzzworm), to poetic (Arcangel), and to a kind of detective style (Gabriel Balboa). This "chorus of voices" (Adams 2007: 264) emphasizes the 'pan-cultural' approach in the novel (Gier et al 1998). Moreover, English, Japanese, and Spanish are incorporated to highlight the diversity of the novel's characters because global processes of hybridization are translated into literature with the use of multiple languages (Ette 2007: 14).

Yamashita, a multilingual speaker of English, Portuguese, and some Japanese, mimics the production of a language when tailoring the narrative voices. Thereby, individual linguistic markers are absorbed, such as ethnically distinct speech patterns and syntax (Glixman 2007). This type of narration achieves the same effect as when an actor plays seven different roles for a blind audience. The description and conveyance of diverse looks and multicultural appearance alone is not sufficient. Instead, syntax and speech pattern are copied and performed according to pre-assigned roles. Thus, in contrast to Lee's *Native Speak-*

59 For more information on the significance of the HyperContexts, please see Section 8.2.1.

er, this effect is accomplished predominantly with the literary technique of 'showing' instead of 'telling.'

Although the story is mostly told in a third-person narration, the narrative voice is altered every chapter in a mimetic fashion to suit the respective character in focus. According to Yamashita, the characters of the novel "all started as 'types,' even as caricatures, in the same way the media represents us" (Glixman 2007). Although Yamashita aimed at criticizing the ethnic framing by the media, the author herself is criticized for the technique of parodying 'ethno-linguistic' stereotypes. This form of mimetic imitation, resemblance, or mirror effect, however, is considered as a truthful literary resemblance of reality (Sturm-Trigonakis 2007: 147) because the polyglossia creates closeness to the characters. Thus, the novel's politics of identity and ethnic representation leave the readership torn "between multicultural mockery and cosmopolitan embrace of diversity" (Raussert 2011: 105).

No white American protagonists are incorporated in a former predominantly white American L.A. Instead, the novel focuses on the city's often underrepresented minorities, emphasizing those ethnic groups with which the author is most acquainted, such as Asian and Mexican Americans. Yamashita wanted to turn the media's "background material" (Glixman 2007) into main stories and characters by representing those who have been neglected in the city's historical and literary past (Adams 2007: 264), including Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans as well as the homeless (Glixman 2007). With its intertwined story of different ethnicities collaborating across class lines and political borders, the novel challenges the literary tradition of the city and "the white middle-class dominant perspective of 'American' society" (Chae 2008: 91).

The novel manages to translate the complex cultural identity of Bobby for the reader's imagination. The Chinese speaks Spanish like a Mexican, demonstrating his linguistic flexibility and hybrid identity. In chapter 2, entitled 'Koreatown', Bobby is introduced as an "Asian dude. Kinda skinny. Short, yeah. But so what? Dark glasses. Cigarette in his mouth." (*TRO*: 14). He speaks in brief sentences, typified by an absence of articles, with short words, no extras or fancy elements, and many colloquial, more informal than formal elements, such as 'kinda' and 'gonna.' He is displayed as someone who is constantly working with and against established stereotypes.

The following quote illustrates how the novel utilizes common misconceptions and stereotypes to display cultural diversity but also to translate the cultural diversity of the characters to the reader's imagination:

If you know your Asian, you look at Bobby. You say, that's Vietnamese. That's what you say. Color's pallid. Kinda blue just beneath the skin. Little underweight. Korean's got rounder face. Chinese's taller. Japanese's dressed better. If you know your Asians. Turns out you'll be wrong. And you gonna be confused. Dude speaks Spanish. Comprende? So you figure it's one of those Japanese from Peru. Or maybe Korean from Brazil. Or Chinamex. Turns out Bobby's from Singapore. You say, okay, Indonesian. Malaysian. Wrong again. You say, look at his name. That's gotta be Vietnam. Ngu. Bobby Ngu. They all got Ngu names. Hey, it's not his real name. Real name's Li Kwan Yu. But don't tell nobody. Go figure. Bobby's Chinese. (*TRO*: 15)

After the confusion and attempts at explanation, the narrator sums up Bobby's cultural identity as being "Chinese from Singapore with a Vietnam name speaking like a Mexican living in Koreatown" (*TRO*: 15). Hence, language functions as an excellent indicator for cultural diversity. Bobby is fluent in Spanish, sounding like a Chicano (*TRO*: 8). Thus, he can be considered a hybrid of Asian American and Chicano who has created a 'third space' for himself in the United States.

Whereas all characters of the novel are "transculturated" (Löbbermann 2008: 277), Bobby is the most culturally diverse of all characters. Bobby is not an 'ordinary' Asian American (*TRO 15*) but is depicted as having "a multi-defined identity" (Chae 2008: 91). He makes use of his diversity, sometimes even opportunistically. Hence, on the micro-level, Bobby's identity has become a mixture of various cultural inspirations. He is not torn but seizes the opportunities offered to him due to his ethnic appearance, for example when he invents his alias to pass as a political refugee. Like a chameleon adapting to his background, he successfully exploits the Americans' blindness to varieties within the Asian American community. He claims to belong to another Asian heritage, taking full advantage of American support and the sympathy of one Asian group while simultaneously circumventing politically-induced racism against another Asian minority, caused by the Vietnam War. The narrator thus interweaves hidden ironic remarks about the common misconception that all Asians appear alike.

The description of the character Bobby goes beyond the concept of cultural 'hybridity' and 'in-betweenness' because the "Asian Latino" (Sadowski-Smith 2008: 62) is a border-crossing character who cannot be described as either-or, protesting against clear categorization. Instead, the character's ethnic intermixture is stressed. Even Bobby's last name "Ngu" functions as a pun (Rody 2009: viii). This pronunciation as 'new' is an allusion to his new form of identity as an interethnic person. Thus, the focus is shifted from one ethnicity to a hybrid state and from there to a global cultural mélange of various influences. It proves that

an individual's identity can be more easily expressed in a mixture of different cultural manifestations than in categories.

Bobby and his marriage are the embodiment of the similarities and parallels between Asians and Mexicans in America. His wife Rafaela is a Chicana of African slave heritage. She is very educated but nevertheless works as Gabriel's housekeeper. She represents the modern Mexican woman and discovers the illegal organ transplant conspiracy. Rafaela and Bobby, the "pan-Asian" who speaks Spanish fluently, and their son Sol are part of the visible minority, suffering from social invisibility. As the HyperContexts reveals, Bobby's chapters are full of work metaphors and consumerism (e.g. *TRO* 79). Together, the workaholics stand for "cheap, immigrant labor" (Lee 2011: 321) of the so-called "dream-addicted Los Angeles middle class" (Davis 1990: 20).

With the seven different narrative voices and modes, the novel achieves coming as close as possible to representing the global (Raussert 2011: 108). The author manages to portray the wide variety of the diverse characters and their different languages in a written form, creating an equality of cultural differences by devoting the same amount of chapters to each of the characters. Language thus functions as a 'point of view' and as a means to question the dominance of one perspective. Bakhtin's notion of the novel as a 'zone of contact' (1981: 27f.), in which different languages, cultures, and ideologies intersect, is a reminder of the crucial characteristic of the global city as a cultural node in a global network of flows.

Section 7.2.3 on 'The Global' examines how globalization affects economic, political, and social networks in the literary global city of Los Angeles. With the network-like structure of the plot, an 'interethnic collaboration' is formed that operates "beyond rigid racial/ethnic boundaries" (Chae 2008: 93). The author focuses on cultural diversity accelerated by globalization, its opportunities and challenges. The novel thus comes as close as possible to representing the global not only with the different narrative voices and modes (Raussert 2011: 108) but also by using the network metaphor for the different globalization processes and for the forms of representations of the global, portrayed by the different characters and their relationships.

8.2.3 The Global

The network-like interaction of the culturally-diverse cast is closely connected to the network-like structure of the novel. Seven seemingly independent characters and stories converge into one team, providing one solution to complex border-crossing problems in the end, each filling in pieces of the whole picture. Thus,

parallels are established to concepts such as the 'rhizome of culture', globalization as 'hybridization' and 'heterogeneity', a transcultural mosaic, or global mélange. The borderless networking in a globalizing age is mirrored by the interconnectedness of the different characters, their relationships, but also by a globe-like, border-crossing orange.

Whereas the novel features different themes of globalization, its structure resembles globalization as such because the various narrative threads are interconnected and interwoven, converging in the end. The three forces and innovations of globalization are depicted.[60] The increased mobility of people, criminals, oranges, and information enhances the impression of a growing connectivity of the world. Thus, a global consciousness is created. Moreover, technological advancements, the economy, and politics contribute to the erosion of borders as well as to a redefinition of time and space when, in the end, everything happens simultaneously.

Whereas the city of L.A. serves as a "metonym for the global" (Wallace 2001: 153) and the protagonists of the book exemplify the diversity of the world, the airport serves as an example of globalization processes in urban space.[61] The scene describing the international airport LAX functions as a metaphor for the potpourri of cultures living, arriving, and passing through the city: "KAL from Seoul ARRIVED. VARIG from Rio ARRIVED. QANTAS from Sydney DELAYED. JAL from Tokyo LANDING. MEXICANA from Mexico City LANDED" (*TRO* 86). The author's detailed description of the arriving flights and airlines in capital letters creates a strong illusion of immediacy, global connectivity, and cultural multiplicity.

The novel also addresses the various effects of globalization, employing irony to criticize economically-driven globalization as Westernization or Neo-Colonization. Thus, the reader learns that Mexican toilet bowls are cheaper if purchased in the U.S. and then shipped to Mexico than those purchased in Mexico from the start. The novel also raises the critique that globalization possibly harms the globe and humankind, providing a list of negative side effects, including accelerated drug traffic (*TRO*: 146f). The major threat in the book, however, is lethal narcotics hidden in healthy Mexican oranges. The fruit's globe-like shape (*TRO*: 12), which functions as a symbol for the world, therefore also be-

60 For more information, please see Section 2.2 on the 'Global Consensus' of globalization and its effects.

61 This exemplification of the diversity of the world constitutes a similarity to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) in which the diversity of different people (yet only men at that time) on the ship represents the whole world.

comes representative of the downside that globalization can bring to the world, literally bearing dangerous elements.

The book points out how much impact local events can have on the rest of the world. The so-called *butterfly effect* resembles the forces and innovations of globalization that, for example, accelerate transportation of information and the connectivity of the world, linking "the myriad small everyday actions of millions with the fates of distant, unknown others" (Tomlinson 2001: 25). In the novel, this is explained by the spread of news when the threat of spiked oranges is altered and elevated in the news in an imaginary cycle of every twenty-two minutes. Buzzworm follows the development of the story from "*spiked* orange alert" to "spiked orange *scare*" to "*illegal* orange scare" to "*illegal alien* orange scare," and finally to "*Death oranges*" (*TRO*: 138-141; emphasis original). This effect illustrates how local events can trigger global attention, creating an impression of immediacy, acceleration of information flows, and interconnectedness. Within hours, a healthy orange is turned into something lethal while blaming illegal immigrants at the same time because both, the poisoned orange and illegal immigrants from Mexico or Latin America, are considered "illegal trespassers" (Chae 2008: 99).

The different perspectives on globalization are embodied by different characters in the novel, such as the border-crossing immigrants Arcangel, Rafaela, and Bobby or the complimentary couple of Emi and Gabriel. The character Emi, for example, views globalization as Westernization and predominantly as a process of Americanization in which different cultural fragments are identified and standardized to fit many other cultures. According to her, economic globalization is "about selling things: Reebok, Pepsi, Chevrolet, AllState, Pampers, Pollo, Loco, Levis, Fritos, […]" (*TRO*: 126). This resembles the standardization or homogenization approach of globalization.

Emi is a representative of the new network society in the "world media city" (Taylor 2004: 57), whose' "networked computing" (Ling 2012: 137) functions as an alternative to ethnic categorizations. According to Manuel Castells, a 'network society' is made of social networks based on communication technologies (2004: 3), and in the novel, the young Asian American represents the digital age, in which news is spread around the world in an instant. She works as an editor at the local TV station, helps to reveal the organ smuggle, and thereby later discovers that Manzanar Murakami is her grandfather. Instead of being nostalgic about

her heritage, Emi prefers to circumvent ethnic pigeonholing by being identified by her profession or use of technology.[62]

Emi and Gabriel together represent two sides of globalization, respectively accepting and distrusting technological advancements or change. Whereas Emi is considered "hypercontemporary" (Adams 2007: 260), constantly and 'fearlessly' making use of new technologies, such as the Internet, email, or emoticons, Gabriel is associated with investigation in a black-and-white colored 1930s detective noir style. Gabriel chooses burgers over exotic food that he cannot translate on the menu, thus revealing his conservatism and resistance to change. Emi compliments their relationship and his investigative abilities by showing the reporter the future of "a paperless existence" (*TRO*: 23), in which the global flow of things, e.g. the news, is vastly accelerated.

Through the border-crossing character Rafaela and Arcangel, who carries the orange northwards, accelerated immigration and the prejudice that Mexican and other immigrants are facing are depicted (*TRO*: 211), highlighting the differences between the North and the South in the globalization process. In chapter 33, titled 'To Dream – America,' the history of the Mexican-American border is explained in detail (*TRO*: 161f.) and the United States is criticized heavily for its border politics (*TRO*: 199-201; 161). Mexico and the South is significantly represented as two-fold, torn between the future and hundreds years of tradition, by Rafaela, the brave, smart, modern Mexican woman and Arcangel, the old, traditional, and respected Mexico, who speaks in metaphors and poetry, is seemingly different, and mysterious. The novel also emphasizes the topic of immigration and racism when describing the fact that (Mexican) immigrants struggle to be welcomed in the United States: "We're not wanted here. Nobody respects our work. Say we cost money. Live on welfare. It's a lie. We pay taxes" (*TRO*: 80).

Globalization as a phenomenon of a focus on world-wide capitalism and a process of Westernization is predominantly criticized through the roles and perspectives of Arcangel, who fights against a mythically anthropomorphized NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Arcangel's chapters are significantly told in a third-person narration because he represents 500 years of Latin American history (Ling 2012: 121). His voice is described as "a jumble of unknown dialects, guttural and whining, Latin mixed with every aboriginal, colonial, slave, or immigrant tongue" (*TRO*: 47). He thus manages to speak for the old, the traditional, the colonized, the conservative, and for things that are severely threatened, affected, altered, or even destroyed by globalization.

62 For more information on Emi's relationship to her heritage and her vision of being 'anti-multicultural,' please see Section 8.2.5 on 'These Lines.'

Arcangel polarizes the reader because he is bizarre but respected for representing the entirety of Latin American history. Inspired by elements of magical realism and Mexican myths, he has mysterious holes in his body that can pull a truck (*TRO*: 211), which creates a feeling of something uncanny, unknown, exotic, or of supernaturalism, disgust, and fear. He is mysteriously described as "an actor and prankster, mimic and comic, freak, a one man circus act" (*TRO*: 47). When Arcangel dreams of the orange, however, he immediately understands its significance and the connection to the tropic.

Arcangel is constantly crossing borders. On his trip North, the "multi-ethnic Latin American wanderer through time and space" (Raussert 2011: 101) stops at a Mexican bar called "Misery & Hunger" that serves only American convenience products, such as hamburgers with ketchup and beer (*TRO*: 130f.). This shows how Mexico has been influenced by the American economy, capitalism, and consumerism and how the American economic domination moves across borders (Chae 2008: 100). Arcangel does not like this influence because he values Mexican habits and resists change. Thus, he confronts SUPERNAFTA, who aims at a free flow of people, commodities, and money between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.

In his role of the historical person of El Gran Mojado, Arcangel confronts SUPERNAFTA in a Mexican-style *lucha libre* wrestling match (*TRO*: 232) to fight false promises, corruption, and exploitation by the United States. El Gran Mojado, or "The Big Wetback," is an 'economic refugee' (Anzaldua 1987: 33; Chae 2008: 99). He functions as a counterforce to American capitalist domination and expansion, fighting against consumerist homogenization, artificial freedom with a combination of liberty and consumerism, and dependence on American capital (Chae 2008: 100f.).

The clash of the North versus the South, which significantly takes place "at the very borders" (TRO: 256) of the Pacific Rim Auditorium, represents excessive consumption versus poverty and crime. Supporters of NAFTA claim that employment opportunities in Mexico will increase when more products are sold to North America, simultaneously counteracting Mexican-American immigration (Adler et al 1992: 796). In the novel, NAFTA is criticized as money-focused instead of working for the well-being of the people (*TRO*: 133), in particular with regard to the Mexican population or immigration. SUPERNAFTA, however, claims that the South belongs to the North (*TRO*: 132). The human organs' trade illustrates this interdependent relationship, in which one country is exploited and the other benefits. This example is representative of the convergence and interconnectivity of the North and the South and the whole world.

El Gran Mojado does not survive when fighting against SUPERNAFTA because traditions need to change. Arcangel's awareness that he has to die to make room for something new represents the change induced by globalization. This economic border metaphor of the United States and Mexico symbolizes the global marketplace and the divide between more and less developed countries. Hence, the novel is being critical about American culture and white American hegemony as well as about globalization as a mere Americanization process. However, the last chapter's title, 'American Express – Mi Casa/Su Casa,' shows that globalization a phenomenon of Westernization affects everyone alike because "mi" ('my') globalization is "su" ('your') globalization.

The novel's description of the literary global city of Los Angeles in a globalizing age is as fluid as its narrative mode because it does without classical images of urban space (Raussert 2011: 108). Instead, the whole geography is moved. How the novel redefines urban literature by presenting a dynamic concept of space is examined in the next section, 'ElastiCity.'

8.2.4 ElastiCity

> Amazing thing was everybody in L.A. was walking. They just had no choice. There wasn't a transportation artery that a vehicle could pass through. It was a big-time thrombosis. Massive stroke. Heart attack. You name it. The whole system was coagulating then and there. […] Streets'd become unrecognizable from an automotive standpoint. Only way to navigate it was to feel the streets with your own two feet.
> (*TRO*: 218F.)

The poetics of place play a major role in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* because they reveal the interconnectedness of time, space, and cultural diversity in a globalizing age. As illustrated in the above-mentioned quote, everything converges in L.A. in a huge traffic jam and, therefore, the city becomes the center of the world. Yamashita claims that the "idea of a changing geography would be a way to demonstrate very physically the change in Los Angeles" in recent years (Yamashita 1999). She used geography to move borders and the conception of cultural diversity. She decided to alter L.A.'s landscape as soon as an orange is moved north, thereby highlighting the impact of accelerated border traffic, immigration, and globalization.

The section's title 'elastiCity' describes how time and space become "elastic" (*TRO*: 123f.) in the imagined global city of Los Angeles and the border region of the U.S. and Mexico. With the 'coming-together' (Lee 2011: 323) of the North and the South, time and space collide when Arcangel carries the orange and thus the Southern Hemisphere with the Tropic of Orange northwards.[63] This dramatic change is sensed by the different protagonists. Once the orange at Gabriel's house had disappeared, Rafaela soon notices "this *elasticity* of the land and of time. This sensation of timelessness, of yawning distances, of haunting fear, of danger" (*TRO*: 149; emphasis added), foreshadowing the threat of the illegal border-crossing organ trade. Similarly, Manzanar had "an uncanny sense of the *elasticity* of the moment, of time and space" (*TRO*: 123; emphasis added). He could feel the time-space distortion and a possible apocalypse dooming from the chaotic convergence because he was able to "see the undulating pattern and the changing geography corrupting the sun's shadows, confusing time, so that all events should happen and end at the same time" (*TRO*: 206).

This *time and space shift* constitutes a force of globalization.[64] The distortion called 'annihilation of space by time' by Marx (1973) and 'time-space compression' by Harvey (1989) is explained in the novel through a graphic description: "Streets stretched and shrunk this way and that. Someone put this city in the washer/dryer. Shrunk 50% in places. Then ironed it out 200% in others" (*TRO*: 230). As Gabriel observes, the geography of the city of L.A. is changed into a "distorted version of downtown. At least that's what the street names indicate" (*TRO*: 227). The phenomenon is also earlier noticed by the smart reporter Emi: "I mean the length of the day. […] It's got something to do with time. Place." (*TRO*: 61). Hence, time and place are defined anew and globalization magically affects geography. Everything is moved north, converging in the city of L.A., which is representative of the convergence of the whole world in "The World City,' thereby exposing the interconnectedness of the local and the global.

Buzzworm, who has a naturally strong sense of time, collects watches, and keeps one for every occasion, can also sense the distraction of time. After fighting for his country in Vietnam, the African American is marked as an outcast in society (*TRO*: 217) due to the anti-war sentiment in the 1970s. The novel is critical of American politics and society, contravening common ethnic stereotypes when the veteran is described as being down-to-earth, helping whenever he

63 For more information on the significance of the novel's title, please see Section 8.2.5 on 'These Lines.'

64 For more information on the perceived convergence as one force of globalization, please see Chapter 2.2 on 'Global Consensus.'

can, and never giving up. He calls himself 'Angel of Mercy' and functions as the Robin Hood of the district in a time of fierce interethnic riots in Los Angeles. The veteran fights for his home area and against corruption. His connection to oranges is the admiration of palm trees for their sense of time, such as the natural sensing of seasons. He collaborates with Gabriel Balboa, being 'his man on the scene' in L.A., observing how the relationship between time and space changes. He manages to connect the drugs to the oranges, revealing the lethal smuggle.

Buzzworm is listening to the radio constantly, which is a metaphor for his understanding of different cultures because he enjoys any kind of music style and can deal with any kind of person. He acknowledges, respects, and understands diversity. He has interethnic appeal and shows respect when he listens to "rap, jazz, R&B, talk shows, classical, NPR, religious channels, Mexican, even the Korean channel. Didn't know a thing they were saying, but he liked the sounds. Fact is, he listened to the sounds so much, he could imitate them" (*TRO*: 29). Thus, he has a good ear for cultural differences. He understands in the sense of listening to and comprehending cultural diversity on the radio and on the streets.

In the novel, the city of Los Angeles and its freeway system is anthropomorphized, being described as "a great root system, an organic living entity" (*TRO*: 37). The novel compares the freeway to the city's veins like Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, which defines it as "a vein nourishing the mainliner L.A., keeping it happy, coherent, protected from pain, or whatever passes" (1966: 15; Adams 2007: 248). Therefore, and as illustrated in the introductory quote to this section, the notorious L.A. traffic jam is described using the metaphor of a human body with an artery and diseases connected to the blood system, such as a thrombosis, stroke, or heart attack, thereby emphasizing the anthropomorphism of "the great heartbeat of a great city" (*TRO*: 35). Hence, when the freeway is jammed like a blood clot blocks a vein, the city and its society are revealed as 'sick' from a standstill.

It is no coincidence that the city is described in a "language of organicity" (Lee 2011: 326) because the homeless person Manzanar who conducts the freeway traffic used to work as a surgeon. Once a respected member of society, this constitutes a paradoxical reversal of his status; the man who formerly saved people's lives and now disgusts them makes sense of traffic instead of bodies. All of a sudden, he understands the system, the pattern, the flow of things by conducting traffic. With this symphony of traffic, Manzanar acknowledges and understands the interconnectedness of urban life in the global city. Being aware of the global connectivity of the world, the Asian American represents "the symbolic

nodal point in which *all* of humanity, in a spiral of ever-increasing scope, is joined" (Lee 2011: 324; italics original).

Manzanar's unique perception of the world in musical chords is another approach to understanding globalization. He makes sense of traffic in his own special way, seeing patterns that transform chaos into order. To him, the freeway "was nothing more than a great writhing concrete dinosaur and nothing less than the greatest orchestra on Earth" (*TRO*: 37). The homeless seems to be the most marginalized character of all. In 1984, however, Los Angeles was considered the "homeless capital" by the U.S. department of Housing and Urban Development (Halle 2003: 12) and thus, as the novel states, "no one was more at home in L.A. than this man" (*TRO*: 36). The novel thus gives the character a voice because he can conduct symphonies made from traffic noise and sees things that others cannot see (*TRO*: 57). The old man significantly derives his alias from the Manzanar concentration camp in California, where he was born when his parents were interned during World War II (*TRO*: 110). Following Pearl Harbor, massive numbers of L.A. residents of Japanese descent were deported to internment camps and kept there until 1945. Nowadays, Japanese Americans are considered part of the 'model minority,' having major financial influence in Los Angeles (Abu-Lughod 1999: 251). Thus, the author does not avoid talking about the atrocities Japanese Americans had faced.

Similar to the mayoral candidate John Kwang in Lee's *Native Speaker* (1995) who transgresses his designated space as an Asian American in New York, Manzanar is introduced as a powerful border-crossing character. As a conductor of the cars on the freeway, he knows and 'regulates' the major infrastructure of the city. Moreover, Manzanar also similarly identifies a kind of common vernacular of the global city that is "an equivalent reproduction of a perfect Babel or jam session of sounds, discourses, and realities" (Manzanas Calvo et al 2011: 61). Thus, compatible to Kwang's creation of an ethnic minority vernacular, the novel creates another form of vernacular typical of a global city that is determined in auditive, industrial, and mechanical terms.

The freeway, its structure, and the automobile are of major significance for the imagined global city of L.A. The freeway as such is synonymous with endless mobility and the extension of the westward movement by American settlers, driven by the concept of 'Manifest Destiny,' enforcing freedom as an ur-American value (Manzanas Calvo et al 2011: 54). The last chapter that focuses on Manzanar is named 'Sig Alert,' refers to the infamous L.A. traffic conditions and traffic jams, which are a key element of Los Angeles freeway culture and commuting routine since the 1950s (Gottlieb 2007: 174). By the 1920s, Los Angeles had the country's highest automobile registration (Soja 2000: 128), and in

a city with no unifying center, the freeway turned into the connecting link and thus became the "new center of the city" (Gottlieb 2007: 175).

The novel's freeway block by the homeless is a very unusual interaction taking place in the global city of Los Angeles. In contrast to Toronto and New York, individuals do not usually meet on the streets, but the novel reverses this peculiarity. As the socio-cultural critical L.A. episode movie 'Crash' (2004) shows, a traffic jam, freeway block, or crash is needed for cultural encounters to happen. As illustrated in the introductory quote to this section, the massive crossing of vehicles is substituted by immobility and a standstill of cars. This immobility of traffic, however, also represents mobility. A pedestrian life develops. Moreover, the homeless are crossing borders of their determined and marginalized space in the city. They mobilize their stigma of belonging to a ghetto and change fixed definitions of using cars for driving purposes only. Thus, with this move, "the nomads, the representatives of the non-city, have trespassed the visible and invisible lines that circumscribed them" (Manzanas Calvo et al 2011: 58). With this redefinition of space, the distinction between race and class are redefined, thereby questioning existing categorizations. Thus, the invisible are made visible when the homeless carjack and control the freeways.

The reader is in a hybrid situation, torn between sympathy for the homeless, who live in abandoned cars, and the car-owners, who want their property back. This dichotomy functions as a metaphor for the strong division of the globe between consumerism and mere survival, such as in 'First World' and 'Third World' countries. Whereas cars are a product of everyday convenience to one half of the globe, the other half struggles for mere survival and basic needs, such as accommodation and nutrition, which is represented by the homeless growing vegetables in the car engines. As a result, a small grass-roots revolution is taking place. The conflict between the car owners and the homeless in the celebrity city of L.A. represents these two contradicting worlds depicted in the following quote.

> As the homeless flocked onto the freeway, there were also the usual questions of shelter and jobs, drug rehabilitation, and the closing of the mental health facilities. And as car owners watched on TV sets or from the edges of the freeway canyon, there were the usual questions of police protection, insurance coverage, and acts of God. (*TRO*: 122)

The homeless can be compared to colonization. They grow their own colony, settling down, naming streets, and planting crops. This functions as a strong critique of colonization and domination in form of irony. For Americans in general and Los Angelenos in particular, cars are their "own home away from home"

(Lee 2011: 326), resembling key values, such as mobility, freedom, and independence. Moreover, the freeway traffic is symptomatic for the restlessness and mobility of the imagined global city (Raussert 2011: 105). Thus, carjacking is "the ultimate American violence" (Zukin 1995: 43). The homeless, however, are portrayed as an anti-globalization movement because they bring the symbol of mobility and economic globalization to a halt by changing diapers and growing vegetables in high-end cars, such as Porsches or Corvettes. Hence, with the elasticity of time and, in particular, space, the novel also manages to interweave L.A.'s image as a city of differences and paradoxes.

When the homeless are stopped by helicopters and the police, the revolution of space and class is violently stopped, enacting scenes of the 1992 L.A. riots. Thus, the freeways of Los Angeles, which have "long occupied the contemporary imagination as the ills of chaotic urban living" (Lee 2011: 326), are again associated with something negative in the novel. Helicopters flying over the freeway, surveillance systems, video cameras, and the aimed control of public space can be identified as implicit references to Mike Davis' *City of Quartz*. Davis argues that "'security' becomes a positional good" for the rich, as in the many so-called 'gates communities,' and the concept of fear and threat is marketed as an industry (1990: 224f.), enforcing existing social boundaries in spatial terms.

This heterogeneous quality of Los Angeles contributed to the 1992 Los Angeles riots, of which Soja raised a question eight years later: given the "volatile cityspace produced by new urbanization processes, […] what has prevented the postmetropolis from exploding more frequently and more violently that it has over the past decade?" (2000: 299). With the novel's depiction of the scenes of uprising like in 1992 and the collaboration of the seven different characters, the emphasis is put "on the necessity of forming a political alliance beyond ethnic differences" (Chae 2008: 104) and class in order to stabilize politics and to prevent an apocalypse.

Magical realism functions as an important instrument in the novel to show that the North and the South are dependent and interconnected in an age of globalization with flows of money, goods, people, and ideas but also to challenge traditional concepts of culture, time, and space, in which borders collapse and boundaries are reconfigured, thereby envisioning new utopias (Benito et al 2009: 87). With this technique of visualizing globalization and its effects by moving or changing geographies, parallels to Edward Soja's dynamic notion of 'space' (1989; 2000) can be identified. His term 'postmetropolis,' for example, which is inspired by the global city of Los Angeles, shows how globalization "brings all the world's peripheries into the center, drawing in what was once considered

'elsewhere' to its own symbolic zone" (Soja 2000: 250). In the novel, this process takes place, symbolizing the collision and convergence of the 'First World' and 'Third World' in 'The World City' of L.A. The novel, however, not only features a new, dynamic definition of space in a postmodern L.A. but also an accompanying redefinition of borders and thus ethnic categorizations. How the 'Tropic of Orange' as one of 'these lines' is moved and therefore reconfigured is elaborated in the last section.

8.2.5 These Lines

> Tied fast to *these lines*. (…) What are these goddamn lines anyway? What do they connect? What do they divide? What's he holding on to? (*TRO*: 268; EMPHASIS ADDED)

The 'lines' Bobby is holdings in the quote play a crucial role in the novel. Lines, a synonym for borders in the physical and metaphorical sense, implicate bilateral or transnational politics, border traffic and immigration, or identity conflicts. In this section, the significance of the novel's title is examined because the 'Tropic of Orange' constitutes one of 'these lines.' The Tropic of Orange's development is explored; a development into a 'third space' in which accelerated border traffic and a shifting of borders take place on different levels.

The idea of the plot and the title of the novel originated from the time when Yamashita and her husband lived in the Brazilian megacity São Paulo, a city through which the Tropic of Capricorn runs. When Yamashita moved to L.A., the story about an orange growing at a geographical border moved north with her to Mazatlán, Mexico, which is on the Tropic of Cancer (Glixman 2007). In the novel, the tropic line was renamed the 'Tropic of Orange,' thereby highlighting the significance of the orange. The tropic is introduced when the housekeeper Rafaela sees and describes the fine line on the property of Gabriel Balboa's vacation getaway that seems to be connected to an orange on the tree: "a line – finer than the thread of a spider web – pulled with delicate tautness. It was most visible in the dewy mornings as the sun rose in the east; at other times, it was barely visible. But she always sensed its presence" (*TRO*: 12). The imaginary boundary continues on both sides of the orange, forming a visible line, thereby creating a border metaphor.

The reporter planting a tree that carries one orange directly at the tropic line signifies the creation of Gabriel's own colony. The reader is reminded of Columbus, who brought the first orange tree to America when he conquered the

continent in 1492 (Rauch 1998: 28). Gabriel's purchase of the land close to the Tropic of Orange is ironically described in terms of colonization, too. The following quote explains his imperial domination of an exotic place: "Gabriel felt a spontaneous, sudden passion for the acquisition of the land, the sensation of a timeless vacation, the erotic tastes of chili pepper and salty breezes, and for Mexico" (*TRO*: 5). Thus, as some critics claim, the orange in the novel also functions as an object of revenge (Ling 2012: 125) for the colonization started by Columbus and forwarded by the hegemony of America and globalization as Westernization. The house situated at the Tropic of Cancer also symbolizes Gabriel's quest for paradise in nostalgic Mexico. He dreams the American dream and that of upward mobility (Hauser 2006: 12). Nevertheless, he clings to the past in search for his Mexican roots. Thus, Gabriel's 'inner division' of having two identities, Mexican and American, is also visualized by the line on his property.

The orange creates a 'third space,' being the symbolic connecting link of the tropic line and of different definitions of space and time as well as a through its symbolic role as mediator between the North and the South, different cultures, and histories, This space is established by the movement of borders and the transformation of geography when the orange is dragged north. The orange establishes a life of its own (*TRO*: 13f) and thus becomes the novel's symbolic center (Raussert 2011: 100). Then, the known geography is transformed into something new that is negotiated by the time and space shift caused by the globalization force. Homi Bhabha elaborates upon this perspective in the following quote.

> The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (Bhabha 1990: 211)

Figuratively speaking, when the threads that originated in the orange forming the tropic line are cut, borders are erased geographically and metaphorically. Indecision and in-betweenness are circumvented. The cultural contact zone is moved to the global city of L.A., and a hybrid discourse can be initiated that encompasses the whole multitude of ethnicities. The seven protagonists investigate together in order to find the criminals who smuggle drugs hidden in oranges and illegally trade human organs in plastic coolers. The message is transported that success lies in diversity and that the problems of the world can be solved with the power

of networking and the collaboration of the various different people in the world. Hence, a collage of the very different and yet distinct personalities is created in which everyone is working together to save the world. Thus, the emphasis is on unity, while maintaining the cultural diversity of the individual. This can be compared to the concept of 'hybridization' and to that of a 'rhizome of culture' (Deleuze et al: 1987).

The novel is also inspired by Anzaldúa's border metaphor because it manages to portray culturally diverse characters situated in the border region of the American Southwest. The novel deals with the process of identity formation across those borders. The author celebrates cultural diversity while illustrating that things are changing and need to be changing in a globalizing age. The novel depicts characters that cross racial boundaries as well as national borders and cultural spaces (Ty et al 2009: 136). Moreover, a border conflict usually entails growing up between cultures (Anzaldúa 1987: 6), mostly accompanied by a generational, language, and integration conflict.

Gloria Anzaldúa illustrates that the border areas provide a 'third space' in which hybridization is practiced.

> To live in the Borderlands means to
> Put *chile* in the borscht
> eat wholewheat *tortillas*
> speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent
> be stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints. (Anzaldúa 1987: 194)

Borderlands are crucial when it comes to cultural identity formation because "border zones are the meeting places of different organizational modes [...] hybrid meeting places of state sovereignty and transnational enterprise" (Nederveen Pieterse 2004: 67). When Arcangel carries the orange north, the border discourse is also moved. Thus, borders are shifted physically and metaphorically. As a result, Asian Americans as well as other minorities are included in the border position and transcultural discourse because "the border narrative [goes] beyond that of Mexican/North-American polarities to consider its effects on Latin American, Asian and Southeast-Asian migrants, and neighborhood locals and transients in Los Angeles" (Gier et al 1998).

The novel manages to illustrate the overlapping of histories, experiences, and social or political integration of Asian Americans and Mexican Americans as well as further immigrants in the concurrent urban and border contact zone of Los Angeles. Rafaela and Bobby, or Gabriel and Emi, for example, are both interethnic couples of the lower or upper middle-class who show the difficulties

and similarities of life in Los Angeles (Sadowski-Smith 2008: 63). Similar to Lee's *Native Speaker*, which shows parallels between African American and Asian American suffering and marginalization, Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* manages to evoke a shared understanding of the cultures of the physical border region and those many more cultures impacted by borders in a wider, metaphorical sense, thus creating "interethnic alliances" (Ling 2012: 137).

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, a Latin American writer and performance artist renowned for his notion of a 'borderless future,' in which separating lines and categorizations do not exist (1995: 175), inspired the author and Arcangel's character (Gier and Tejeda 1998). Similar to Lee's *Native Speaker*, Yamashita's novel presents an intertextual reference in its prologue. The meta-logical epigraph to Gómez-Peña's *The New World Border* (1995; *TRO*: 198) is meant to address the reader and to provide a context for the novel's plot but is not further explained within the novel. Thus, compatible to Gómez-Peña's work, the readership is forced "to examine the junctions of society, culture and language, and to question the static notion of identity" (Cole 2011: 89).

Through the character Emi, the novel tries to do without ethnic borders by arguing against established concepts like 'multiculturalism.' Emi controversially claims that she hates "being multicultural" (*TRO*: 128) because she disregards people that make assumptions about others with regard to their skin color. Although Emi considers herself as "so distant from the Asian female stereotype – it was questionable if she even had an identity" (*TRO*: 19), she is connected to her heritage but she is not, in contrast to her co-worker and lover Gabriel, as romantic about it (Glixman 2007). Instead, her controversial arguments, such as "maybe I'm not Japanese American. Maybe I got switched in the hospital" (*TRO*: 21), underline her insistence on a rethinking of cultural pigeonholing. She "liked trying to be antimulticultural" (*TRO*: 21) because she does not want to be categorized as a 'J.A.' (Japanese American), thereby circumventing categorizations in general and cultural stigmatization in particular.

Gabriel Balboa, for instance, does not connect Emi to her ethnic community at first because she does not really fit into the tight-knit Asian American society. Instead, Emi is a very individualistic, young, self-confident, and successful Asian American woman. Moreover, the young woman "identifies herself through technology to avoid an ethnical identification" (Hauser 2006: 7). Contrasting the Asian American stereotype of being silenced, for example, Emi uses explicit language in public. She has a big mouth, raises her voice, and thus does not remain silent, as female Asian Americans are commonly stereotyped, as seen in her mother commands, "no J.A. speaks like that" (*TRO*: 21).

The author gives Asian American women a voice, working against prevailing clichés. Emi's character circumvents and breaks all rules when it comes to stereotypes. The young woman is self-conscious as well as self-confident. Yamashita explains in an interview about Emi that she wanted "to give her a strong voice, and make her powerful, even bitchy, and proud of it" (Gier and Tejada 1998). This trait of being unafraid to voice her concerns regarding American identity politics is pictured when Emi sees a woman wearing chop sticks in her hair to artificially convey the attachment to a certain ethnicity. Emi confronts a white woman at the Sushi restaurant whether she would believe that wearing two forks would be 'unsanitary' (*TRO*: 129). With this provocative and ironic example, multiculturalism is revealed as a social construct that needs to be questioned. To illustrate that 'cultural diversity,' which is the term that she prefers over 'multiculturalism,' should not be color-coded, Emi defines it as including "a white guy wearing a Nirvana T-shirt and dreads" (*TRO*: 128).

Similar to Lee's John Kwang, whose tragic fall stops his political ambitions and significantly decreases his influence as an interethnic leader with a powerful minority vernacular, Emi is killed in the end to show that an innovative character like her, who is defined more by her job and her networking technology than by her ethnicity, is doomed to fail in Los Angeles, still. Emi was brutally killed in a drive-by shooting. The respective chapter, entitled 'Commercial Break – The Big Sleep,' foreshadows Emi's death and alludes to Raymond Chandler's famous 1930s noir work, which portrays Los Angeles as a corrupt city at the time of the Great Depression (Clarke 1988: 141). Her last words, "what color is blood in . . . black and . . . white?" (*TRO*: 252), relate to the movie and ironically show that Los Angeles, in some sense, is still stuck in the 1930s.

As illustrated in the introductory quote to this section, Bobby helps to erase borders in the end when he lets go of the two strings that originated in the orange. At first, he was holding on, being in an in-between position and trying to choose sides. Then, Bobby asks the following questions that are meant to address the reader and thus are written in a third person narration: "What are these goddamn lines anyway? What do they connect? What do they divide? What's he holding on to?" (*TRO*: 268). The most culturally diverse characters of all, who, put in Gómez-Peña's words, is "jumping borders at ease / jumping borders with pleasure" (1995: 175), chooses to let go of the lines and thereby paves the way for a kind of a 'borderless future' of 'the world city' of Los Angeles and thus ethnic diversity beyond monocultural or bicultural constraints.

8.3 INTERIM CONCLUSION

In Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997), the poetics of narrative, place, and code-switching are equally important. Set in Los Angeles in the 1990s, the novel displays the changing image of the global(izing) city as well as the local and global challenges of cultural diversity, migration, and socio-political integration. With the seven ethnically diverse characters, their individual narrative voices, and interconnected threats, the novel comes as close as possible to grasping the global. Therefore the imagined global city of Los Angeles can be regarded as 'the World City,' in which different worlds, such as the 'First World' and the 'Third World,' come together, cooperate, or collide.

The HyperContexts functions as an overview of the book, alluding to the global city's multi-layered textuality, spatiality and form, its history and literature as well as to cultural conflicts. The characters each have one chapter a day to tell their story, thus creating equality in narrative and socio-political terms. Similar to the city's infrastructure, the novel's structure has no single origin and no center (Lehan 1998: 257). This approach of fragmentation and convergence resembles a postmodern representation of urban structure, global narrative, and ethnic diversity (Raussert 2011: 103). Moreover, the mixing of genres supersedes the former standards of ethnic American fiction generally, and Asian American in particular, paving the road for a new narrative leeway in a globalizing age (Rody 2009: 136).

The poetics of code-switching functions as a tool to echo the diversity of the global city. The novel is told in a 'polyglot' fashion (Murashige 2006) with multiple languages, such as English, Spanish, and Japanese, and seven individually tailored narrative voices with distinct speech patterns and syntax. The novel focuses on the city's often underrepresented minorities in a formerly predominant white American L.A., thereby challenging the literary traditions of the city. Thus, a linguistic, ethnic, and literary 'zone of contact' (Bakhtin 1981: 27f.) is created in the global city of Los Angeles, one in which different languages, cultures, and ideologies intersect.

The novel's portrayal of increased mobility of people, criminals, oranges, information, and other traffic enhances the impression of a growing connectivity of the world, creating a global consciousness. The characters represent globalization from different angles, illustrating the different impact and numerous repercussions of globalization, including the opportunities and the pitfalls of the phenomenon. Arcangel, for example, fights against an anthropomorphized NAFTA, illustrating the South's economic dependence on the North.

Instead of letting all characters migrate and move, the novel creates the image that the whole geography is moved. Everything converges in the imagined global city of Los Angeles and the neighboring border zone, becoming 'elastic' in geographic and socio-political terms. However, the characters also have the power to change geography when taking their culture with them (Gier and Tejada 1998), ultimately altering the city of L.A., its appearance, and the cultural identity of a place.

Lines, a synonym for borders in the physical and metaphorical sense, play a crucial role in the novel. In the end, the collaboration of the seven diverse characters advocates globalization as a process of hybridization and global mélange when a shifting of borders takes place. Instead of focusing solely on the Asian American minority, the novel manages to evoke an 'interethnic alliance' of the cultures of the border region and those impacted by borders in a wider, metaphorical sense. The novel's notion of 'cultural diversity' thus challenges the insistence on 'these lines' not only in physical-geographic or literary-generic, but also in ethnic-categorical and socio-political terms.