

HEIKE PAUL
ALEXANDRA GANSER
KATHARINA GERUND (Eds.)

Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond

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ALFRED HORNUNG



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in cooperation with Sebastian Schneider
and Stephen Koetzing

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TIM CRESSWELL

Foreword: Desire Lines

‘Desire lines,’ or ‘desire paths,’ are the names given by planners to the marks inscribed into the ground by people (or animals) taking short cuts. These result from people leaving the paths and roads laid out for them by those with the authority to direct our mobilities and making their own way from A to B. They are the material signs of alternative mobilities.

People have probably always been making desire lines – refusing to go where they are supposed to and striking out across space in novel and creative ways. Power consists (in considerable part) in the construction of geography – of spaces, places, and territories as much as in the conduits that form spaces of mobility between places. Mobility is a key part of this process. It is tempting to think of mobility as always in some way ‘alternative.’ Power is most easily mapped as a pattern of clear boundaries demarking clear spaces where certain people, things, and activities ‘belong.’ Mobility can consistently undo this clear patterning. By moving we cannot help but cross boundaries and this mobility can pose a challenge to power. It does not take long to start constructing a list of forms of mobility that run counter to established forms of power: nomads, vagrants, minstrels, pirates, fugitives, tramps, the *flâneur*, runaway slaves, drifters, beatniks, gypsies, traveling salespeople, camp-followers, prostitutes, skateboarders, free-runners, urban explorers, situationists, joyriders, drag-racers, hells-angels, refugees, and asylum seekers. All of these, in their multitudinous practices, make life difficult for those who are invested in clear spatial ordering. They all appear as out of place. It is for this reason that mobility is an object and practice of struggle. Some moments in the remarkable (hi)stories of this struggle appear in the pages of this book and, as you will see, they hold important lessons for the analysis of mobility and spatiality in general.

The designation of appropriate mobilities is every bit as important as the drawing and policing of boundaries. The spaces of flow are central to the formation of power in the twenty-first century and probably always have been. Established forms of power produce approved mobilities. Let’s start another list: commuters, mobile capital, businessmen

and -women, tourists, explorers, container ships, the armed forces, cruise missiles, academics, jet-setters, car-drivers, and joggers in the park – all part of an established and approved world of production and consumption in late capitalism.

Mobility then, is both central to power and a threat to it. It can be ‘alternative’ to forms of fixity and sedentarism and it can also be ‘alternative’ to other forms of more directed, firmly routed, mobility.

These issues, as the editors of this collection point out in their introduction, are particularly prevalent in the historiography of the United States. Mobility has formed part of the foundation myths of the United States since its inception. Two mobility stories are particularly important to the mythology of “America.” One is the idea of an immigrant nation – a mythology inscribed onto the base of the Statue of Liberty and reiterated on nearby Ellis Island on a daily basis.¹ The other is the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, the pivot for almost all discussions of the history of the American West, which suggests that America was formed through the confrontation of ‘savagery’ and ‘civilization’ on a line that moved steadily from the East Coast to the West Coast. On this line, in the act of mobility, European immigrants shed their European identities and became Americans.² These stories are told over and over in countless presidential speeches, films, literature, and historiographies of the United States.³ Alongside this dominant story of heroic American mobility are the stories of counter-cultural mobility that have become every bit as central to what it is to be American – the mobility of tramps and hobos, of the migrants in Steinbeck novels, of the characters in road movies from *Bonnie and Clyde* to *Thelma and Louise*, the songs of Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Tom Waits, the train sounds of the blues harmonica, the slave narratives of the underground railroad, the

¹ For an excellent nuanced account of the immigrant foreigner as both central to American mythologies and threatening to them see Honig. For an account of the contentious politics of immigration at Ellis Island and beyond see Kraut.

² For a well developed critical take on this see Limerick.

³ For very different celebrations of America as a mobile nation see Kouwenhoven; Douglas; Turner; Baudrillard.

plays of Sam Shepard. All of these play a part in a counter-culture mythology of America that has mobility at its heart.⁴

Mobility in general, and in the particular case of the United States, has been subject to celebration and vilification. It is both mainstream and alternative, opportunity and threat. Some of this ambiguity was recently in evidence when Presidential hopeful Sarah Palin visited Ellis Island, as every Presidential hopeful must. While there she celebrated the “work ethic” and “love of country and freedom” of the immigrants who passed through Ellis Island at the same time as worrying about the children of ‘illegal’ immigrants getting citizenship under Obama’s DREAM act. Palin noted that “the immigrants of the past, they had to literally and figuratively stand in line to become US citizens. I’d like to see that continue” while standing in front of the museum that charts many of the hardships and injustices that immigrants faced as they arrived in the United States. Palin has to celebrate the immigrant idea of “America” but at the same time guard against the perceived threat of mobility.⁵ These issues are politically resonant and always will be. It is for this reason that the intellectual work being done in this book is important. The narratives of ‘alternative’ mobilities, of pirates, drifters, and fugitives, provide a lens through which we can examine the ‘central’ mobilities that make up the geography and history of modernity and American modernity in particular. They further confirm the key notion in Stallybrass and White’s account of the *Politics and Poetics of Transgression* – that that which is socially marginal is often symbolically central.

The desire lines we see across the park, or through the broken fence, tell us as much, or more, about the mobile constitution of society as the formal roads and paths that are made for us to follow.

⁴ Some of these tensions are explored in Cresswell, “Mobility as Resistance;” Cresswell, *The Tramp in America*.

⁵ For an account see <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/onpolitics/post/2011/06/sarah-palin-bus-tour-immigration-1>

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HEIKE PAUL, ALEXANDRA GANSER, AND KATHARINA GERUND

Introduction

[M]obilities and culture are not external to one another. Rather, the performing of mobilities *is* culture. So it is fair to claim that the mobile practices are more than physical practices, as they also are signifying practices.

(Jensen xv)

I.

Narratives of American beginnings are narratives of mobility, and ever since the creation of a “usable past” (Henry Steele Commager) and the formation of the ideology of American progress, mobility has been at the core of American foundational mythology: transatlantic journeys of exploration and ‘discovery’ by European travelers, the ‘errand into the wilderness’ as the New World exodus, westward expansion and Manifest Destiny; upward social mobility as inscribed in the American dream; or the exploration of space as the tackling of *new frontiers* – these and similar notions and images have evoked myriads of mobility narratives from the 15th century to the present. The protagonists of these narratives, the “American Adams” and their latter-day descendants are explorers and travelers, Puritans and Pilgrims, settlers and pioneers, immigrants, and, finally, astronauts who assert an American presence on the moon during the time of the cold war. Usually of European descent, white and male, they have become heroic figures in the national archive of extraordinary individual achievement: Columbus as well as the Pilgrims figure prominently in the American Pantheon, the Rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C.; pioneers and frontiersmen have been immortalized in Hollywood films; and Neil Armstrong is included among the notable Americans commemorated in Barack Obama’s recent children’s book *Of Thee I Sing* (2010). Even though this Eurocentric

perspective on US-American history has long become contested, it still resonates in often inadvertent and implicit ways in many cultural tropes of *American exceptionalism*.¹

Throughout US-American cultural history, geographical and social mobility – oftentimes seen as interdependent – have been of major significance for the narratives of nation-building and American subject formation (cf. Campbell 285). The history of American colonialism, settlement, expansion, and migration has been recorded as the history of a “nation on the move” (Wesley xxi). John Urry describes the somewhat clichéd notion that the ‘American character’ has been and continues to be centrally shaped by mobility when he states that “[t]o be an American is to go somewhere, especially to go west” (103). Yet, this mobility comes at the expense of immobilized Others and is highly exclusionary. In Tim Cresswell’s observation that “[t]o be American is to have a car,” the mass-produced commodity of the car figures as symbol of geographical mobility and social status (*On the Move* 260). Following Urry, Cresswell, and others, there are “ideologically sound” and culturally accepted forms of mobility but, on closer inspection, these depend on their counterparts, namely those types of mobility which are illegal(ized), (socially) stigmatized, and/or unsanctioned (Cresswell, *On the Move* 58).

The present volume sets out to critique the dominant scripts of American mobility from subnational and transnational perspectives. It takes pirates, drifters, and fugitives as exemplary figures which represent non-dominant forms of mobility and may appear as elements of counter-narratives. The contributors to this collection interrogate the ideological baggage of classical mobility narratives and of their re-writings while also excavating little-known, partially anti-foundational narratives of mobility in American history, literature, and (popular) culture. From a diachronic perspective, representations of these social types – pirates, drifters, and fugitives – appear to have longevity across the centuries; from a synchronic perspective, they display an ambiguity of signification at different historical moments. Over all, they appear as agents of (counter-)cultural critique and as allegorical figures in

¹ Deborah Madsen’s overview provides a genealogy and a critique of American exceptionalism and its myths of mobility from the Puritan errand to westward expansion.

hegemonic narratives. They are appropriated as symbols of romantic escape as well as of (political) scapegoating. Our task in this volume is to examine the representational politics, the ideological functions, and the cultural work of these figures in a wide range of texts and materials, past and present.²

The essays collected in this volume cast light on some of the “less central stories” of mobility (Cresswell, *Tramp* 20) and establish the pirate, the drifter, and the fugitive as symptomatic figures in discourses of nationhood, legality, race, gender, and class. As the case studies demonstrate, these figures are mainly imagined, represented, and coded as male. Representations of unsanctioned mobilities often seem to be dominated by the same masculine parameters as the mythical and foundational American narratives of mobility and freedom. Investigating pirates, drifters, and fugitives in their cultural representations, the essays in this volume attest to their ambiguous role in resisting and at the same time affirming dominant ideologies.

II.

The transnational turn in American Studies, announced by Shelley Fisher Fishkin in her 2004 Presidential Address to the American Studies Association (ASA), programmatically invites a new critical engagement with American (and American Studies) foundational mythology and its narratives of mobility. Fisher Fishkin envisions mobility in America as “multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and goods” (22) and describes the United States itself as “a transnational crossroads of cultures” (43). Much recent scholarship in the field of American Studies, Fisher Fishkin argues, has, in fact, been about forms of transnational mobility – Paul Gilroy’s study of the Black Atlantic, the hemispheric Americanist scholarship by Anna Brickhouse and Rachel Adams, or the transpacific studies of Mae Ngai and Lisa Lowe, – and “[m]ost Americanists in the

² Naturally, the selection of pirates, drifters, and fugitives does not exhaust the forms of marginalized mobility: illegal (im)migrants, refugees, or deserters are also agents of contested forms of mobility.

United States today reject celebratory narratives of American exceptionalism and nationalism” (36).

These transnational dimensions of mobility also echo in many of the contributions in our collection, and we share Fisher Fishkin’s sense of a postnational American Studies that moves past “a fixation on American innocence” (20). Over the last two decades, this revisionism has already taken shape in the publications of the so-called *New Americanists* who have engaged with both, the history and the legacy of the American empire as well as its narratives and tropes of mobility. Amy Kaplan und Donald Pease, the editors of the collection *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993), have formulated a critique of American exceptionalism and contributed to a new sense of American Studies as cultural studies and as (trans)area studies, and many essays in their collection take particular issue with the prominent foundational myths of American mobility. In her introduction to the volume, Amy Kaplan looks at the genesis of Perry Miller’s Puritan scholarship and his “errand into the wilderness” as a paradigm developed in a transnational setting; Eric Cheyfitz examines the articulation of the “doctrine of discovery” in a 1820s Supreme Court verdict that embraces the mobility of white settlers to take possession of Native American territory and paved the way for the Indian Removal Policy as forced mobility and displacement; and Michael Rogin analyzes how Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show mythologized the empire of the American West and the mobility of its heroic protagonists. In the sum of its case studies, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* has added the study of empire to the field of American Studies in transnational as well as subnational perspectives. Thus, it has broadened our sense of power relations in situations of cultural contact, cultural mobility, and cultural transfer.

Merely a year earlier, the publication of Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* had investigated the ways in which European travel writing has constructed the world beyond Europe for metropolitan readerships and (borrowing from Fernando Ortíz) established the term “contact zone” for the hybrid, emergent spaces of cultural contact in which the routes of travelers, migrants, sailors, and other mobile populations cross. Her book highlights the ways in which discourses of travel have to be seen as enmeshed in European colonialism, gender constructions, and dominant epistemological regimes of ‘knowing’ and describing the Other, while it

points to the destabilizing of such structures through their geographical displacement. Equally, James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20th Century* (1997) and in particular his essay "Traveling Cultures" have provided a critical framework by placing mobility and travel at the center of culture; a kind of "dwelling-in-travel" (2) takes precedence, in Clifford's argument, over simplistic notions of fixity and belonging. It is this dialectics of rootedness and mobility that Clifford sees as a way to circumvent center-margin dichotomies as well as notions of culture as monolithic and static:

[w]hy not focus on any culture's farthest range of travel while *also* looking at its centers, its villages, its intensive fieldsites? How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how is a culture also a site of travel for others? How are spaces traversed from outside? To what extent is one group's core another's periphery? If we looked at the matter in this way there would be no question of relegating to the margins a long list of actors: missionaries, converts, literate or educated informants, people of mixed blood, translators, government officers, police, merchants, explorers, prospectors, tourists, travellers, ethnographers, pilgrims, servants, entertainers, migrant laborers, recent immigrants. New representational strategies are needed, and are, under pressure, emerging. (25)

Some of our contributors consider representational strategies of this type in their essays and the ways in which fictional and non-fictional texts envision and locate marginal figures of mobility characterized by un-sanctioned (fugitives who escape slavery), anti-hegemonic (drifters who debunk suburban ideologies), or uncontrollable (pirates with changing allegiances) movement who have received little attention within the study of mobility in American studies so far. It is pertinent to analyze textual representations of non-dominant mobilities, as they subvert or at least question the pervasive rhetoric of the American myth of freedom of mobility. In order to get a fuller picture, "[t]he story of mobility in America" has to take heed of "tales of marginality and exclusion, which cast a different light on the grand narratives of nationhood, of progress, of democracy and of modernity," as Tim Cresswell put it in his study *The Tramp in America* (20). In the introduction to the collection *Nation on the Move: Mobility in U.S. History* Sylvia Hilton and Cornelis Van Minnen emphasize that mobility must be read in its double function of

affirmation and resistance – not understood as polar opposites, but as a continuum (re-)produced by cultural texts (4).

The new critical attention paid to space and geographical as well as cultural mobility in American Studies corresponds with a turn to mobility and to what is now called *mobility studies* in the social sciences. The founding of the journal *Mobilities* in 2006 is only one manifestation of the development of mobility studies into a new field of research. In the editorial to the first issue, cultural geographer Kevin Hannam and sociologists Mimi Sheller and John Urry programmatically state that

[m]obility has become an evocative keyword for the twenty-first century and a powerful discourse that creates its own effects and contexts. The concept of mobilities encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life. (1)

The *new mobilities paradigm* seeks to understand mobility as a lived reality and, more radically, as a source of knowledge and meaning production. Thus mobility becomes a conceptual category in the critical debates on numerous issues such as travel and embodiment, race, gender, (post-)colonialism, and state theory: “mobility is part of a power game. Just as the seller’s price is the buyer’s cost, so the freedom of mobility experienced by one person might be conceived by another as a threat of intrusion. Greater mobility empowers some, while others will respond by developing control mechanisms” (Sager 259). The power asymmetries are most obvious in comparisons of tourists and fugitives or migrants whose paths cross in the border zones between Latin America, the Caribbean and the US, or between Africa and Europe; simultaneously, these contrasting mobilities are also closely interrelated in the emergence of a new global order in which the subject’s freedom and capability of movement is a determining factor (cf. Holert and Terkessidis). In a second and expanded edition of *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt calls for “thinking through mobility” when addressing this “new phase of empire” (237), i.e. “the restructuring of planetary relations by an imperially designed neoliberalism” (238):

[v]astly altered and accelerated patterns of human mobility are one of the key new elements of this [new geopolitical] order, most conspicuously mass labor migration, from poor countries to richer ones and from country to city, and mass tourism. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, tourism is the largest industry in the world after the drug trade, labor migration has produced, among other things, a reversal of the colonial spread of settlers from Europe outwards. Today every city in Europe and North America has diasporic communities from multiple parts of the globe, often from the country's ex-colonies. (237)

The sensationalist, sometimes happy and more often sad narratives of the surviving Cuban child “washed up on the shores of Florida” or the African boys “frozen to death in the wheel casings of jets landing in European airports” (239) show that these kinds of “[t]ravel stories reveal the flow metaphor [of globalization] to be perverse. The asphyxiated Chinese workers were not flowing in the back of the truck; the Rio Grande may have been flowing but not the young men who drowned there” (241).

Since mobility is viewed as socially constructed, with the subject (re)producing and challenging notions of mobility in his/her everyday life (cf. de Certeau), it has to be (re-)conceptualized as *mobilities* in the plural. The new mobilities paradigm allows for addressing both immobility, especially in the form of exclusionary mechanisms and the ‘hyper-mobility’ of electronic communication, and critically differentiates between actual mobility and motility as potential movement (cf. Cresswell, *On the Move*; Kaufmann; Kaufmann, Manfred, and Joye; Sager). Case studies in these fields often examine issues such as migration, transportation and the politics of mobility, mobile communications, disability rights, governance and governmentality (cf. e.g. Adey; Biemann; Thomsen, Nielsen, and Gudmundsson).

Tim Cresswell's seminal monograph *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (2006) sees mobility often clad in metaphors of fluidity and instability in current scholarship that are positively connoted, thus implying localizability and rootedness as the negative pole of a dichotomy, and he deconstructs this simplistic binary opposition:

[c]learly, there are forms of mobility that are neither transgressive nor resistant – the flows of the transnational business community and of the capital that travels with them are examples of this. It is clear that there

are also examples of resistance that involve not moving, staying put, resisting dominant flows and motions. (ix)

Thus, Cresswell makes important analytical distinctions between mobility (understood as “socially produced motion”), as 1. an empirical, technologically constructed reality, 2. an idea formed and (re)produced by representational strategies in texts, and 3. a physical experience. The interface between mobile bodies and representations of mobility is of interest for cultural studies as they address questions of ideology, subjectivity, and agency.

In our volume, American Studies and the new mobility studies fruitfully connect. Whereas the former provides a culturally specific yet interdisciplinary context for our inquiries, the latter offers valuable conceptual insights. The phenomena at the center of the contributions to this volume do not focus exclusively on contemporary aspects of mobility, which are the object of much research in the social sciences that relates mobility to discourses of globalization; as the 2010 publication *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* by Stephen Greenblatt and others suggests, the mobility paradigm needs to historicize (cultural) mobilities and thus to counter the notion of mobility as a new or recent phenomenon. In his introduction, Greenblatt programmatically claims that

[w]e need to understand colonization, exile, emigration, wandering, contamination, and unintended consequences, along with the fierce compulsions of greed, longing, and restlessness, for it is these disruptive forces that principally shape the history and diffusion of identity and language, and not a rooted sense of cultural legitimacy (“Cultural Mobility” 2)

and that “[t]he reality, for most of the past as once again for the present, is more about nomads than natives”³ (6) as “the local has always been

³ The figure of the nomad has come to the fore of a variety of scholarly discourses long before the new mobilities paradigm, especially through the theorization of the postmodern subject as fragmented and in flux (cf. esp. Bauman) and the critique of rootedness as the dominant, territorially bound metaphorization of (political) legitimacy in the wake of Gilles Deleuze and

irradiated [...] by the larger world” (4). Many of the essays in *Cultural Mobility* revisit historical discourses of mobility in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Greenblatt calls for scholars to trace the itineraries of people(s), texts, and cultural products, to examine the interaction between the local and the global, and to inquire into “the mechanisms at work when movement encounters structures of stability and control” (19). The present collection responds to Greenblatt’s suggestion that “mobility studies should shed light on hidden as well as conspicuous movements of peoples, objects, images, texts, and ideas” (“Manifesto” 250) and that it “should account in new ways for the tension between individual agency and structural constraints” (251).

III.

The *pirate* as an historical figure is remembered in contemporary culture as adventurous, freedom-loving, and excessive: pirates roam the seas, travel from coast to coast and among islands, nations, and continents; they follow their own code of honor, yet violently usurp and claim foreign treasures in the Atlantic world. As a specter of colonialism, this figure resurfaces as a haunting presence in contemporary conflict scenarios along the African coast. As historical agents and as cultural symbols, pirates are portrayed as disrespectful of legal and political boundaries, as transgressing class, ethnic, and gender differences, and as embodying non-dominant movements.

Alexandra Ganser’s essay looks at the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when seafaring narratives were an important genre in transatlantic literature. The literature of piracy not only debated mobility, but also enacted contemporaneous debates about legitimate and illegitimate economic, cultural, and social practices. Ganser focuses on discourses about legitimate and illegitimate mobility in narratives of piracy, and on how narratives of piratical mobilities have been used in the context of European colonial expansion. This is exemplified in Ganser’s brief reading of Alexander Olivier Exquemelin’s *The Buccaneers of America* (1684). In

Félix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (cf. Braidotti; Ganser; Paul). On metaphorizations of mobility, cf. Wolff; C. Kaplan.

addition, she examines the Puritan anti-piratical sermon as an exemplary form in which mobility is cast as a disruptive force not only for sailor morality but also, indirectly, for New England's social order, based on strict hierarchies. Cotton Mather's anti-piratical sermons differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate movement as part of a religious discourse. Ganser argues that such popular texts discussed piracy *pars pro toto* in their negotiation of power and economic relations as well as of social and cultural norms.

Gesa Mackenthun also explores the multiple and contradictory meanings that both the term and the practice of mobility have taken in early American culture. Discourses of national identity circulated around ambivalent definitions of mobility in which westward expansion was sanctioned and sanctified while the northbound movements of fugitive slaves were condemned as illegal. In this context, Mackenthun analyzes the erratic mobility of 19th-century literary pirates as an alternative to a nationalist mobility. They are read against the background of a juridical discourse that came to understand the slave trade as a form of piracy. Characters like Cooper's Red Rover, Maxwell Philips's Emmanuel Appadocca, or Jules Verne's Captain Nemo express this discursive ambivalence and unsettle the ideological foundations of the slavery-based Atlantic world and the expansionist practice of the United States.

Nina Gerassi-Navarro's "Piracy: Shifts in Global Mobility" demonstrates how contemporary piracy at the horn of Africa and elsewhere can be read with reference to the political and religious confrontations between Spain and 'heretical' English pirates during the colonial period. While pirates defy political and cultural boundaries, colonial powers have alternately supported and condemned their attacks according to their own political interests. Literary and filmic representations of Francis Drake, Captain Hook, and Jack Sparrow (among many other figures) evoke distinct images of violent lawlessness and romanticized freedom in the collective imaginary. The essay analyzes how piracy has been represented, probing when mobility is encouraged by society and when it is perceived as a menace. Popular culture, such as Hollywood films and illustrations in periodicals, as read by Gerassi-Navarro, has contributed to the construction of the pirate as an articulation of discourses of power and legality instrumental for the construction and conceptualization of a national consensus.

Finally, Heike Steinhoff's essay traces the Hollywood pirate into the 21st century. In Hollywood movies, representations of pirates often evoke ambivalent meanings of race, nationality, gender, and sexuality. As the protagonist Captain Jack Sparrow in the film series *Pirates of the Caribbean* evidences, the pirate is constructed as a liminal, restless, and rootless figure: s/he is continually linked to the threshold – of land and sea, good and evil, life and death, white and non-white, masculine and feminine, self and Other. Moreover, filmic representations often position the pirate in the US-American mythological tradition of the outlaw and frontier hero. Steinhoff pays particular attention to female pirates and gender issues in her analysis of *Captain Blood* (1935), *Cutthroat Island* (1995), and *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003-2007). Her essay elucidates the ways in which piracy has functioned both as a signifier of mobility and a mobile signifier.

The activity of drifting is stereotypically connected with aimlessness, passivity, laziness, or lack of resolve. Thus, the figure of the *drifter* has often been cast as inimical to a society that thrives on liberal market capitalism and a self-realizing Protestant work ethic. Yet, ever since Henry David Thoreau's experiments at Walden, his two-year long 'drifting' in and by the pond, and his concomitant portrayal as a kind of "anti-Franklin" (Parini 117), the drifter has also come to embody a cultural practice of resistance and critique. The various ways in which the drifter has been described as an enemy of the state and as a criminal on the one hand, and celebrated as a non-conformist drop-out and a counter-cultural nomad on the other hand are the subject of the essays in this section. Of course, marginal forms of drifting may eventually be part of dominant narratives: as Andrew Delbanco has reminded us, even the Puritans were "drop-outs" at one point in history before they started to police the movement of their fellow Saints and sinners (xxii).

Peter Kuras looks at the ways in which the figure of the hobo is constructed in American legal discourses; the hobo as an emblematic figure of railroad culture and as "the sole true inhabitant of a kind of liminal modernity created by the railroad" is among those social types named in the discourses that established a tradition of crimes of condition, rather than crimes of commission, in American jurisprudence. This legal discourse on the hobo brings to light the policing of public-private dichotomies along with property rights as well as the profound

implications of mobility as a class specific privilege that depends on whether one is on the ‘right’ or the ‘wrong side of the tracks.’

Martin Butler discusses the representations of the drifter in Woody Guthrie’s work against the historical backdrop of the Dust Bowl Migration and the Great Depression. He shows how Guthrie’s reception (of his work as well as of his artist persona) sheds light on the significance of the drifter in American popular culture and how it echoes in the works of other folk artists (such as Bob Dylan). Guthrie’s songs convey a critical patriotism that addresses social injustices but that – much like the American Jeremiad – affirms national unity and cohesion.

Dorothea Löbbermann’s contribution investigates the figure of the homeless in contemporary American literary and popular texts. Her readings of Paul Auster’s *City of Glass* and *In the Country of Last Things* as well as of George Dawes Green’s *The Caveman’s Valentine* inquire into the proximity of the homeless and the artist in post-modernity. By reflecting on de Certeau’s seminal essay, Löbbermann investigates how “Walking in the City” is turned from practice to representation to meaning production in contemporary literature that reconceptualizes space by fictionalizing homelessness.

Skateboarding and skate punk as cultural practices are at the center of Konstantin Butz’s essay. The way these practices encode movement and a sense of drifting are evidenced in the 1986 music video for the song “Possessed to Skate” by Venice Beach hardcore punk band Sui-cidal Tendencies. While Butz’s close reading of the video and the song lyrics valorizes the counter-cultural potential of such practices and their politics of transgressive movement, he also reflects critically on their class and gender biases.

The figure of the *fugitive* is readily associated with both dangerous criminals on the run from the law and heroic individuals fleeing oppression and injustice. It has often been simplistically determined by discourses of illegality and liberation. However, as the contributions in this section assert, representations of fugitives cover the full spectrum between these poles and emerge as contested figures. Conflicting narratives cast the fugitive figure as foundational hero, helpless victim, escapist adventurer, dissenting rebel, or dangerous outlaw. Fugitive stories are particularly intriguing as they leave considerable room for the imagination and contain ‘strategic silences:’ the fugitive defies surveillance, control, and

containment (at least to a certain degree) and practices a form of mobility which entails the formation of 'alternative geographies.'

The contribution by Christina Judith Hein and Heike Paul examines the implications of the fugitive as a figure of alternative mobility in early America and looks at this figure as an anti-colonial presence in exemplary 17th- and 18th-century texts that describe (or silence) fugitives from the white colonial settlements (starting with Jamestown) to the indigenous cultures of North America. These texts draw attention not only to hierarchies of class and status within the English colonies but also to experiences of indigenization that are often neglected in American literary and cultural history and that return in the pages of 20th-century postmodern texts (by Angela Carter, Bharati Mukherjee, Louise Erdrich, and Gerald Vizenor). The white fugitive thus becomes a figure of cultural critique which undermines processes of English colonization and American nation-building.

As Heike Paul's essay shows, the fugitive has also been championed as a key figure of a foundational narrative: in the context of Canadian national self-representations, Canadian anti-slavery and the story of the Underground Railroad often loom large – in apparent contradistinction to a US-American history of slavery. Josiah Henson, allegedly an inspiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom, escaped slavery and found a new home north of the US border. He may well be the best-known black fugitive who today is commemorated widely in Canada and who is part of a public memory that portrays Canada as a kind of biblical Canaan. Yet, as Paul argues, the creation of Canadian public memory of the country's black history is often highly selective and may perpetuate narratives of black helplessness and white charity whereas it remains silent about violent black resistance and black diasporic cultures that cannot be contained in a narrative of national identity and belonging.

Katharina Gerund's essay zooms in on the historical example of an African American fugitive who made headlines around the world during the Black Power era: Angela Davis. Gerund's analysis reveals the contested terrain on which the struggle over representations of (political) fugitives is located during this period and critically examines the media and 'official' representation of Davis as fugitive-criminal in contrast to Davis' claim to self-representation in her autobiography. Davis counters the wide-spread perception of the fugitive as criminal particularly by

placing herself in a specifically African American tradition beginning with the (heroic) fugitive slaves. The discourses on Davis as a fugitive expose the cultural function and appeal of the fugitive story and at the same time reveal the genderedness of these discourses which conventionally construct the fugitive not only as a criminal but also as male.

Christoph Ernst examines the TV series *The Fugitive* from a media studies perspective and focuses on mobility beyond the normative order. In this 1960s series, protagonist Richard Kimble is not only on the run from the law but also in search of his wife's murderer. He emerges as a complex figure of mobility that defies surveillance and, thus, does not appear on the maps of his pursuers: Ernst argues that the map of the law is subordinated to the rules and conventions of seriality. His reading reveals the series' reflections on the normative order as it combines medial (self-)reflection with the diegetic construction and function of the fugitive. The fugitive ultimately does not destabilize the 'utopia' of justice: Kimble neither flees the country nor questions the law and the judicial system at large. Rather, he stays in the US to prove his innocence. Ernst's contribution takes Kimble as an example to shed light on the intricate interconnections between the fugitive figure and the seriality of *The Fugitive*.

Rüdiger Kunow's contribution delineates a provisional ABC of mobility studies, fleshing out entries that range from A as in "airplane" and "arrival" to C as in "contagion" and "copyright" and open up a national discussion of mobility-themes to a transnational discussion of mobility and its concomitant fields. As part of a larger, quite encyclopedic project, Kunow's essay shows that we can study many cultural artifacts (literature, law, popular culture, etc.) in a discursive context of mobility studies and thereby gain new insights and new perspectives on modes of representation and regulation. We thus conclude this volume with his programmatic contribution to the field of American mobility studies after the transnational turn. Finally, we provide a comprehensive bibliography on mobility studies as an important interdisciplinary field of scholarship relevant for both cultural studies and the social sciences. The

transdisciplinary bibliography includes monographs, essay collections, and articles with a clear and specific focus on mobility.⁴

The present volume dates back to the international conference “Imagining Alternative Mobilities? Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives in the U.S. and Beyond” at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg in June 2009. The Fritz Thyssen Foundation has generously funded both the conference and the publication of this volume, which collects the original conference papers as well as several new essays on the (cultural) mobility of pirates, drifters, and fugitives within a North American and transatlantic framework.

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⁴ It deliberately excludes works in adjacent fields such as cosmopolitanism, (im)migration, postcolonial studies, translation, transatlantic and transnational studies, travel writing, or tourism studies unless they explicitly focus on the topic of mobility.

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PIRATES

ALEXANDRA GANSER

“That the *Enchantments* of the *Sea*, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some:” Seafaring Mobilities in Transatlantic Narratives of Piracy around 1700

A core dispute in academic studies of piracy, which have so far been mostly undertaken in the field of history, has revolved around the question whether early modern pirate communities presented an alternative social order or whether they were merely a pre-capitalist avant-garde of exploiters in the Americas, mirroring colonial Europe. European colonialist discourses, in their distinct national versions, debated the legitimacy of trade monopolies claimed by the Spaniards; in this context, critics have wondered whether piracy was a consequence of a military-based capitalism whose aim was ultimately to establish a ‘free’ market, as Goethe’s Mephistopheles implies in the second part of *Faust*: “Krieg, Handel und Piraterie, / Dreieinig sind sie, nicht zu trennen!”¹ (Act 5; cf. Leeson). To what extent did piracy act as an economic catalyst in British, French, and even Spanish nation-building?² Was piracy merely a radical type of libertarianism that focussed on free enterprise, excessive consumption, violence, exploitation, and individualism? Can its cultural and socio-political significance be reduced to its role in the development of capitalism and the nation-state? Questions like these are answered in the negative by studies in labor history, most eminently those of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, who propose to view pirates as a different sort of avant-garde, constituting outposts of a utopian social model

¹ “War, trade, and piracy together are / a trinity not to be severed!” (Goethe 282).

² A question Nina Gerassi-Navarro examines in her study of Spanish American pirate novels, in which she reads them as fictions of nation-building in the colonial hemispheric context (cf. also Gerassi-Navarro’s essay in this volume).

that performed radical democracy and embodied ideas such as liberty, equality, and fraternity – ideas that would alter the course of American and European history only fifty years after the so-called ‘golden age of piracy’ of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Were pirate communities such models of *avant-la-lettre* multicultural, transnational micro-societies, a “motley crew,” as the contemporaries called them (qtd. in Linebaugh and Rediker 211), in which racial and social differences were at least questioned and at best abolished?

It would be a vain endeavor to try to present a definitive answer to these dichotomously framed questions. The plethora of Anglo-American texts on piracy of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, from which the following analysis will be drawn, dismantles any such ‘either/or’ preconceptions. Instead, it introduces piracy (mainly represented in sermons, broad-sheets, criminal biography, and chorographic³ travel narrative) as a multi-faceted, complex legal and discursive category. In these texts, pirates appear as repentant sinners on the verge of execution; as defiant rebels against colonial authorities; as crafty tradesmen whose aim is profit and gain; as radical philosophers and religious dissenters; as slave-holders and as liberators of slaves; as picaresque traveler-adventurers on the margins of empire,⁴ cartographers and writers; as atrocious and as egalitarian masters; and as multinational proponents of an alternative way of life. As figures symptomatic of crisis, the pirates in these texts may be seen as all and none of the above at the same time; they are textual constructions articulating a historical phenomenon that provoked the colonial authorities of the multipolar colonial Atlantic world to write back: to contain the pirate, to turn him from an agent of

³ Chorography has been discussed by Barbara Shapiro as the combination of scientific and social history writing, of descriptive geography and narrative history, built on the critical reading of sources and firsthand observation. Richard Frohock discusses Exquemelin’s book in the context of chorographic discourse in early modern literature.

⁴ Continuities between the picaresque traveler and the pirate in the popular literature of the early 18th century are implied by Richetti, esp. 60-118. Cf. also Ralph Bauer’s reading of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora’s captivity narrative in *The Cultural Geography of Early American Literatures* (2003). On the science/travel writing/piracy nexus, cf. also Neill’s essay on William Dampier’s writing.

disruption, questioning the dominant order, into a figure that affirms that very order.

These efforts at containment are unsuccessful in terms of controlling the texts they produce – exuberant texts filled with polyphonic voices and ambiguity because they figuratively enact the epistemological crisis that had been produced by the ‘discovery’ of the New World. Since the end of the 15th century, many reported ‘wonders’ had to be integrated into existing symbolic orders and Western systems of knowledge/power; the quantity and quality of sensational news from far-away corners of the globe provoked a crisis of the concepts of truth and authority as well as of the cultural meaning of testimony and witnessing (cf. Frohock’s interpretation of Exquemelin’s 1678 *Buccaneers of America*). In these reports, mobility is a central category, both in a literal and metaphorical sense, through which the figure of the pirate is negotiated and his (il)legitimacy is debated. In the mobile world of the various Atlantic migrations that traversed colonial America, from the Puritan Great Migration to the triangular slave trade, the pirate was a transgressive figure who encompassed traits of all the major characters of that mobile world: the trader, the adventurer, the pilgrim, the slave and the indentured laborer as well as the slave-holder and -trader. Through the sensational appeal of the emblematic pirate, major anxieties of an increasingly mobile society were thus voiced in these texts in all their ambiguity.

In the following, I will focus on how piratical mobilities have been cast as *both* a threat to *and* an affirmation of European colonial expansion and the imperialist project in literary texts; on interpretations of the ship and the sea as paradoxical, heterotopian spaces in which the threat and the lure are combined; and on the overall significance of mobility as well as motility (the capability of movement) in Anglo-American texts about piratical illegitimacy of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. In the early modern era, just as control over people’s mobility was increasingly nationalized (cf. Cresswell 12-13), pirates emerged as figures of yet another ‘new world:’ “the world of Hobbes, Galileo, and Harvey, [...] an infinite, restless entanglement of persistent movement” in which “happiness itself was based on the freedom to move” (14). Early modern texts on piracy articulate that emergent world.

I will first turn to Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers of America*, one of the earliest and most widely-known examinations of piracy. It contrasts the

mobility of the pirates with an alleged immobility of indigenous people on the one hand and associates mobility with consumption on the other. The text was the first in a series of ethnographic narratives of the late 17th century about the New World in which pirates were a major socio-political force.⁵ The anti-piratical sermon of Puritan New England constitutes a second genre of the late 17th and early 18th centuries that discussed mobility and piracy in conjunction; I will thus exemplarily read Cotton Mather's comments on piracy in terms of their use of metaphors of mobility as another discursive moment around 1700 centering on that conjunction. While at first glance these texts and genres are very different from each other, both Exquemelin's and Mather's narratives produce an ambivalent image of pirates. Because of the pirate's geographical and conceptual mobility, the texts are unable to fully contain this unruly figure. Before turning to these narratives, however, I will discuss both contemporary and current discursive renditions of the ship, the crucial site of Atlantic mobility, evoked in the literature of piracy as a setting in motion which confronts the reader with a similarly mobile and dynamic population of diverse ethnic and national provenance. As such, the ship and the sea emerge as the main spaces in which hegemonic and anti-hegemonic mobilities take effect.

Hydrarchies of the Ship

Both the ship and the sea are spaces characterized by fluidity and mobility and are therefore appropriate sites for discursively enacting the dynamics of oppression and resistance. Literary renderings of the ship and the sea around 1700 are informed by the paradoxical nature of these spaces, irreducible to either victimhood or agency. Yet while the illegitimate pirate ship thus also embodied the promise of resistance, seafaring life in general was often compared to being in jail; Samuel Johnson observed that the ship was like a prison and characterized sea laborers as the most miserable among workers (qtd. in Rediker, *Villains* 43).⁶ While

⁵ Cf. similar texts by Wafer; Ringrose; Dampier.

⁶ This seems indisputable if we take into consideration the descriptions of conditions aboard the Royal Navy and Merchant Marine. Harsh discipline and hard work, low wages often remaining unpaid, meager or spoilt

the ships of the Merchant Marine and the Royal Navy functioned as imperial moving machines⁷ in which sailors were reduced to ‘hands’ that set them into and kept them in motion, pirate ships turned the spatial insulation and isolation of the ship (the very qualities that induced Michel Foucault to call the ship an instance of heterotopia, a territorialized site of a different spatial order) into an asset (27; cf. also Ganser).

When pirate crews captured a ship, they usually determined the fate of her captain by asking the crew whether it had undergone what was then termed ‘bad usage’ by their officers. The second major act in the capture consisted in renaming the vessel, semantically marking that a different, non-sanctioned maritime order was to be installed. The importance of renaming signifies the break with what Richard Braithwaite, a supporter of Parliament in the English Revolution who had lost a son to Algerian pirates, called “Hydrarchy:” the strictly regulated maritime social order that reflected and sought to imitate imperial social hierarchies (qtd. in Linebaugh and Rediker 143). The vessel’s name was thus turned from a marker of ownership and nationality into a sign of defiance of legality in terms of economic enterprise and military engagement. The black flag or Jolly Roger, whose icons pointed to *vanitas*, death, and terror, operated in this fashion, too, but alongside their faster, smaller ships (compared to those they attacked), it was also the pirates’ most important weapon: many official ships that would have easily won against pirate crews in battle gave up upon sighting the black flag, which connoted pirate courage and fierceness. The flag expressed the pirate communities’ preference for “*a merry Life and a short one*” (qtd. in Rediker, *Villains* 10) over a life of misery (which usually lasted not much longer than a pirate’s anyway). One can argue that hissing the Jolly Roger was the constitutive act of a piratical performativity of power that rested in the repetition of the act itself rather than in the repetition of violent acts referenced symbolically by the flag.

supplies, disease, violence, and the constant threat of punishment characterized daily life on the imperial ship.

⁷ As Marcus Rediker states: “[e]pidemics, consumption, and scurvy raged on royal ships, and the men were ‘caught in a machine from which there was no escape, bar desertion, incapacitation, or death’” (*Villains* 44; his source for the quote is not clearly identifiable).

It was in this process of physical and symbolic appropriation that the ship turned into a vehicle of unsanctioned mobility and an alternative social order. In *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, Linebaugh and Rediker draw on the mythological Hydra, the sea-monster that grew two new heads for each one that Hercules cut off, in order to reinterpret that hydrarchy. They argue that “within imperial hydrarchy grew a different hydrarchy, one that was both proletarian and oppositional” (153). This alternative social order ‘from below deck’ valued seafaring abilities and group solidarity higher than social class, color, nation, or heredity, as Kenneth Kinkor also argues regarding the position of blacks in pirate crews.

In order to avoid the romantic fallacy of viewing piracy as diametrically opposed to oppression and violence which lurks in many accounts of pirates, one needs to acknowledge the other side of the coin as well: first, experimental pirate counter-societies were often short-lived or unsuccessful; for instance, pirates did partake in the slave-trade and did not always free slaves captured from another vessel. Their resistance was by no means unaffected by the social values and racial stereotypes of their times; pirates might have minimized acts of violence by relying on their dangerous image, but pacifism was never their priority. Second, especially from a macrohistorical perspective, one might argue that despite the pirates’ anti-hegemonic economic and social practices, they nevertheless did function as vanguard colonialists, first settlers, explorers, and dynamic agents necessary for the advance of capitalism. This interpretation has been fostered, most prominently, by the controversial political theorist Carl Schmitt, who characterized pirates (and non-industrial whalers) as the first practitioners of a new, maritime world order that evolved during the 16th and 17th centuries and produced the sea as the most important space of European power play; in *Land und Meer* (engl. *Land and Sea*), he interprets piracy as a colonializing force. From his perspective, “Seeschäumer” (literally “sea-frothers” and denoting sea robbers, a term Schmitt takes from Krünitz’ *Oeconomische Encyclopädie*) played a major role in the exploration and initial settlement of the colonies, paving the way for Protestant civilization to follow. “Seeschäumer” are conceived in binary opposition to “Landtreter” (landlubbers). He writes:

Seeschäumer aller Art, Piraten, Korsaren, Seehandel treibende Abenteurer, bilden, neben den Waljägern und den Seglern, die Aufbruchskolonnie der elementaren Wendung zum Meer, die sich im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert vollzieht. Hier haben wir eine weitere, verwegene Art von "Kindern der See." [...] In solchen Seeschäumern bricht das Element des Meeres durch. (40-41)⁸

In his treatise, Schmitt conducts a different sort of romanticization, an idealization that does not glorify piratical counterculture but rather views pirates as the Protestant vanguard of anti-Catholic imperial politics. Consequently, he regards the pirates who operated after the 1713 Peace of Utrecht that ended the Spanish War of Succession as degenerates: "Im 18. Jahrhundert ist er nur noch ein wüstes Subjekt, ein krimineller Typus rohester Art, der wohl eine Figur spannender Erzählungen sein kann [...], aber keine geschichtliche Rolle mehr spielt" (43).⁹

Linebaugh, Rediker, and other labor and radical historians would certainly disagree with Schmitt, who reduces piracy entirely to its function in the process of empire-building and thereby altogether eradicates its mostly anti-accumulative, anti-frugal economic ethics of expenditure (cf. Bataille). Critics have often taken issue with Schmitt's somewhat exaggerated assumption of the sea as an anarchic space of lawlessness on which his vanguard theory of piracy is based. Michael Kempe, a German scholar of international law, critically redraws the dualistic conception of land and sea in Schmitt's text and proposes a more balanced view which takes into account that the sea has never been completely beyond the law but only beyond the specific laws of European nations. Kempe concludes that the sea is a space of diverging and conflicting strategies of lawmaking, crossing the oceans like vectors,

⁸ "Sea-frothers of all kinds, pirates, corsairs, adventurers in maritime trade, form, beside the whalers and sailors, the vanguards of the elementary turn to the ocean that happened in the 16th and 17th centuries. Here we have another, swashbuckling kind of "children of the sea." [...] In such sea-frothers the element of the ocean breaks through" (my translation).

⁹ "In the 18th century he is only a wild subject, a criminal type of the crudest kind who can of course be a figure of exciting narratives [...], but no longer plays a role in history" (my translation).

rather than merely a container of such strategies. It is formed by multiple lines drawn by various juridical discourses of (il)legitimacy and by conflicting imperial and non-aligned mobilities. The pirate is an agent of the latter, yet simultaneously operates in an oceanic space delineated by the former.

Since classical antiquity, the maritime pirate was contrasted with the ordinary thief in his greater motility due to the fact that the sea allowed escape in all directions. As Cicero defined the pirate as “*communis hostis omnium*” (*De officiis* III, 29), the pirate emerged, especially in the discourse of international law, as an enemy of all nations and as a foil for the integration of European nation-states which tried to translate the rule of the land into the rule of the seas. Hegemonic and alternative, legal and illegal mobilities were discursively negotiated along these very lines. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, images of the pirate increasingly drew on a negativity defined by the aforementioned lack of national and ethnic character and even by their alleged non-humanity (as pirates were depicted as cruel monsters and potential cannibals). The pirate was constructed as uncivilized and cannibalistic (Kempe 397), a threat to the *translatio imperii* once he left his assigned role of privateer or military aid to national endeavors – in other words, his role of a colonial vanguard. Once pirates started building alternative social communities, European legal and political theorists increasingly sought to delegitimize such endeavors.¹⁰

¹⁰ Following these observations, Kempe names the international terrorist as the semantic successor to the pirate because of their similarity in terms of uncontrollable mobility: “Wenn heutige Terroristen als ‘nuovi pirati’ bezeichnet werden, dann ist es zweifellos die räumliche Unfaßbarkeit, die nicht-lokalisierbare Raumpräsenz, die hier zum Komparativ wird. Das eigentümliche Raumparadox aus Nicht-Präsenz und Omnipräsenz lässt in beiden Fällen den Aggressor zum Universalfeind werden. Bei den klassischen Theoretikern [...] schien nur das Meer ein solches unberechenbares Raumverhalten, nämlich okkasionelles Auftauchen und instantes Zuschlagen, zu ermöglichen. Das Meer repräsentierte im völkerrechtlichen Piratenbegriff ex negativo den Verkehrsraum der Völker, da es die topographische Voraussetzung dafür bildete, den Piraten als virtuellen Angreifer aller Völker und Nationen zu verstehen” (397). “When terrorists today are called ‘nuovi pirati,’ then it is undoubtedly the spatial elusiveness, the non-

In a time when the sailing ship was the single means of transportation that connected the European, African, and American shores of the imperial Atlantic, it functioned as a medium of transatlantic communication. Discursively, it emerged as a conflicted site of articulation for diverse imaginings of and commentary on the social order. These imperial and resistant sites appear as fluid, permeable spaces of conflict and struggle in the literature of piracy since about 1700, as both Exquemelin's and Mather's narratives demonstrate.

The Buccaneers of America: Mobility and Consumption

Chorographic narratives of piracy, which were part of the tradition of the ethnographic travel narrative and also influenced the further development of the genre, confirm a continuum between resistance to and participation in the colonial project. One of the earliest book-length narratives of piracy was Alexander Olivier Exquemelin's *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers*, published originally in Dutch in 1678 and translated into German, Spanish, English, and French in numerous editions within the following decade. The book became a standard source for subsequent piracy literature (for example Captain Charles Johnson's and Daniel Defoe's piracy narratives). It is a text published under the name of a (possibly French) indentured laborer who became barber-surgeon for pirate captains François L'Olonnais and Henry Morgan. He was not sufficiently fluent in Dutch to have written the book by himself; it was most likely his Dutch publisher who brought Exquemelin's oral account into written form. In this collectively

localizable presence in space that becomes the comparative category. The peculiar spatial paradox of non-presence and omni-presence in both cases turns the aggressor into the universal enemy. For the classical theorists [...] it seems that it was only the sea that allowed such unpredictable spatial behavior as occasional appearance or instant attack. *Ex negativo* the sea represented, in the definition of the pirate in international law, the mobility of the nations, as it formed the topographic precondition for understanding the pirate as a virtual attacker on all peoples and nations" (my translation). On the continuities of piracy and terrorism, cf. also Daniel Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All*.

authored work, marked by traces of an oral tradition, the process of translation, and linguistic hybridity, the implied author-narrator recounts his service in the French West India Company in Tortuga until the company's expedition is dissolved for bankruptcy, and he is sold to a cruel master. Sick and on the verge of dying, he is bought by a philanthropic surgeon who lends him the money to buy back his freedom after his recovery. Wanting to return the money he owes and lacking other means of its acquisition, Exquemelin 'enlists' with the buccaneers, partaking for five years in the 'Custom of the Coast,' as the pirate's life and code were called, before returning to Europe.

'Buccaneer' is the name given to Protestant pirates in the mid-17th-century Caribbean, who were frequently hired for attacks on Spanish ships and on settlements by British and French colonials (who themselves often had no legal cover for these attacks). The name for these masterless men, who had come from many parts of Europe as sailors and indentured servants who then deserted their contracts and took refuge as hunters in the forests of Tortuga, Hispaniola, and other fringe zones of the Spanish empire, points to the cultural contact zone of the Caribbean: 'boucan' has been traced etymologically to the Tupí word for the place and wooden grating the natives used to smoke-dry meat, a method the survivors of this people taught the European refugees (cf. Beeching 9). Buccaneer communities had their own code of social conduct and organization, including the homosocial bonds of *matelotage*. They turned pirate when the Spaniards, seeking to dissolve these outlaw communes, destroyed the wild herds of cattle on which the hunting-society of the buccaneers subsisted. Although they were eventually eliminated by the English when they had made peace with Spain, both English and French agents in the Caribbean had made frequent use of these men's raiding skills in their wars against the Spanish trade monopoly. Also, the buccaneer communities were possible only as a result of indigenous genocide, which had left many islands depopulated. They were clearly complicit in the colonial wars between the three major European empires, which instrumentalized yet never fully controlled their Caribbean 'task force.' This legal ambiguity also fully pervades Exquemelin's narrative.

Piratical life is described in the book as adventurous, cruel, and sumptuous. The buccaneers are depicted as wasteful squanderers:

[t]hey squander in a month all the money which has taken them a year [...] to earn. They drink brandy like water, and will buy a whole cask of wine, broach it, and drink until there's not a drop left. Day and night they roam the town, keeping the feast of Bacchus so long as they can get drink for money. The service of Venus is not forgotten, either. (54)

Women, here, are the providers of service, while men are mobile, consuming subjects, roaming the towns; other providers of military and labor service, unsurprisingly, are “Negroes” and “Indians” (as they are termed throughout the book). Both the buccaneers and their Spanish enemies used these ethnic groups as slaves, servants, and military personnel. A lengthy passage from the third part of the *Buccaneers* sets forth even more clearly the ambivalent terms on which their utopia is based – the exclusion of women, African Americans, and indigenous subjects as equals from their societies. At the same time, the relations between the buccaneers and the “Indians” are described as harmonious; the text here does not paint the natives as cannibalistic, savage enemies:

[t]he rovers are on such friendly terms with the native people they can stay and live among them without risk of harm, and without a care in the world. The Indians give them all they need, in exchange for which they give the Indians nothing but old knives, axes and tools [...]. When a rover comes there, he buys a woman from the Indians for an old axe or knife, and for this fee she must stay with him till he leaves [...]. A man who has taken an Indian wife has nothing to worry about: she brings him his daily food, as is customary among the Indians. The man need do nothing but a little hunting or fishing. A white man need not even do this, but may order an Indian to do it for him. [...] These Indians are a great asset to the rovers, as they are very good harpoonists [and] extremely skilful [...]. In fact, an Indian is capable of keeping a whole ship's company of 100 men supplied with food [...]. (219-20)

In this colonial land of Cockaigne, an economy of color in Exquemelin's terms, the Indians are constructed as stationary and at the service of the mobile rovers, and Indian women are sold for a fee, an act that virtually enslaves and immobilizes them as long as their (white) master wishes. The rovers' utopian project is the native woman's rape and the appropriation of the skillful native's labor. Thus the text shows that “Indians” and African Americans are never equal participants in buccaneer society – neither in economic terms, nor in terms of mobility.

The ambivalent nature of Exquemelin's text comes to the fore also on the level of narration. The narrator, although part of the piratical crew himself, refers to the buccaneers as "they" rather than "we" whenever he reports cruelty or squander, thus distancing himself, for the sake of narrative authority, from his outlaw fellows. Emphasizing their deviance and difference, he presents an exotic, transgressive, and spectacular Other to the European colonial centers, yet at the same time also hints at similarities, e.g. when he compares "the coming of the hunters and the privateers" to Caribbean coastal towns with that of "the East India ships and men-of-war" to Amsterdam (54). Taking into account these ambiguities in the narration, the pirates appear as mobile subjects in a colonial continuum of economic exploitation, violent practices of oppression, and resistance rather than as mere disturbers of imperial maritime undertakings or, conversely, as mere supporters of these ventures.

Alternately stressing similarity to and difference from European culture, Exquemelin's depiction traces an evolving society on the fringes of, rather than beyond, colonial control. Through the incorporation of both the first and third person plural narrative voice and the varying narrative distance from the colonialist project (e.g. also by alternately siding with and Othering indigenous subjects), Exquemelin's text, with all of its contradictions, is symptomatic of the literature of piracy until well into the 18th century; and it is also symptomatic in another respect: as we have seen, it links mobility with consumption and thus produces a specific proto-capitalist conjuncture. Liberty, here, consists of both the freedom to move and the freedom to consume the New World colonies' material and human resources.

Seafaring Mobilities and the Agenda of Cotton Mather's Anti-Piracy Sermons

Besides such travel accounts and histories like Exquemelin's, sermons, trial protocols, and gallows narratives, sold as broad-sheets in major cities on both sides of the Atlantic, constituted popular literary forms in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. One of the oldest genres in the literature of piracy is the anti-piratical sermon. Sermons frequently problematized mobility as a disruptive force not only for sailor morality

but also, indirectly, for a larger social order based on strict and immobile hierarchies.

In one of his many sermons debating the issues of piracy and life at sea, Mather, the most renowned Puritan minister and intellectual of his generation in New England, lists as one aspect of a pirate's way to redemption through repentance to "Stay in your Place & Station Contentedly" (*Useful Remarks* 33).¹¹ In the sermon *The Religious Marriner: A Brief Discourse Tending to Direct the Course of Sea-men in those Points of Religion Which may bring them to the Port, of Eternal Happiness*, published in 1700, Mather uses numerous metaphors of mobility which are supposed to morally guide the sailor and lead him on the 'right' course. In his preface, Mather acknowledges the importance of space and spatial occupation in the formation of collective identity when he addresses his sermon to a new collective the author calls "the Waters" in an explicit parallel to "the Grecians" and "the Romans." The influence of the sea on the sailors' moral character is the central topic of this text, which quotes Matthew 14:25 on its title page: "Jesus went unto them, walking on the Sea." Mather positions himself as the savior of a people drawn to sin through the customs of the sea: drinking, swearing, adultery, and other "special vices of the sea" (14), and he tended to pirates sentenced to death in order to lead them to redemption and save them from hell.

In the *Religious Marriner* and elsewhere, Mather characterizes seafaring as "riotous living" and the sea as a "school of vice" (5), an observation that he claims to be older than Plato. Preaching to sailors in Boston, the minister warns against "those false courses of sin" (7), emphasizes the sailors' importance for the Commonwealth, and urges them to be "faithful in Christ, where alone, your Souls may be *Anchored* with Eternal Safety" (10). Other metaphors similarly connote mobility as dangerous, direction as crucial, and sessility as preferable: "*steer clear* of the Sins," "*Depart from Evil*" (14), "don't go out of the Way, when

¹¹ Mather in fact uses a condemned, repentant pirate to utter these words. The ventriloquist use of the repentant pirate is a recurring feature of Mather's sermons, whose heteroglossic dialogism, in the Bakhtinian sense, lends itself to a contrapuntal literary analysis. On the method of contrapuntal reading, cf. Said.

you Go to Sea” (19). Despite his admittance of the national importance of seafaring, Mather regards it also as a necessary evil:

[t]ruly, 'Twere much to be advised, That the *Enchantments* of the *Sea*, may not have too strong and quick a Force upon some, to make them rashly leave *Good Callings*, by Which they might competently subsist ashore. I am far from condemning all that leave their *Callings*, and go away to *Sea*; but this we have seen, where one hath *Advanced* himself, more than two have *Ruined* themselves, by doing so. (20)

Before continuing his sermon with a long prayer fashioned for his seafaring audience to imitate aboard ship, Mather warns against “bloody *Murderers*, *Pyrates*, and *Atheists*” (21): “[t]here are some, in such Ill Terms with Heaven, that if one could help it any way in the World, one would not care to carry them: '[t]is no safe thing, to be of their Mess!’” (21-22). Adapting his vocabulary to that of the seafarers and acknowledging both their collective and multinational character, Mather’s sermon also draws on and enforces the sensationalist representation of pirates as “the worst Enemies [...], who barbarously butcher all that may discover them” (30).

Indeed, Mather’s exaggerated representation of pirates as killers who do not distinguish between friend and foe served the official politics of the day that saw in plunder only one threatening aspect of piracy; equally dangerous to imperial expansion was the fact that pirate crews were ever-growing around 1700, since many sailors of the Royal Navy or the Merchant Marine, when coming into contact with pirate crews, willingly joined them. Daniel Williams interprets Mather’s anti-piratical activities as a response to the tendency of New England sailors to desert and turn pirate, which the minister also reflected upon in his diary:

[t]o counter this tendency, [Mather] sought to make special examples of all condemned pirates in Boston jails [...]. But while he worked to save pirate souls from the fires of hell, he was as well attempting to reaffirm the same social and religious values that the pirates had first defied. Aware of the immense public fascination with the spectacle of execution, Mather used those about to be ‘turned off’ to illustrate the futility of sin and the inevitability of judgment. (Williams 235)

William Fly, a pirate captain who refused to repent and taunted his hangmen at his execution, prompted Mather to publish *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, a sensationalist biographical text that slandered Fly posthumously. The historical character of Fly is interpreted by Williams as a vanguard in terms of resistance against oppression, as Fly justifies his crimes as the appropriate response to a captain and a mate who had used him “[b]arbarously,” claiming that “we poor Men can’t have Justice done us” otherwise (Mather, *Vial* 21). Unintentionally, the anti-piratical sermon delivered to its audience not only the preacher’s perspective, but also the pirate’s, which acts like a Saidian counterpoint in the text. As Fly boasted that he had already read Mather’s *Converted Sinner* when the minister offered to bring him the pamphlet before his execution, allegedly at a point of despair in his efforts to convert Fly, one might even speculate about Fly’s intentional use of Mather to defend himself in front of a wider audience (cf. *Vial* 17).

If we follow Linebaugh and Rediker’s history from below deck and especially their diagnosis that a “motley crew” of multilingual, multi-racial, and transnational pirates formed communities in which rigid categories of social difference were negated, we could refashion mobility as MOB-ility, evoking the proletarian threat of the ‘masses’ in order to differentiate between empire-building ship traffic and an alternative mobility. Etymologically, the mob describes the Latin *populus mobilis*, the ‘moveable’ masses formed by the lower, ‘vulgar’ strata of society. Similar to what Eric Hobsbawm has called “primitive rebels,” pirates embodied the dangerous elements from these strata. Gentlemen pirates were an exception in terms of their provenience, but pirates like William Fly used the term to formulate a new self-description: in calling himself and his crew “Gentlemen of Fortune” (*Vial* 2), Fly proclaimed his transgression of class barriers. From above, the menace of uncontrollable geographical mobility that the pirates signified was perceived as directly related to social mobility and to a discontent with one’s class position. This is most obvious in Cotton Mather’s exhortation, through the voice of a pirate he ventriloquizes, to “Stay in your Place & Station Contentedly” (*Useful Remarks* 33).

The pirate’s life was used as an example of sinful existence, but by turning piracy into such an important object of public discourse, narratives like Mather’s (or Charles Johnson’s 1724 bestseller *General History of the Pyrates* and criminal biographies later on) unintentionally

added to the fascination with the pirate through their inherent sensationalism. Here we find the same cultural logic at work that has been diagnosed in the early novel: the didactic intention demands a display of what is to be controlled, but the eagerness in the didactic impulse and the unstable representation of the sinner turns what is to be controlled into a figure of excess and indeterminacy.¹²

Conclusion

The sheer number of pirate narratives, of broad-sheets, reprints, and translations into major European languages, suggests that the multi- and transnational reading public for this dialogic literature was quite large from the very beginning. As the British Empire started to turn into an empire of commerce and, concomitantly, into an “empire on the move” (Fedorowich) in the 18th century, a transatlantic reading public emerged through travel and translation, and “true crime” became one of the first genres of popular literature.¹³ The scope of these texts varies enormously: Johnson’s encyclopedic collective biographical *History* conveys a far more heterogeneous image of the pirate than the average gallows narrative or sermon; we encounter revolutionaries as well as madmen, violent brutes as well as protectors of the weak. That Johnson’s standard work on piracy highlighted the narratives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, the two best-known female pirates who, despite their cultural significance, were historical exceptions in the masculine world of the pirate ship, can be read as an attempt to include women into this vision of alternative mobility as well.

Overall, the heteronomous, illegitimate mobility pirate societies were associated with in these texts presented a radical break with society and a utopian vision of a social order beyond the law of the land and the customs of the day. However, this is not to obscure the fact that pirate life was by no means easier than that of the average sailor, even if the execution sermon that condemned piracy also unintentionally suggested

¹² Cf. also Winfried Fluck’s observations on the development of the early American novel (ch. 2, esp. 30-39).

¹³ On early criminal literature and the origins of American popular culture, cf. Daniel Cohen’s seminal study *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace*.

that piracy was one, if not the only, way to escape impressment and exploitation, inequality and alienation, hierarchy and oppression. It was in this moment of transgression that sailors who turned pirate appropriated a mobility that had been economically or politically coerced. Sailors, plantation laborers (among them indentured servants), and slaves were increasingly needed to stabilize the emergent Atlantic economy and to bolster the fledgling European nation-states in far-off waters in the 17th and 18th centuries. The English foreclosures of the 17th century, leaving ten thousands of small farmers landless, were integral in the formation of both a proletariat that would be needed in the manufacturing system and a seafaring labor market crucial for maritime empire-building in the Americas and elsewhere (cf. Linebaugh and Rediker, ch. 2). Accustomed to a life at sea, the moment that sailors turned into pirates could be the moment when formerly coerced mobile subjects began to appropriate hegemonic mobility and turn it into a more democratically organized form.¹⁴ Storytelling and pirate lore, the vernacular culture of the sea, spread the knowledge among sailors that pirate captains were only military chiefs and that all other decisions aboard, according to pirate code, were based on the principle of ‘one man, one

¹⁴ If we consider African Atlantic mobility in this context, the case is more complicated. For one, pirate crews both occasionally freed slaves captured on slavers, but they also kept slaves for themselves, and it is rather a matter of speculation as to what extent pirate life promised alternatives to Africans and African Americans in the 17th and 18th centuries. In this case, too, we have to heed Tim Cresswell’s understanding of mobility as *mobilities*, as always in the plural (e.g. 1-2). As Jeffrey Bolster and Kenneth Kinkor have demonstrated, blacks encountered ships not only as enslaved subjects transported to the New World: they were also sailing as seamen, as mariners hired on for wages in West Africa, or as pirates. We know that some members of the pirate crews in the 18th century were African American or African men, and the biography of Captain Misson in Johnson’s *History* features a lengthy abolitionist monologue by the pirate captain who founded the alleged multinational coastal community of Libertalia in Madagascar. In the 19th century, in the context of a Black Atlantic imaginary, piracy and slavery were discursively combined in literature to an even greater extent, as can be seen in Melville’s “Benito Cereno” (1856) or in Michel Maxwell Philip’s *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854), the first Anglophone Caribbean novel (cf. Mackenthun; Ganser).

vote;’ that pirates divided shares almost equally; that they had devised an early form of a pension system; and that it was a world despising hard work and the Protestant work ethic in favor of a Bataillan economy of expenditure.

Narratives of piracy, both oral and written, played an important role in the early modern Atlantic world as they contributed to a transatlantic cultural imaginary, transporting sensational news of pirate communities and lives full of adventure in the Caribbean, in Madagascar, and elsewhere, across the oceans during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Yet the fascination with pirate-adventurers was also a reason to worry: it was due to the combination of their seafaring mobility and their alternative social organization that pirates were increasingly seen as threats to, or even competitors in, official colonial policies and relations. Such discourses of a motility translated into uncontrollable movement by the pirates demonstrate that unsanctioned mobility was regarded as potentially endangering national allegiances and as inducing disloyalty to nations-in-the-making, whose governing elites could not expect patriotic solidarity as a given. They simultaneously obscure, however, the fact that mobility, even in its illegitimate version, was key to the imperial expansion of the five great European sea-powers (Spain, Portugal, France, England/Great Britain, and the Netherlands). “By 1716 a worldwide process of expropriation, called primitive accumulation, had already torn millions of people from their ancestral lands in Europe, Africa, and the Americas” as “mechanisms of dispossession had set thousands in motion,” Marcus Rediker asserts in *Villains of All Nations* (22). The maritime laborer knew he was part of a motley crew of people moving, voluntarily or involuntarily, about the Atlantic. As sailors turned into pirates, they used their seafaring capabilities, their specific motility, to escape coerced mobility; they developed, somewhat dialectically, MOB-ility, a moveable class and a class-based mobility, relying on experiences of shared oppression and a collective consciousness that had developed under the influence of the circulation of pirate stories, both orally and in print. And yet this MOB-ility, as I have argued in this essay, was never completely disentangled from (and at times even complicit with) colonial endeavors in the Americas. This is what the polyphonic literature of piracy teaches its readers.

Narratives like Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers of America* or Mather’s anti-piratical sermons, like the broad-sheet, the gallows narrative, and

the criminal biography, were best-sellers of their day and have remained important points of reference for scholars of piracy. While on the one hand they attempted to transport hegemonic ideas of pirates as terrorists and brutes, most of these texts are on the other hand highly ambiguous once we consider the spectacle of piracy they create and the ideas they convey in their descriptions of pirate life – values like democracy, freedom, adventure, abundance, leisure, community, or equality. These utopian aspects have been conserved in popular Western fantasies of piracy until today, and this romance has in fact increasingly obliterated the downsides of piratical existence as piracy has become ‘disneyfied’ (as visible in the success of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series). Their historical antecedents – the pirates that have appeared in transatlantic texts of the 17th and 18th centuries – are ambivalent figures of both hegemonic and subversive mobility; paradigmatic mobile inhabitants of the contact zone of the New World, these textual pirates draw attention to the polyphonies and broader cultural repercussions emerging from the violent world of imperial economic and political projects.

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GESA MACKENTHUN

“I Am the Law! I Am the Justice!” Cosmopolitan Piracy in New World Slave Ship Fiction and Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*

This essay explores the multiple and contradictory meanings that both the term and the practice of piracy have taken in early and nineteenth-century New World literature. While the American national narrative is based on the ‘sanctioned’ idea of a providentially ordained migration – an ‘errand into the wilderness’ – that same mythical narrative denigrates alternative forms of mobility – by fugitive slaves, Native Americans, or so-called pirates – as ‘vagrancy’ and aimless ‘wandering.’ Discourses of national identity continued to circulate around ambivalent definitions of mobility in which westward expansion was sanctioned and sanctified while the northbound movement of fugitive slaves and its supporting network, the ‘underground railroad,’ were condemned as illegal. The focus of this essay is on the planetary mobility of literary pirates as an alternative to nationalist, i.e. colonialist and imperialist, mobility. The figure of the literary pirate is read against the background of a changing juridical discourse in which the slave trade became increasingly regarded as piracy. The essay will be rounded off by a discussion of Jules Verne’s redefinition of the pirate figure in his famous novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas* (1869-70), a text often unfairly regarded as juvenile literature. Its theme, the sanction of human mobility, is highly relevant to the general topic of this volume. Verne’s text is also instructive for its multiple references to British and American imperial politics.

I. Unsanctioned Mobility

How are we to distinguish between so-called ‘alternative’ mobilities and more ‘established’ tropes of movement (e.g. migration)? How are (in my case) pirates textually staged to imagine forms of unsanctioned mobi-

lity? The opposition that these questions establish between sanctioned migration and unsanctioned mobility is intriguing: migration normally refers to movements of people who have a particular destination in mind (teleological movements); ‘alternative mobility’ on the other hand points toward a more circular or even erratic form of movement. The two types of mobility are furthermore distinguished by their legal status: whereas teleological mobility is infused with the Judeo-Christian ideology of *translatio imperii et studii*, the latter bears the stain of connotations of vagabondage and vagrancy. It is worthwhile to problematize this implicit dichotomy between migration and ‘alternative mobility’ by taking a glimpse at the history of these concepts.¹ The dichotomy replays an old distinction that colonial discourse makes between ideologically (biblically) sanctioned movements of groups of people to a new land – like the settlement of New England – and the unsanctioned movement of people who did not partake in the ideological project of imperial settlement. More precisely, the difference is between events like the Puritan Great Migration to erect a New Jerusalem in America (typologically sanctioned with reference to the Biblical precedent, Israel’s migration to Canaan), and the less systematic movements of so-called masterless men who the British authorities were eager to remove from England because they were regarded as a scourge to the social system. These masterless men were victims of the massive transformation of the British economy since the early modern period (enclosures, transformation of farmland into pastures). Deprived of their means of subsistence, these people migrated to the cities, where they frequently fell to begging and illegal economic practices. Members of this ‘surplus’ population were jailed for minor offenses and were offered indenture work in the colonies as an alternative.² Others were hired or ‘shanghaied’ as soldiers or sailors – and sometimes deserted from their ships in order to turn pirate.

The charge of a non-sedentary, i.e. ‘vagrant,’ life-style was also leveled against America’s indigenous population since early modern times; its function was to legitimize colonization and dispossession. Here is a potpourri of early modern metaphorical descriptions of native

¹ The following discussion benefits from Peter Hulme’s analysis of a similar dichotomy (see Hulme).

² See Beier; Hill; Thompson.

American ‘vagrancy:’ they “range rather than inhabit” (Purchas); they “live and lie up and downe in troupes like heards of Deare in a Forest” (Johnson); they “live not in great numbers together, but dispersed and in small companies” (Waterhouse); they “wander up and down like beasts” (Gray); they “live but like deer in herds” (Symonds) and “range up and down little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same [i.e. the “vast and unpeopled countries”]” (see Mackenthun, *Metaphors* 267-68). Similar quotations can be found with reference to ‘masterless men’ in Europe. This language is informed by a capitalistic, Lockean notion of land property in that it absolutizes agriculture as the only ‘sanctioned’ life-style while denouncing semi-sedentary forms of land use. Ironically, both European farmers and Native American farmers were deprived of their commonly held land and were thus turned into ‘vagrants’ by the increasing privatization of land – the transformation of common lands into large privately owned landholdings, often combined with an exchange of subsistence agriculture for market-oriented farming.³

The economic situation that produced thousands of ‘masterless men’ in the early modern period is perhaps not very different from that which produces countless refugees in our own time. Their itineraries, too, resemble those of the early modern ‘masterless men’ in being often erratic (although they may be very clear about where they wish to go). Their fate also epitomizes the problem inherent in the idea of legality (or ‘sanction’). Although their flight is sanctioned by international moral standards, they are frequently criminalized and regarded as illegal aliens once they arrive in the countries they wish to live in. The criminalization of modern refugees is prefigured in that of the fugitive slaves in the United States in the nineteenth century, whose measures for self-preservation were defined as violating the law of private property by the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850.

Anne Pérotin-Dumon refers to the differences between these radically divergent concepts of people on the move when she argues that the definition of who is a criminal migrant or a pirate always depends on which party possesses the political and hermeneutic hegemony – the

³ On the similarities between European common farming and Native American agricultural practice, see Morgan (ch. 3). For a full discussion of the vagrancy trope with regard to Native Americans, see Mackenthun, *Metaphors* (ch. 5).

rhetorical power of definition, so to speak. In an imperialist or colonialist setting, as Pérotin notes (with reference to St. Augustine), the hegemonic power defames as piracy those political and economic activities – either by its own citizens or by members of other nations – which challenge its hegemony. St. Augustine relates the story of a pirate who is asked by Alexander the Great how he durst to molest the seas. The pirate replies: “[h]ow darest thou molest the whole world? But because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief: thou doing it with a great navy, art called an emperor” (qtd. in Pérotin-Dumon 25). A look at contemporary Somali piracy suggests that things have not changed that much since St. Augustine’s times: the desperate seizures of Western ships by Somalis are still criminalized by a hegemonic discourse while the Western fishing fleet, whose gigantic exploits deprive the Somali fishermen of their source of subsistence, is not even included in the narrative.

II. Slavery and Piracy

In the nineteenth-century American context, the term ‘piracy’ became highly ambivalent once the slave trade had been successively declared piracy by the majority of Western nations, who had followed the initiative of Great Britain (whose motives to outlaw the trade were not exclusively humanitarian but also economic). In 1823, the US government, represented by John Quincy Adams, entered into negotiations with London and other European maritime powers to denounce the slave trade as piracy. The British government insisted on having the slave trade treated as piracy under the Law of Nations – not just according to national law – which included the Right of Search of suspected ships. Adams agreed to this with the qualification that illegal slavers should only be tried “by the tribunals of the country of the slave trading vessel” (qtd. in DuBois 141). England additionally demanded that individuals engaged in the activity of slave trading on a ship sailing under a flag other than their home country’s should be tried in the courts of their country of citizenship. The convention was presented to the Senate of the United States in April 1824, but under the impact of Southern senators it was “mutilated” to such a degree (as DuBois writes) that London did not agree to sign it (141). American politicians particularly resented

the granting of the Right of Search to the former colonial power, England. Thus, the official declaration of the slave trade as piracy was postponed out of respect for national unity. While England busily made treaties with all major slave trading powers to outlaw the trade, slave traders of all nationalities increasingly adopted the American flag to cover up their illegal activities, knowing fully well that only American cruisers were authorized to search them as the treaty with Great Britain had never been ratified. Thus the official abolition of the slave trade by the United States government in 1808 was virtually inefficient, and its declaration as piracy in 1823 amounted to an empty gesture without any executive consequences. While the execution of the piracy act was pending because of the disagreements between the free states and the slave states, many illegal slavers in fact chose the Stars and Stripes as their cover-up due to the fact that the United States violently resisted having its ships searched by British cruisers. W.E.B. DuBois summarizes the situation:

the United States, for two decades after the abortive attempt of 1824, refused to co-operate with the rest of the civilized world, and allowed her flag to shelter and protect the slave-trade. If a fully equipped slaver sailed from New York, Havana, Rio Janeiro, or Liverpool, she had only to hoist the stars and stripes in order to proceed unmolested on her piratical voyage; for there was seldom a United States cruiser to be met with, and there were, on the other hand, diplomats at Washington so jealous of the honor of the flag that they would prostitute it to crime rather than allow an English or a French cruiser in any way to interfere. [...] [T]he United States had invited the world to join her in denouncing the slave-trade as piracy; yet, when such a pirate was waylaid by an English vessel, the United States complained or demanded reparation. [...] [B]y 1845, a large part of the trade was under the stars and stripes; by 1850 fully one-half the trade, and in the decade, 1850-1860 nearly all the trade, found this flag its best protection. (145-46, 144)⁴

American writers readily exploited the legal ambivalence arising from this mobility that was neither sanctioned nor outright unsanctioned. Thus James Fenimore Cooper's pirate novel *The Red Rover* (1827)

⁴ For a full account of illegal slaving to the United States in the nineteenth century, see Horne.

features a Byronic hero – the pirate called the Red Rover (Captain Heidegger) – who wages his lonesome battle against the British colonial power in the mid-eighteenth century in the disguise of a slaver. The novel thus smartly comments on the volatility (indeed the semantic ‘mobility’) of contemporary legal definitions: in 1759, when the novel is set, slavery was considered a perfectly respectable trade, while by 1827 it had – at least at the federal level – lost its respectability and legal sanction. At the end of the novel the Rover’s Flying Dutchman-like masquerade is rendered obsolete, and he dies a hero of the American Revolution, holding up the Stars and Stripes. Like St. Augustine’s pirate, the Red Rover is a rebel against the much more powerful immorality of an exploitative nation whose actions are solely sanctioned by a narrative of the succession of rulership which Heidegger, and his American colonial compatriots, reject. Thus the unsanctioned rebel haunting the British Navy throughout the Atlantic world ends up a pioneer of sanctioned, i.e. landed, sovereignty. Meanwhile, as Cooper’s patriotic novel leaves unmentioned, the African slave trade continued to form one of the economic backbones of the United States.⁵

The terminological confusion between slavery and piracy continued to haunt American public discourse and legal practice. The contradictory legal status of runaway slaves was at the center of the *Amistad* case (1839-41) and drove John Quincy Adams, acting as the Africans’ legal defense before the Supreme Court, to point out the logical paradox of regarding the slave ship rebels as both ‘merchandise’ and ‘robbers:’

[t]he merchandise were the robbers and the robbers were the merchandise. The merchandise was rescued out of its own hands, and the robbers were rescued out of the hands of the robbers. [...] Is any thing more absurd than to say these forty Africans are robbers, out of whose hands they have themselves been rescued? (23)

At issue were two related questions: first, the question of the subject-status of slaves (in order to convict them they would first have to be respected as legal subjects which in turn questioned the right to enslave them), and, second, the conterminous discussion about the high seas as

⁵ For a more extensive discussion of the *Red Rover*, see Mackenthun, *Fictions* (ch. 3).

an extra-judicial zone. The fact that the *Amistad* rebellion had been carried out in international waters led Adams to claim that “I know of no law that reaches the case of my clients, but the law of nature, and of Nature’s God on which our fathers placed our own national existence” (qtd. in Cover 111). But the courts refused to define the high seas, where the mutiny had taken place, as an extraterritorial space only subject to the law of nature.

The concept of the law of nature, on which the United States rests its own national legitimacy, was frequently evoked in romantic legal discourse. It may be regarded as a special manifestation of Enlightenment cosmopolitanist discourse because of its tenor of transcending the limitations of national legal principles and of imagining a supra-national legal space in which only the ‘higher’ law of nature would apply. The high seas offered themselves as an especially romantic site for such legal imaginings. Arguing in favor of another group of African slave ship rebels (the *Creole* case), Ohio congressman Josuah Giddings and abolitionist William Jay countered Secretary of State Daniel Webster’s opinion that the national territory of the United States extended to its ships no matter which geographical area they traveled in, claiming that on the high seas “resistance of [...] force [...] even unto death, cannot be called mutiny or murder – because they [the Blacks] are violating no law by such resistance, but on the contrary vindicating their natural freedom – the gift of God alike to all” (Jay qtd. in Cover 114). This stance was radical; its logical consequence would be the roundabout abolition of slavery, both at sea and on land.

III. Cosmopolitan Pirates

This idea of the ocean as a huge blank space on the world map – a space outside the jurisdiction of national governments,⁶ fired the romantic literary imagination of writers within and outside of the New World. Madison Washington, the Byronic hero of Frederick Douglass’s novella *The Heroic Slave* (1853), exclaims at the height of his violent takeover

⁶ For a superb discussion of the American juridical debate over slavery and the law of nature, see Cover (part I).

and against the noise of storm and lightning, “Mr. mate, you cannot write the bloody laws of slavery on those restless billows. The ocean, if not the land, is free” (347). He steers the *Creole* into the harbor of Nassau in the British Bahamas, where the rebellious Africans are set free. Martin Delany likewise appeals to the idea of natural justice in his novel *Blake* (1861), whose geographically mobile protagonist leads an attempted slave ship revolt (266). Both texts are examples of a transnational turn in the literature on American slavery. Madison Washington and Blake repeatedly cross national borders in their quest for freedom (which, of course, could only be found outside the United States). In doing so, they fuse the traditionally itinerant figure of the pirate with the figure of the runaway slave forced from his home by an inhuman and exploitative system.

It is the Trinidadian writer Maxwell Philip who added a cosmopolitan twist to the figure of the transnational pirate and thus established a bridge between US-American slave pirates and Verne’s Captain Nemo. Philip’s novel, *Emmanuel Appadocca, or, Blighted Life: A Tale of the Boucaneers*, was first published in London in 1854. Its tragic hero, an illegitimate son of a British plantation owner and a Trinidadian mulatto woman, takes revenge on his father and on the representatives of colonialism, for having abandoned him together with his mother. A self-declared avenger of the victims of European economic and sexual exploitation, Appadocca plows the Caribbean in a highly technologized ship like an oceanic version of Robin Hood and redistributes the goods from the captured merchant ships to the poor inhabitants of the islands. Like Cooper’s Red Rover, Appadocca and his crew live at sea; indeed their power would dissolve if they went on land and exposed themselves to the superior military force of Britain. Of course this lonely guerilla battle could not be victorious in the long run; Appadocca is defeated in the end – although neither by the clumsy British warship that chases him, nor by a storm at sea but by a self-declared fate which orders him to commit suicide after having accomplished his personal revenge.

Although a sea novel apparently unconcerned with the issue of United States slavery, *Emmanuel Appadocca* was written in response to the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. Philip declares in his preface that his plot was also inspired by the practice of Southern plantation owners to keep slave women as mistresses and to use them as ‘breeders’ (the topic of William Wells Brown’s 1853 novel *Clotel*). The

“blighted life” of his noble protagonist is meant to condemn the enormous crime inflicted upon people of African descent throughout the Americas.

Philip depicts the Atlantic Ocean as a site of ‘natural’ resistance against all forms of oppression, exploitation, and paternal disavowal. By way of his protagonist’s transoceanic migrations, Philip juxtaposes the world of Atlantic slavery with the world of industrial poverty in the European metropolises of London and Paris – there are scenes of human misery reminiscent of the politically radical poems of William Blake and the socially critical novels of Charles Dickens. Both worlds, or rather both spaces within the same world, are inhabited by victimized women, abandoned children, and ruthless wealthy white fathers. This is where this Caribbean novel partakes in a dialectical view of world history concurrently articulated in the works of socialist radicals. Its capacity to draw transnational and transhistorical connections between exploitative hegemonic powers on the one hand and the suffering of dehumanized and disenfranchised people on the other puts it on the same plane with the revolutionary cosmopolitanism of the age expressed in American literature (to my knowledge) only by Herman Melville (see Mackenthun, “American”).

Appadocca is a romantic pirate and a tragic hero “consumed” by a “quest for justice” on an international scale (Cain v). His project of achieving justice and human rights for all victims of modern colonialism ultimately fails because it takes more than one ship to defeat the united forces of Atlantic capitalism. The protagonist is presented as a racially ambiguous person. In his dialogues, however, he mixes his outspoken Marxian critique of colonial capitalism with references to the African (i.e. Egyptian) origin of the sciences. Appadocca is himself an ingenious engineer. Having studied mathematics and astronomy at Paris, he possesses a knowledge of cosmic and technological processes that enables him to turn his ship into a high tech machine: it is furnished with long winding pathways in the inside and a set of mirrors on the top masts which allow the seamen to see beyond the horizon, anticipating Verne’s novel and its technologically mysterious submarine. The shape-shifting ship is thus technologically far superior to those of Appadocca’s enemies and fools the British persecutors by way of an almost ‘magic’ masquerade (spontaneous changes of the ship type). The stupendous performance culminates in the display of the Jolly Roger.

While imprisoned on a British war ship, Appadocca discusses his identity and his cosmopolitan vision with his former university friend Charles. He replies to Charles' predictable self-identification as "an Englishman, and an English officer" by saying, "'And I [...] am an animal, – sub-kingdom, *vertebrata*, genus *homo*, and species, – 'tropical American:' naturalists lay my habitat all over the world, and declare me omnivorous" (122). Like Captain Ahab before him and like Captain Nemo some years later, Appadocca, although an offspring of the social elite, is a representative of the 'wretched of the earth' – or, in Melville's terms, of "[a]n Anacharsis Clootz deputation from all the isles of the sea" (*Moby-Dick* 108).⁷

As other revolutionaries before him, Appadocca appeals to the law of nature as he cannot find justice under municipal (colonial) law. Accused of piracy by Charles, he replies that if he was a pirate, then "the whole of the civilized world" would be guilty of it as well, as it "turns, exists, and grows enormous on the *licensed* system of robbing and thieving" (113). Like Captain Ahab, Appadocca carries out his retribution on the high seas. The ocean is once again romanticized as a realm of freedom beyond the reach of municipal law. Appadocca's assertion of a postnational, indeed 'oceanic' identity turns *Emmanuel Appadocca* into what William Cain calls a "multicultural, polyphonic, 'Atlantic' book that challenges, even as it capitalizes upon, traditional notions of what a 'national' literature is and includes" (ix). Cain accordingly argues that Philip's novel splendidly fits into Gilroy's paradigm of the Black Atlantic as a diasporic, rhizomorphic "counterculture of modernity" (*The Black Atlantic* 4) – a culture to which the practices of sanctioned ("licensed," in Philip's words) and unsanctioned human mobility are crucial.

IV. The Pirate Who Travels in Search of the Deep

Philip's novel anticipates Jules Verne's *Vingt-mille Lieues Sous les Mers* in so many ways – not least in its cosmopolitan vision of revenge – that direct influence does not seem impossible. Published in 1869/1870,

⁷ On the Anacharsis Clootz trope, see Mackenthun, "American."

fifteen years after the publication of *Emmanuel Appadocca*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues* resembles the Caribbean text above all in the technological perfection of the ship and the cosmopolitan unrootedness of the pirate figure.⁸ The route of the submarine journey of the *Nautilus* likewise evokes the trope of ‘unsanctioned mobility.’ Hunted by the warships of the Western nations, whose traffic it piratically sabotages, the *Nautilus* goes on a submarine *tour du monde*, visiting various historical and natural sites and thereby evoking memories of forgotten historical events (such as the sinking of the French warship *Vengeur*) and, more importantly, the underside of global capitalism. The narrator, the scientist Dr. Aronnax, who sets out with his companions on an American steamer with the suggestive name *Abraham Lincoln* to hunt down a sea monster and who is taken prisoner on Captain Nemo’s electrically powered submarine, is torn between the conflicting emotions of fascination with the enigmatic figure of the pirate and with his scientifically astounding contraptions, and a desire to escape his bondage. Together with the reader, Aronnax burns with the desire to learn more about Nemo’s past where he assumes to find the explanation for his unconventional behavior. Discovering himself to be Nemo’s captive, Aronnax invokes the right of nations and hospitality toward prisoners of war, furthermore claiming that his coming into contact with Nemo was “unintentional” – an explanation that Nemo angrily rejects. Asked by Nemo whether he had not had the right to leave the pursuers shipwrecked on their dysfunctional steamer instead of taking them on board and saving their lives, Aronnax replies,

“[p]erhaps the right of a savage [...] but not that of a civilized being.”
“Dr. Aronnax,” answered the captain sharply, “I am not what you call a civilized being! I have broken with society for reasons which I alone have the right to appreciate. So I do not obey its rules, and I ask you never to invoke them in my presence again!” (*Twenty Thousand Leagues* 62-63)

Having placed himself, as Aronnax muses, “outside humanity’s laws” and having “made himself independent, free in the strictest sense of the

⁸ On ‘unrooted cosmopolitanism’ see Robbins (51); Mackenthun, “American.”

word” (63), Nemo resembles Appadocca in acting out of a deeply felt sympathy for those whom Fanon refers to as the “wretched of the earth:” he spends most of the treasure he collects from sunken ships in support of the Greek independence struggle (232, 253) and to brush up the meager income of an Indian pearl diver (205) whose dangerous work Verne describes in some detail. “Whatever he might say,” Aronnax muses, “this strange man has not yet totally succeeded in killing his heart” (206). And in a statement that has been read as the clearest indicator of Nemo’s national identity, the pirate says: “[t]hat Indian, doctor, is the inhabitant of an oppressed country. I am his compatriot, and shall remain so to my very last breath!” (206).

Severely constrained by his publisher Jules Hetzel from expressing his republicanism too openly, Verne uses the figure of the Byronic pirate to construe his own version of global solidarity. Captain Nemo fuses technological superiority and a desire for scientific knowledge with the spirit of political independence and republican values. He continues the count of the French Republican calendar (“it is today 13 *Prairial*, 1 June 1868” 364), and the walls of his “monk-like” room are plastered with portraits of

those great men of history whose lives were entirely devoted to a great human idea: Kosciusko, the hero who fell with the cry *Finis Poloniae*, Bozzaris, the Leonidas of modern Greece, O’Connell, the defender of Ireland, Washington, the founder of the American Union, Manin, the Italian patriot, Lincoln, who fell shot by a supporter of slavery, and finally John Brown, that martyr to the freeing of the black race, hanging from his gallows, as so terribly drawn by Victor Hugo. What link existed between these heroic souls and the soul of Captain Nemo? [...] Was he a champion of downtrodden peoples, a liberator of enslaved races? Had he taken part in the political and social upheavals that had recently marked the century? Had he been one of the heroes of that terrible American Civil War, that frightful but forever glorious battle ...? (248-49)

Nemo confirms the more general speculations without betraying any particulars. In response to Aronnax’s wonderment that the treasures which the *Nautilus* extracts from sunken galleons are not kept by the crew for their own benefit, Nemo says: “[d]o you think I am unaware there are suffering beings and oppressed races on this planet, wretches to be helped and victims to be avenged? Don’t you understand ...?” (253).

Like the Red Rover and Appadocca before him, Nemo fuses his personal revenge with the abstract purpose of aiding the victims of global oppression to gain their independence. Like Ahab, he is not portrayed as entirely inhumane – while he seems to take sadistic pleasure in observing every inch of the descent of the enemy vessel which he sinks after having been attacked by it, the event plunges him into a deep depression (373, 377-78). Instead of filling him with a feeling of victory, he neglects his duty to such a degree that the *Nautilus* loses its route and gets dangerously close to perishing in the maelstrom. At bottom, then, Nemo is a tragic figure. While attacking the enemy ship, he shouts, “I am the law, I am the justice! [...] I am the oppressed, and they are the oppressor! It is because of them that everything I loved, cherished, venerated – country, wife, children, parents – perished as I watched! Everything I hate is there!” (369). The context suggests that the ship, whose attack Nemo fends off by sinking it, might be a British ship and that the battle takes place in or near the English Channel, but the novel avoids giving more precise information. As the correspondence between Verne and his publisher Hetzel reveals, this vagueness was intentional; its function was to prevent Verne’s romantic idealism from compromising diplomatic relations.

As similar utterances of other literary pirates, Nemo’s words (“I am the law, I am the justice!”) indicate that he positions himself and his actions outside man-made law. What is rather untypical of Verne is that his phrasing here adopts religious overtones. Referring to the nationality of the ship he sinks as that of the nation that has destroyed his family and friends, Nemo adopts the part of a “terrible lawgiver” (373), of an authority whose realm is not of this world and which seems to derive from the law of nature itself. His attitude rings with the invocations of higher justice by the radical abolitionists quoted above. This impression is reinforced by the subsequent route of the *Nautilus*. Like Poe’s various ships, Nemo’s ship at the end seems to drift out of earthly time and space. As Aronnax notes, “[t]he time of the clocks on board had been suspended. [...] I felt myself carried off into the realm of the extra-natural” (374). The position of the *Nautilus* is “no longer plotted on the planisphere” (374-75). Explicitly grafted on the ending of Poe’s *Arthur Gordon Pym*, as well as his short stories “M.S. Found in a Bottle” and “A Descent Into the Maelstrom” (Poe is directly referred to, 374), the final cruise of the *Nautilus* also strongly resembles that of the *Pequod*,

whose instruments likewise fail shortly before its final encounter with the white whale.

Throughout the novel, the reader speculates about the identity of Nemo, which is never revealed. All we know is that he shuns the company of other men, that he has, as Aronnax muses at the end, made the ocean his “homeland,” and that he lives an “extra-natural existence,” walking, according to the Book of Ecclesiastes, “in search of the depth” (381). Written at a time ruled by the ideology of nationalism, this silence is troubling, and has troubled many scholars.⁹ The novel contains a few clues, among them Nemo’s empathetic identification with the Indian pearl diver (which may be merely idealistic, though) and his allusion to his family having been destroyed by that nation whose ship he sinks in or near the English Channel. Yet the novel remains vague about the location of that final battle and about the national identity of the attacking ship (see 434 n364). The editor of the English translation, William Butcher, discusses various options – among them that Nemo was originally designed by Verne to be a Polish nobleman whose family had been killed by the Russians during the Polish insurrection of 1863 (437 n369). Verne may have been forced by his intrusive publisher Hetzel to delete Nemo’s Polish identity in order not to upset the Russian government (436 n368). He consequently left Nemo’s national identity open, writing that “[r]eaders will suppose what they want, depending on their character” (qtd. in Verne 438 n369). In a letter to Hetzel, he concluded that, given the constraints of diplomacy and the publishing industry,

[t]he best idea was Nemo battling against the whole of society. A fine situation but difficult to make people believe in, since there was no motive for such a fight. Less good, there was the battle of the outlaw against those who had made him an outlaw, a Pole against Russia. That was forthright. We rejected it for purely commercial reasons. But if it is now just a battle by Nemo against an implausible enemy who is as mysterious as him, it’s not a duel between two individuals any more. It singularly diminishes the whole thing. No, as you say, we need to keep it vague. (441 n376)

⁹ For good critical assessments of Verne’s work, see Martin, *Knowledge* (ch. 4); Martin, *Mask*; Butcher. For a useful biography, see Lottmann.

The vagueness of Nemo's identity is emphasized by his name, which means 'no one' in Latin and which was used by Ulysses in its Greek version, *outis*, to cover his identity from Polyphemus (see Butcher's note in Verne 396 n66 in regard to further connotations of that phrase). This name questions Nemo's status as a legal subject and his human subjectivity; it problematizes even his membership in the *consortium humanum*, the brotherhood of men.

Apparently, then, Nemo's global, or cosmopolitan identity is the result not of Verne's love for ambivalence but of ideological pressures. The outcome, in any case, is very close to the literary figures looked at earlier in this essay – above all the figure of Emmanuel Appadocca, whose identity is only half-revealed and whose suffering and revenge obviously were to represent those of the victims of imperial powers around the world (in *Emmanuel Appadocca* represented by Britain). There are sufficient hints in Verne's novel of a deeper rooting of Nemo's cosmopolitan identity than is suggested by the correspondence – the most powerful one perhaps being the novel's maritime setting (it is somewhat inconceivable to have a Polish landlubber carry out his revenge against a largely land-locked nation on the seven seas). The *Nautilus* unquestionably plows the ocean as the culmination of a long series of romantic pirate ships, even though Verne explicitly did not want to make it one. As he explains to Hetzel, he has avoided using “a slaver, corsair, or pirate ship” because “you know full well that these ships don't exist any more. And if we are sticking as much as possible to contemporary reality, it would be unwise to assume the existence of things which do not in fact exist” (441 n376).

Verne's claim of realism comes as a surprise in view of the fantastic elements of his novel. Both the text and the author's comment can be seen to represent the transition from the kind of historical fiction we find in Cooper, Douglass, and Delany, toward a more allegorical fiction (also to be observed in Poe, Melville, and Philip) which seemingly takes us out of historical reality in order to return us to it from a more enlightened and (at least in the case of Melville and Verne) a more cosmopolitan point of view. The figure of the charismatic cosmopolitan pirate is decisive in this process of transformation. Its late nineteenth-century manifestation is that of the superhuman individual who declares himself to stand above the law (“I am the law! I am the justice!” 369),

who grows “out of all proportion” (377), yet who suffers superhuman anguish for being banned from human society: as Aronnax witnesses,

I heard distant chords from the organ, the sad harmony of an indefinable tune, the veritable complaint of a soul wishing to break all ties with earth. I listened with all my senses, hardly breathing, plunged like Captain Nemo into musical ecstasies that carried him beyond the limits of this world. (377)

With his anguished soul, Nemo, the “archangel of hate” and “terrible lawgiver” (373), is literature’s response to the waning of humanitarian idealism in the face of emergent jingoistic nationalism of the late nineteenth century. In the figure of Nemo, Verne anticipates by a decade Nietzsche’s critique of the Judeo-Christian value system as being complicit with the suppression of manhood, as well as his figure of the *Übermensch* as that extra-moral force whose authority is rooted in its mere physical and mental power. Nemo’s subversion of all values (Nietzsche’s “Umwertung aller Werte”) is symbolized in his clandestine submarine migrations as well as in his planting black flags on the South Pole (as a sign of taking possession) and on his ship the *Nautilus* while attacking the anonymous ship in the Channel (312, 368).

Like Melville, Douglass, and the radical abolitionists (by whose actions he was inspired), Verne explores the limitations of law, the invisible and indefinable borderline between law and justice. Nemo appears like an agnostic, and anarchistic, Father Mapple, who in *Moby-Dick* regards it his duty to “kill [...], burn [...], and destroy [...] all sin though he pluck it out from under the robes of Senators and Judges,” who “acknowledges no law or lord, but the Lord his God, and is only a patriot to heaven” (51) – or a patriot to Nature, rather, because by Verne’s time the wonders of the natural world had definitely replaced God as the ultimate legitimation of modernity.

Verne’s cosmopolitan vision of the tragic avenger shrivels down to provincial proportions in *The Mysterious Island* (1873-74). At the end of that novel the shipwrecked Americans find out that Nemo, the only survivor of the *Nautilus* crew, had saved them from starvation and enemy attacks. On his death bed they learn his life story (rendered in third-person narration): he was born in India as Prince Dakkar and was later sent to Europe for his education but then joined the Indian resistance against the British colonial power. The people of India, the

narrator tells us, “were persuaded that they might successfully rise against their English rulers, who had brought them out of a state of anarchy and constant warfare and misery, and had established peace and prosperity in their country” – a position that clearly differs from how Nemo himself evaluates the situation in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*. The insurrections, we further learn from the American narrator, culminated in the Sepoy Revolt (or Indian Mutiny) of 1857:

[h]e [Nemo/Dakkar] forthwith devoted his talents and wealth to the service of this cause. He aided it in person; he fought in the front ranks; he risked his life equally with the humblest of the wretched and misguided fanatics; he was ten times wounded in twenty engagements, seeking death but finding it not, but at length the sanguinary rebels were utterly defeated, and the atrocious mutiny was brought to an end.

Never before had the British power in India been exposed to such danger, and if, as they had hoped, the sepoys had received assistance from without, the influence and supremacy in Asia of the United Kingdom would have been a thing of the past. (341)

Admiring Nemo’s fortitude while condemning his cause, the narrator unambiguously sides with the British colonial power. Evaluating the situation, he draws the determinist lesson, typical of the time, that “[c]ivilization never recedes; the law of necessity ever forces it onwards. The sepoys were vanquished, and the land of the rajahs of old fell again under the rule of England” (341-42).

After telling the rest of his story – which is already known to the readers of *Twenty Thousand Leagues* – Nemo sanctifies the intention of the American castaways to annex the Pacific island on which he has lived “and to establish for our shipping a port so fortunately situated in this part of the Pacific” (348). With his eyes resting on “the motto of the ‘Nautilus’ – ‘Mobilis in mobile’” (345), Nemo dies, “murmuring the words, ‘God and my country!’” (349).

What can be observed in this passage is a transition from the pirate’s romantic cosmopolitan anonymity to a nationalist postcolonial – and, I would claim, post-piratical – identity. This does not mean, of course, that Verne planned his figure to represent the anticolonial cause even in the first novel. Which “country” Nemo refers to is not altogether clear – his previous narrative suggests India, whose independence from the colonial power he had spent part of his life in obtaining. Surprisingly,

however, the narrative voice regards Nemo's support for the anticolonial insurrection as folly and as the result of misguided personal ambition – an attitude that sits strangely with the praise of Nemo's support for the downtrodden of the earth in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*. The patriotic ending utterly contradicts Nemo's former dedication to “mobility” (his ship's motto) in the service of mankind.

As William Butcher has found out in comparing the published text of *Mysterious Island* with that of the manuscript, Nemo's absurd dying words are the result of the intervention of Verne's publisher Hetzel who “brutally, criminally, imposed” them (Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues* 443 n380). According to the manuscript, Nemo's dying word is “Independence!” Although it is difficult, from a reception point of view, to speak of the Nemo of the earlier novel, as Butcher does, as the “true Nemo” (443), his change of politics reflects the broader change from Enlightenment cosmopolitanism to parochial nationalism already indicated. In between the two novels, France had experienced the Franco-Prussian War, succeeded by the 1871 uprising and brutal liquidation of the Paris Commune – perhaps not an ideal time for having literary characters plant black flags around the globe!

Arguably, Nemo's dying words may also be taken to refer to the patriotism of his American visitors, whose imperialist intentions Nemo sanctifies by ‘bequeathing’ his island to them. Just as the official political rhetoric of the United States, Verne's novel, too, seems to regard the recent defeat of slavery as legitimizing continental and transoceanic expansionism. Jules Verne's two novels are thus relevant to our discussion of Atlantic ‘unsanctioned’ mobility because of their numerous references to American history¹⁰ – similar references can be found in

¹⁰ Butcher points out that the strong presence of the American Civil War in Verne's novel is best exemplified in the above-quoted references to John Brown and Abraham Lincoln. Yet it was important to Verne not to reduce Nemo to a mere abolitionist. As he writes in a letter to Hetzel, “[h]is nationality needs to be kept vague, together with the causes which cast him into his strange existence. [...] If Nemo wanted to take revenge on the slavers, he only had to serve in Grant's army and everything was settled” (qtd. in Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues* 422 n248). Butcher notes the similarity between the sinking of the enemy ship by the *Nautilus* near or in the English Channel at the end of Verne's novel and the sinking of the

other of his novels, for example *De la Terre à la Lune* (1865) (see Schenkel). Verne's literary indebtedness to Edgar Allan Poe has often been pointed out – it went as far as Verne writing a sequel to Poe's novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* called *Le Sphinx des Glaces* (1896). The resemblance between Nemo and Ahab, as well as further similarities with *Moby-Dick*, cast doubt on the theory that Verne did not read English.¹¹ But while the references to the history of the United States in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* primarily consist in praising the success of abolitionism and celebrating the end of slavery, Nemo's gift of his island to the American expansionists in *Mysterious Island* (who want to turn it into an imperial entrepôt) is in line with that text's grotesque, proto-Conradian celebration of British 'efficiency' in India. Regardless of who is responsible for this shift – Verne or Hetzel – the transformation from radical cosmopolitanism into vapid Orientalism is a good example of the 'voluntary' assimilation of literature to the demands of political and commercial tastes – and to the demands of literary form: as could already be observed in Cooper's *Red Rover*, with its almost identical ending, pirates tend to be domesticated to the discourse of patriotism once their revolutionary potential has been spent.

As in Cooper's case, the domestication of the pirate is accompanied by the revision of the legal discourse of the text. A radical critique of Western law which at times takes on the stance of accusing the idea of justice as such from the point of view of disfranchised subjects is

Confederate warship *Alabama* off the coast of Cherbourg by the Unionist ship *Kearsarge* on June 11, 1864.

¹¹ William Butcher's assertion that the similarities with *Moby-Dick* (directly evoked on pages 7 and 8 of the novel) must be coincidental or can only be based on Verne's knowledge of book reports because Verne did not read English (386) is hard to believe; there are simply too many of them. The parallels are not only in the ending, the characterization of the charismatic captain, and the discourse of science carried out in both books, but also in numerous details. It also seems that Verne knew the contents of other British and American books that had not been translated into French in his time, for example Matthew Maury's *The Physical Geography of the Sea and Its Meteorology* (1855), whose impact Butcher stresses (405). Poe's works, of course, were readily available to French readers through the translations of Charles Baudelaire.

replaced between Verne's two novels by an affirmation and justification of colonial law, effectively supported by the colonialist rhetoric of native incompetence and irrationality. Yet, it is in the realm of science – the most visible manifestation of Western rationality – where the romantic pirates of Philip and Verne excel. Technologically and philosophically, they are far superior to their educated counterparts: Appadocca fills the cabin wall of the British warship with mathematical calculations predicting the fatal hurricane, just as he fills in his stupefied student friend Charles with a counterhegemonic chronology of world history; Nemo, on the other hand, develops a completely new procedure for producing energy while Aronnax and Conseil are patiently and unproductively engaged in the Enlightenment project of collecting and classifying marine creatures. Roland Barthes' thesis that Verne was above all employed in encyclopedically transforming the inexhaustible multiplicity of earthly creation into the manageable limits of a museal archive of knowledge (39-40) is correct with regard to the French scientist Aronnax but only partly with regard to Nemo, who stands both inside and outside of the collecting project. Although he has a museum on board, he is not satisfied with merely collecting things; rather, he seeks to transform the world. Yet, like Ahab's rationality – deployed, for example, in his cartographic skill – Nemo's is always verging on madness; each man's "intense thinking" has made him a "Prometheus" who has himself created the vulture that feeds upon his heart (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 175).

As my literary examples as well as the case of the Somali 'pirates' exemplify, piracy is a symptom of the incapacity of the social and economic order to provide for the well-being of all its members. If the order is global, its members comprise all the citizens of the world. If the international political and legal system fails to include all its members in the distribution of the common good, piracy and terrorism are the result. With their policy of kidnapping European passengers in response to being deprived of their economic subsistence, the Somali 'pirates' reenact the practice of the so-called 'Barbary pirates' in the early modern period who resorted to kidnapping Christian sailors and selling them for a ransom because they were excluded from Mediterranean commerce. Thus the self-sanctioned migrancy of the colonial desiring machine produces its nomadic others by denying them access to the fruit of their labor. But its discourses of legitimation – including the discourse of

romanticization – ultimately reveal the crucial contradictions within the dominant structure: the fact, well phrased by Marx, that capitalism experienced, and continues to produce, its “rosy dawn” through a gigantic process of robbery with violence (the transformation of the commons in Europe, the dispossession and enslavement of non-Europeans across the ocean, the global exploitation of precious metals) (479-80).

As the literary examples also show, the unbounded geographical mobility of pirate figures is accompanied by a tropological mobility, a migration of topics, narremes, and ideologemes across national and linguistic borders. The result of these transactions is that the pirate figure undergoes remarkable semantic transformations, sometimes within the limits of the same text, according to the ideological demands of the day, and with a strong tendency to contain the rebel’s subversiveness by domesticating him. Locked in this endless play of subversion and containment, the literary pirate will remain a potent symbol for articulating the concerns of the disfranchised – until the “crack of doom” (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 235), or until equality among the world’s inhabitants will become a reality – which is to say that pirates will be with us for quite a while yet.

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Piracy: Shifts in Global Mobility

In the final scene of *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003), the governor of Jamaica cunningly ponders: “[p]erhaps on the rare occasion [that] pursuing the right course demands an act of piracy, piracy itself can be the right course.” This ambiguous ending, in which the assessment of piracy¹ as “right” or “wrong” is suspended, is typical of portrayals of piracy in popular culture; the ambivalence inherent in the figure of the pirate as villain/hero may well be the reason for its continuing fascination, to which the success of the *Pirates of the Caribbean*-franchise testifies. Despite the discovery of Blackbeard’s flagship off the coast of North Carolina and Sam Bellamy’s *Whydah* off the coast of Cape Cod through which new insights were gained into the historical pirates’ way of life,² and academic studies on piracy which have also sought to demythologize the historical pirates,³ the clichéd and stereotypical images of heroic rebels and violent criminals are currently updated not only by films such as the *Pirates of the Caribbean*-installments, but also by the representation of actual piracy in the media (for example in the case of Somali piracy).

The fact that these stereotypical images are deeply rooted in the (trans-)national cultural imaginary might explain why they are invoked to articulate and visualize political conflicts. Just recently, in October 2010, Cristina Kirchner, president of Argentina, denounced British naval exercises near the Malvinas/Falkland islands, comparing the English marines to pirates.⁴ The representation of the English as pirates has a

¹ Today of course the term ‘piracy’ is no longer restricted to seafaring robberies, but may also refer to digital piracy, biopiracy, and copyright infringements. See Strangelove; Smith Ekstrand; Shiva; Robinson; Kamau and Winter. For a discussion of ‘air piracy’ see Heller-Roazen (esp. 171-180).

² See Broad; “In Shipwreck.”

³ See e.g. Rediker, *Between the Devil*; Cordingly; Pennell.

⁴ Cf. “En Twitter.”

long history in Latin America, most notably with respect to Sir Francis Drake, who is known throughout the Spanish-speaking world as one of the most violent British pirates in history. Drake, like many others during his time, received covert support from the Crown to seize Spanish vessels; he also came down upon villages and ports, raiding churches and homes, harassing civilians for ransom and instilling enormous fear among the population. Despite Spain's official complaints, Queen Elizabeth I systematically protected him in her negotiations with Spain (cf. Kelsey). For the English, however, Drake holds a very different place in history. Phillip Gosse, in *The Pirate's Who's Who*, recognizes that the Spanish at the time viewed Drake as a pirate in the light of his early buccaneering activities. Nevertheless, he considers Drake's subsequent activities more "akin to privateering cruises than piracy," making him a "fervent patriot," which is why Gosse does not include him in his list of marauders (15).⁵

Many pirates have been transformed into icons with a fascinating yet contradictory allure: Francis Drake, John Hawkins, François L'Olonnais, Captain Hook, Blackbeard, and Jack Sparrow, among many other historical as well as fictional figures,⁶ have conjured up distinct pictures of violent lawlessness and romanticized freedom in the cultural imaginary. At the core of these depictions lies a complex paradigm of mobility endowed with compelling political and cultural connotations, which has kept the imagery of piracy alive. This essay analyzes how popular culture has used piracy as a strategy to untangle and represent contemporary armed conflicts and political disputes.

In his well-known study on nation-building, Benedict Anderson argues that the emergence of print culture played a fundamental role in the construction of the "imagined community." Building on Anderson's analysis, William Rowe and Vivian Schelling claim that film rather than

⁵ Jan Rogozinski does include Drake as a pirate in *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Pirates* (102-105). Drake is also popularly recognized for his actions in the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Felipe Fernández-Armesto offers an interesting reassessment of the English victory in *The Spanish Armada: The Experience of War in 1588*.

⁶ Despite a few exceptions such as Anne Bonny and Mary Read, pirates have for the most part been men. For a discussion of these two female pirates see Rediker, "Liberty."

writing plays a fundamental role in the forging of a mass national culture (cf. 99). While in agreement with Rowe and Schelling, I would add that print culture – though clearly not the lettered kind that Anderson analyzes in his discussion of 19th-century nation-building – did and continues to play an important role in defining an “imagined community.” As a genre, tabloids belong to a lucrative industry which produces sensationalist, formulaic, and predictable information with a broad appeal (cf. Bird). My interest is in how popular culture, broadly defined as a series of mass media signifying practices such as film, soap operas, television, tabloids, comics, or pop music, engages with the nation-state and participates in the construction of a particular imagined community.⁷ I argue that despite its simplified portrayal, popular culture does not disregard history and politics, but in fact at specific junctures can have a forceful and influential role in nation-building debates precisely because of the way in which it engages with history and politics.

Focusing on two 20th-century examples that revive the English piratical attacks on the Spanish Main, I examine the ways in which images of legality and illegality are at the core of popular piratical representations, and how economic and political conflicts are contained within these films. The effect of film and print media on the public’s perception of piracy has been to reinforce stereotypical images while endowing each representation with powerful ideological meaning. I discuss two examples to illustrate the ways in which history is appropriated and reshaped through a narrative and visual iconography in order to articulate contemporary political confrontations. The 1940 Hollywood film *Sea Hawk* and the representation of the Malvinas/Falklands War of 1982 in the Argentine tabloids reveal that distinct ideological constructions of nationhood can be discerned beyond the evocative images of piracy that circulate in popular culture.

I first analyze *Sea Hawk* to underscore how Hollywood displaces the colonial confrontation between the English and Spanish empires to WWII through an adventure film that evokes Francis Drake’s piratical conquests. This shift of using piracy as a trope for contemporary

⁷ The term “popular culture” is not a fixed conceptual category and can therefore be defined from many critical perspectives. In this essay, I am using it in the broadest sense. For a discussion of the critical perspectives used in analyzing popular culture, see Storey.

conflicts is also evident in the second example I analyze, which focuses on the way the Argentine press used the same conflict of empires to relate the Malvinas/Falklands War. In both cases the representations are anchored in important historical events that became national landmarks and historical turning points for each country involved: entering WWII pulled the United States out of the Depression and dramatically transformed its society, and it would emerge from the war as a world power; for Argentina, the Malvinas/Falklands War was equally important as its defeat marked the end of the dictatorship which had ruled the country since 1976. Since both of these narratives engage with key historical moments in the process of nation-building, my reading draws on current debates of international law and politics to highlight the ways in which the representations shed light on the political significance embedded in popular culture's appropriation of piracy. My point is that popular culture can illustrate ways in which difficult issues of nationhood are addressed and synthesized for a broad public.

The Politics of Piracy

Although piracy is defined as a maritime assault using or threatening to use violence, legally it has proven to be a slippery concept. While it is not a political crime, it has unceasingly been linked to politics and state power. This made it possible to link piracy to international terrorism (cf. Chomsky vii). The economically devastating assaults of Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden and along the coast of Africa not long ago exemplify this shift. Considering the alleged involvement of Islamist factions in the piratical attacks along the Horn of East Africa, critics in the West have urged to reclassify it as "maritime terrorism," as Douglas Burgess Jr. advocated in the *New York Times* in December 2008 (A 33). This change of terms, Burgess argues, would enable the United States and other nations to fight Somali pirates under the jurisdiction of international courts. Indeed, Somali pirates have definitely changed the terms of piracy, assaulting enormous cargo ships with their small speedboats, armed with AK-47s, hand- and rocket-propelled grenades and GPS-controlled satellite phones. Burgess' request, however, is not to redefine piracy itself, but rather to specifically categorize the actions of the Somali pirates so that their assaults may be stopped. If today's global

community cannot contain piracy, terrorism certainly legitimizes global counteraction. The proposed shift of terminology is key to understanding the conceptualization of piracy throughout history.

Focusing on the current US involvement in the Middle East, Noam Chomsky underscores how, despite a general agreement as to what constitutes terrorism, political discourse does not offer clarity as to the delimitation of terrorism, nor does it offer a clear boundary between international terrorism and aggression.⁸ In fact his analysis demonstrates how the term has become “a category that shifts with the needs of power and ideology” (vii). Jamal Nassar reiterates Chomsky’s assessment: “[l]acking a clear definition acceptable by all parties, terrorism remains in the eye of the beholder. A terrorist is such to his or her enemies and a freedom fighter to his or her supporters” (15). Thus the terms ‘terrorism’ and ‘piracy’ share a similar ambiguity. Even Ruwantissa Abeyratne, who equates piracy with terrorism, recognizes that “there is no consensus among the world community that terrorism is an offense against established principles of law” (64). This charged legal and political ambiguity has led Daniel Heller-Roazen to argue in *The Enemy of All* that the term ‘pirate’ is key to understanding the contemporary paradigm of the universal foe. Heller-Roazen explores the shifts regarding the assessment of piracy in legal and political thought from antiquity to the

⁸ Chomsky’s point of departure is the official United States Code that defines terrorism as an activity that “(A) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State; and (B) appears to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping” (United States Code Congressional and Administrative News, 98th Congress, Second Session, 1984, October 19, volume 2; par. 3077, 98STAT 2707 [West Publishing Co., St Paul, MN] qtd. in Chomsky 120). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines terrorism as “[g]overnment by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the Revolution of 1789-1794; the system of the ‘Terror;’” whereas piracy is defined as: “The action of committing robbery, kidnap, or violence at sea or from the sea without lawful authority, esp. by one vessel against another; an instance of this” (“Terrorism”).

present. What links the pirate to the terrorist in today's view is that his acts need only be declared by the executive power to pose exceptional danger to the security of the civilian population or to be authorized by a 'failed' or 'rogue' state to declare him 'an enemy of all.' Thus Heller-Roazen concludes:

[t]he pirate may no longer be defined by the region in which he moves. Instead, the region of piracy may be derived from the presence of the pirate. Wherever an 'enemy of all' can be found – upon the seas, in the air, or on the land – there a zone beyond the line will emerge. There, the regular statutes of the law, be they civil or martial, may not apply. (179)

These contradictions inherent in the definition of piracy and in the way pirates have been perceived have been present since the beginning of piracy and illustrate the conflicting meanings it has had for the nations involved. Throughout the colonial period, European nations attacking the Spanish colonies invoked their religious differences with Spain to justify their economic interests in obtaining the goods the Spanish had monopolized.⁹ Spain considered all foreign trade within its territories to be acts of piracy, and the intruders were seen as heretics; the rest of Europe considered these acts in more lenient or even heroic terms, avoiding or delaying prosecution despite numerous complaints by the Spanish.

In defining these foreign transgressions, the Spanish used the terms 'pirate' and 'corsair' indiscriminately. Yet unlike the pirate, who plundered the seas without any governmental authorization, the corsair – from the Italian *corsaro* – was backed by a government.¹⁰ In English, the

⁹ José Bravo Ugarte distinguishes four specific phases of piracy that correspond to the wars in which Spain was engaged: the first (1521-1524) is marked by the presence of French pirates; the second (1568-1596) corresponds with England's battles against Spain; the third period is marked by hostilities with the Netherlands (1621-1650); the final phase lasted until 1750, during which Dutch, British, and French forces fought to occupy strategic ports of the Caribbean. This last phase corresponds to what scholars generally consider the 'Golden Age' (1953, 286); see also Rediker, *Villains*; Marx.

¹⁰ For an excellent explanation regarding the use of 'letters of marque,' see Elleman, Forbes, and Rosenberg, "Introduction."

equivalent term was 'privateer.' Historically, the term 'corsair' carried a religious connotation, as the first corsairs were from the Muslim states of the Barbary Coast of North Africa attacking Christian ships. When US critics today suggest categorizing the Somali pirates as terrorists, they are also reasserting this religious antagonism to represent the pirates as using arbitrary violence against 'civilization' (i.e., the Christian West) in order to legitimize US efforts at global containment. However, what has driven Somalis to piracy is not religious fervor or politics; it is poverty. The explanation one Somali pirate offered the Spanish Newspaper *El País* was very simple: "[f]oreign vessels stole our fish, [our livelihood]. Now we get back at them through ransom. Hunger made us pirates" (Aznárez 6, my translation). He is referring to the large-scale illegal fishing by commercial ships which has occurred since 1995, in addition to the more current use of the Somali coast as a dumping ground for toxic waste.¹¹

The difficulty in dealing with piracy in legal terms centers on the issue of physical as well as metaphorical and political mobility. Even when piratical assaults take place at sea, their impact does not end there. On the contrary, piratical acts permeate national and territorial borders because of the political and economic consequences they carry. Pirates expose and contest open spaces, provoking acute anxieties within existing power structures. Space is rarely able to remain open and neutral; it is recurrently bound by power structures. The blurring of boundaries caused by the pirates' presence immediately calls for a redrawing of the spatial map so that borders may again be controlled (cf. Sibley). But controlling the high seas is not easy.¹² While piracy may be perceived as a universal crime, even international law is jurisdictional, meaning it must be enforced by a state, and the legal interpretation of piracy varies widely in domestic legislation (cf. Murphy 12).

One reason the legal interpretation of piracy fluctuates is that no state wants to be known as having a problem with piracy for fear that it will hamper its trade. Hence, exerting a high degree of control over its

¹¹ Although the collapse of the Somali central government occurred in 1991, between then and 1995 the naval task force associated with the United States peacekeeping operations in Somalia effectively monitored the maritime traffic. See Weir.

¹² See United Nations, "Convention on the High Seas."

territorial waters might well be advantageous for one state but it would not be for the states crossing the respective area for trading purposes; freedom of trade demands freedom to navigate. Furthermore, the narrow area over which the coastal state has jurisdiction is insignificant insofar as most piracy happens on the high seas where there is no jurisdiction except for that of the flag state of the ships. Pirates have their own flag but claim to have no state. This claim gives them a unique advantage over their antagonists on the open sea.

Numerous international laws and codifications regarding piracy have been enacted, all with problematic limitations. Martin Murphy's book on piracy and maritime terrorism in the modern world provides an in-depth account of the different kinds of legislation enacted from 1926 to the most recent articles by the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention in 1982. They are attempts to define and legalize the terms of piracy that, as Murphy explains, fail on numerous accounts:

[u]ntil the middle of the last century all international law was law between states. Pirates are, quite obviously, individuals. Except in a very few cases, individuals can only be prosecuted under domestic law, but because definitions of piracy have varied from one state to another and continue to do so, what was defined as piracy in one jurisdiction might not have been piracy in another; in fact in some jurisdictions, it might not even have been a crime, a situation that in some places is still true today. (19)¹³

The legal as well as metaphorical fluidity surrounding piracy enables the conceptual transformation of piracy into a critical category for thinking about social, economic, political, and cultural production. Mobility implies circulation, a central quality of a globalized world. Like piracy, mobility has numerous meanings: independence, opportunity, progress,

¹³ In 1926 the League of Nations published its *Draft Provisions for the Suppression of Piracy*, but failed to achieve widespread agreement. The Harvard Law School draft followed. In 1949 the International Law Commission reworked both drafts; additional provisions were made by the International Maritime Bureau, a division of the International Chamber of Commerce created to act as a focal point of maritime crime to protect the integrity of international trade. For a detailed summary of the reworking of the numerous drafts and provisions see Murphy (12-16); Campbell.

as well as disorder, inconsistency, resistance. Tim Cresswell aptly explains the contradiction: “[m]obility itself, and what it means, remains unspecified. It is a kind of blank space that stands as an alternative to place, boundedness, foundations, and stability” (2). However, mobility does not exist in an abstract world; it is context-defined. This is important for understanding how to read mobility as well as piracy. Mobility is not only a sign of modernity, as critics like Arjun Appadurai affirm;¹⁴ when read diachronically, it can shed light on how cultures have interpreted historical events in a particular moment and place, and how those readings have traveled through time, establishing particular paradigms.

My reading of two distinctly different examples of piracy that circulated in the popular culture of the Americas illustrates how notions of power and legality have been instrumental in the construction and conceptualization of national paradigms through the figure of the pirate. Both examples address representations of wars that used popular images of piracy to visualize conflicts which had no particular connection to piracy.

Hollywood’s Fiction of Heroism

My first example is the film *Sea Hawk*, directed by Michael Curtiz. During WWII, the US film industry established a narrative that could articulate what Dana Polan defined as a “discourse of affirmation:” a discourse in which reality is transcribed within a closed set of values; where conflict, tragedy, and the insecurity brought about by war are contained within an ideological framework that explains the crisis and ultimately reinstates the stability of the social order in peril (46). *Sea Hawk* exemplifies how film can articulate representations of the ‘imagined community’ (cf. Barbero 181). Its seductive force lies in its power of appropriation: film can take a myth, a story, a historical event or fantasy, give it a voice and image, and inscribe it as a collective experience.

¹⁴ Arjun Appadurai underscores mobility as one of the characteristics of modernity, although his emphasis is on the mobility resulting from electronic mediation and mass migration.

As the US prepared to enter WWII, Hollywood took on the role as the preeminent promoter of a national discourse that was to unite the country.¹⁵ Piracy was a fitting subject for adventure films because it offered the possibility of recreating a patriotic act. *The Buccaneer* (1938), *Sea Hawk* (1940), *The Black Swan* (1942), and *The Spanish Main* (1945) are just a few of the films Hollywood produced portraying the Spanish as villains who enslaved the indigenous population and robbed them of their treasures. At the center, the Inquisition, Spain's most powerful institution of the 16th century, stands as the emblem of a religiously zealous and corrupt legal system that condemned any individual who dared not to follow its mandate. By reviving the 'Black Legend' of Spain and translating it into film, Hollywood constructed the ideal enemy: violent, treacherous, and intolerant.¹⁶

Sea Hawk is perhaps the best-known of these films. Bearing a strong similarity to Francis Drake, Captain Geoffrey Thorpe (played by Errol Flynn) is a bright, handsome, and defiant pirate who, while robbing foreign ships, claims to be serving England and the Queen. In his view, the assaults are justified and necessary because the Spanish are robbing the indigenous of their riches to build the Armada that was to attack England to thwart its incursions in Spain's territories in the New World. Piracy in Thorpe's view is the right course to deter the Spanish; in the same way that war is the only means to stop Nazi Germany in 1940, piracy is the only alternative against the Spanish in the 16th century. In the end, Thorpe will be vindicated when the Queen, in recognition of his deeds, knights him and declares English pirates legitimate subjects of England, asserting that the war against Spain is a patriotic battle England must embark upon "to save humanity." This vindictory discourse is echoed in US public discourse framing the US as defenders of humanity upon entering WWII (and again with regard to the war in Iraq after September 11, 2001); the key to justifying war is endowing the assaults with a broad moral value that clearly visualizes 'right' and 'wrong.' At the core of *Sea Hawk*, then, is the need to legitimize piracy and war. The pirates rise from outlaws and underdogs to recognized and

¹⁵ For a history of Hollywood and national politics see Sklar.

¹⁶ Known in Spanish as *la leyenda negra*, the term was coined to refer to anti-Spanish propaganda during the early modern period. See Gibson; Powell.

valued citizens of England. They not only become part of the nation, they endow their country and citizens with the status of freedom fighters. Like terrorism, piracy has no fixed, permanent boundary, which enables its identity to shift constantly. During the War of Independence, US privateers had become patriotic freedom fighters for their raids on British vessels.¹⁷ During WWII, however, the British shed their previous identity as oppressors as they became allies of the US, and British colonial incursions against the Spanish were perceived as legitimate fights of resistance. Thus, in this context the pirate is reframed as a transnational freedom fighter linking both US and British forces.

The opening scene of *Sea Hawk* establishes the opposition of 'good' and 'evil.' An imposing map of the world is draped across the back wall, framing the scene in which King Philip II of Spain sits to the side conferring with his councilors. The Spanish colonies are barely discernable on the map, whereas North America stands out disproportionately, engulfing most of the landmass facing Spain, its borders highlighted in bold. Phillip's goal is to seize the world, and his frustration lies in a "puny rockbound island as barren and treacherous as her queen, who secretly gives aid to our enemies while her pirates plunder our commerce." The camera slowly moves in to a low angle close-up of King Phillip, his voice and villainous look overflowing the frame as he states, "with England conquered nothing can stand in our way." The ominous shadow his silhouette casts upon the map reinforces the danger of his sinister dream, "[o]ne day before my death we shall sit here and gaze at this map upon the wall. It will have ceased to be a map of the world: it will be Spain!" The positioning of each force is clearly set up. The Spanish, like the Nazis they represent in the film, are moved by one goal: the consolidation of their empire. The English, reduced to a minuscule rockbound island, are the only ones to obstruct the way for the Spanish. The metaphoric displacement articulates the link between the English and the Americans: the oppositional narrative strategy articulates a double symbolic displacement; spatially, it moves from the particular (defenders of England) to the universal (defenders of humanity), and chronologically it goes from the 16th to the 20th century. Following the traditional

¹⁷ For a more detailed analysis of privateering during the Revolutionary War see Patton.

framing of the adventure film, the encounter between both forces takes place in a removed setting: at sea, somewhere near the English Channel. The distance from everyday life allows the dangers to be maximized and increases the magnitude of effort made by the characters (cf. Sobchack 10). The stage is larger than life so that the hero may be tested against adversity and prove his worth by performing outstanding deeds. In this case, the sea is a cultural realm in which fundamental values collide. As we watch the two vessels slowly advance, the narrative takes on epic proportions.

The open sea creates a unique horizontal landscape in which the physical bounds of country and state powers are reframed in terms of the ships battling each other. The 'puny rockbound nation' is metonymically displaced by its pirate ship attacking the Spanish. The Spanish ship carries Spain's Ambassador, Don José Alvarez de Córdoba (Claude Rains) and his niece, Doña María (Brenda Marshall), who happily plays badminton on deck with her servant. The Spanish soldiers on guard reinforce the stereotypical image of the evil Spanish: swarthy men with black pointed beards, morions, and Toledo blades. Down below, in the dungeon of the galleys, bare sweating men are rhythmically whipped in unison with the deep thump of the rowing beat. They are slaves and Englishmen. Placing the English in the galleys (rather than Native Americans or Africans) reinforces the danger the Spanish will bring, for they will treat all their prisoners as slaves regardless whether they are Europeans or not.

As the English ship, the *Albatross*, prepares to attack, Thorpe encourages his men to prepare for battle. Despite their disheveled aspect and lack of sophistication, Thorpe's men are proud Englishmen who work as a team. Full of enthusiasm and confidence, one sailor asks another, "[d]id you ever see a Spaniard the Captain couldn't swallow?" The rowdy English easily take over the Spanish vessel in classic Hollywood style. Once their triumph is assured, however, they behave like gentlemen, treating their Spanish prisoners with respect, ushering them onto the *Albatross* before the Spanish vessel sinks. Their 'illegal attack' is thus reframed: they do not only save the Spanish from drowning but also free their fellow Englishmen from the galleys, who immediately join the pirates. These actions endow them with a national identity and purpose. Confirming this new identity, Captain Thorpe stands proud and erect at the helm of his ship, announcing to his audi-

ence, both viewers and sailors, “[b]y now you know what the purpose of the Sea Hawks is: in our own way to serve England and the Queen.”¹⁸ By the end of the film their “own way” will have become the right way.

The encounter at sea gives women a role in the process of nation-building as well. Although Doña María finds Thorpe ruthless and uncivilized at first, she soon realizes that she has misjudged him. She accuses him of stealing Aztec jewels that are not his, but Thorpe outwits her, replying ironically that he cannot understand how the Indians were persuaded to part with the beautiful jewels she claims to be hers. A romance ensues, and her choice to side with Thorpe reassures the film’s audience that his actions are indeed just and honest.¹⁹

These events are crucial in setting the frame for the discourse of affirmation and the redefinition of the pirates’ actions as patriotic. Although both sides use violence to enforce their social order and values, by constantly reiterating the moral opposition between the Spanish and the English, the division between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is clear, and the use of violence is consequently legitimized for the English. Morality encloses the conflict within a higher structure and enables the political social order endorsed by a nation to be identified with the personal destiny of the hero. Thorpe’s triumph, in other words, will reflect England’s triumph. From the beginning of the confrontation, the audience inevitably recognizes and identifies with the victorious forces. There can be no other ending. Despite the location in a distant past, the emplotment of events surpasses its temporality, delineating a moral and visually clear-cut patriotic message: united, the English – and by extension their future allies, the United States – will succeed, for their cause is just. And it is precisely this imagination of a political community, sovereign and limited, that allows these individuals to feel united and define themselves as English subjects, qualities Anderson considers essential to establish the imagined community (cf. 6).

In this patriotic battle, women also endorse the political project, namely through their romantic involvement with the pirates. Their role as spectators is to differentiate ‘right’ from ‘wrong.’ Though women

¹⁸ The term ‘Sea Hawks’ in this instance is used to describe the pirates themselves.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the role of women in pirate novels see Gerassi-Navarro. For the role of women and romance in nation-building see Sommer.

stand at the margins and do not form part of the brotherhood of men – for they are not given the ‘right’ to die for their country – their function is to endorse what men have proven to be right; the Queen by knighting Thorpe, and Doña María by choosing to marry him.²⁰

The final scene of the film articulates the reframing of piracy: as Queen Elizabeth knights her faithful subject she declares:

[w]hen the ruthless ambition of a man threatens to engulf the world it becomes the solemn obligation of all free men to affirm that the earth belongs not to any one man but to all men, and that freedom is the deed and title to the soil on which we exist.

The victory is no longer cast as crucial just for England but also for the freedom of future generations. The pirates have earned their right to become legitimate citizens because they are willing to fight and die for England; they have become seamen of England and “saviors of humanity.” Hollywood created a sense of national identity before going to war, and piracy, as exemplified in this film, articulated the confrontation in clear and absolute terms. Thorpe represents the ideal American hero: daring, trustworthy, confident, with a strong sense of justice.

It is striking that in this reconstruction mobility, in the sense of transgression, is largely absent. There are no shifts in political and cultural identities, except in the case of Doña María, who is part Spanish and part English, and chooses to marry an Englishman. In *Sea Hawk*, pirates may roam the seas and lack a home beyond their ship, but their Englishness remains intact. Their battles are battles of empire; there is no cultural transgression, only a desire for political power. In this film, then, mobility is presented as a means to enhance the national myth, which requires stripping away all possible ambiguity.

Myth abolishes the complexity of human acts; it organizes a world without contradiction because it is a world without depth. As Roland Barthes reminds us, myth is a system of communication that takes shape through discourse. The power and danger of myth is that it creates a world in which there is nothing beyond the immediately visible. In order to make sense of the pirates’ actions, they must be defined within

²⁰ Mary Louise Pratt observes that Anderson’s concept excludes women; they cannot be part of an imagined brotherhood.

specific limits, limits that imbue them with clear visual and moral characteristics. In the same way that Northern European states used the Black Legend to legitimize their colonial enterprises between the 16th and 18th centuries, Hollywood's updating of this legend in the 1940s helped create an atmosphere which prepared the ground for the United States' entry into WWII and comforted American audiences by underlining the patriotic endeavor of this war. But myths also travel and change. While strikingly simplistic, they take on different shapes and meanings through time and space. Thus, the heroic symbolism of freedom the pirate embodies can also become its opposite. This becomes evident if we take into consideration how history is plotted within a different cultural and political context.

Updating the Colonial Enterprise

A counter-example to Hollywood's reconstruction of piracy during WWII is the representation of the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War, in which Argentine newspapers represented Anglo-Saxon values as synonymous with imperial greed. The tabloids went even further, recasting English marines as immoral heretical pirates, creatively updating the portrayal of British soldiers as pirates. For Argentina, the war became a symbolic quest for the assertion of its national autonomy and pride, and the press embarked on this quest with misguided verve.

Located 400 miles off the Southern coast of Argentina, the Malvinas/Falklands constitute an archipelago of two main islands (East and West Falkland) and 778 smaller islands, which are currently a United Kingdom Overseas Territory by choice (The Falkland Islands Government).²¹ The islands were under Spanish rule until Argentina secured its independence from Spain in 1816 and claimed them as part of its national territory. The Spanish and English names that currently circulate reflect the islands' complicated history of colonization. The name 'Malvinas' originates from the islands' first permanent settlement in 1764 by

²¹ The Kelpers (the local inhabitants) consider themselves part of the United Kingdom and view the Argentine presence as an invasion, while the Argentine government continues to claim sovereignty over the islands in international forums.

French colonizers from Saint Malo, who occupied the Eastern main island. A year later, the British settled on what they called ‘West Falkland.’ In 1767, the Spanish bought out the French settlement and the British, under pressure, eventually withdrew from the Western main island. In 1833, the British invaded the islands, deposed the Argentine governor and established a small settlement. In 1892, the Falklands were granted colonial status.²² Almost a century later, in 1982, the Argentine dictatorship under General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri, facing massive protests for a failing economy, inflation, and the forced disappearance of thousands of citizens, played the nationalist card and invaded the Malvinas, gaining the support of many Argentines.²³ On the other side of the Atlantic, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took advantage of the situation, reasserting her image as a strong leader to save her conservative government from its political and economic collapse.

The media on both sides of the Atlantic battled to define the war.²⁴ The *London Times* on April 3 stated it was a necessary defense against “fascist rulers,” (“Naked Aggression” 7) while its equivalent in Argenti-

²² For a detailed history of the Malvinas/Falklands, see Terragno. On the 1982 conflict see Yrigoyen; Freedman; Graham-Yooll.

²³ On March 30, 1982, a massive demonstration took place in Buenos Aires against the military government, which was violently dispersed with tear gas and armed soldiers on horseback. Two days later, on April 2, 1982, the government announced its reclaiming of the islands, setting off new demonstrations, this time in support of the government. The dictatorship that deposed the democratically elected government of Juan Domingo Perón and Isabel Perón on March 24, 1976, is known for being responsible for the forced disappearance of at least 30,000 Argentines in what is known as the ‘Dirty War.’ Shortly after the defeat of the Malvinas, in October 1983 President Raúl Alfonsín was elected. In September 1984, the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared (CONADEP) was created to investigate the disappearances. According to CONADEP, there were approximately 340 secret detention camps. The commission’s report was published in English as *Nunca Más: The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared*.

²⁴ Although I focus on only a few examples of the tabloids in connection with the Malvinas/Falklands War, there are numerous plays, films, songs, TV documentaries, and novels that deal with the war on both sides of the Atlantic. See for example Monaghan; Howard and Stokes; McGuirk.

na, *La Nación*, saw the invasion as a desperate act that revealed Britain's "nostalgia for its lost empire" ("El informe" 1, my translation).²⁵ With the help of the media, especially of tabloids such as the *Sun*, the British government was able to conjure up a network of images geared towards regaining Britain's "destined position of moral preeminence amongst the nations of the world" (Monaghan 8). As Thatcher throughout the war sought to emphasize Britain's heroism and likened herself to Elizabeth I and Winston Churchill (Monaghan 23-24, 36), the *Sun* built on the piratical analogy portraying the Argentine fleet as the Armada and the British as chivalric.²⁶ Argentina would do the same, claiming the war was a fight for freedom against imperialism. In the same way that Hollywood had vindicated piracy as a heroic act in the 1940s, the Argentine government and media redefined the arrival of British naval forces in 1982 as a piratical attack. The colonial rhetoric was once again invoked and became the structuring guide behind a unifying discourse. As with the British attacks on Spain during the 16th century, religion played an important role during the war. The newspaper *Convicción* adhered to this perspective as it evoked the *Reconquista* and announced on its front page "Reconquest of the Malvinas!"²⁷ Shortly thereafter, a member of the Air Force declared to the weekly tabloid *Gente*, "this war is between Christians and Protestants. We fight for a just cause and that is a conviction that the English must not have" (qtd. in Verbitsky 247). Argentine pilots referred to their enemies as 'infidels,' and the tabloids called British Marines 'pirates.' In April 1982, a priest, Father Piccinalli, reasserted the concept of infidels as he declaimed in his sermon:

[t]he Argentine people, who are Catholic, because they are Hispanic, because they are Roman, have embarked on the heroic deed of reconquering a territory for the Nation. A nation whose origin lies in

²⁵ "La nostalgia británica del imperio perdido."

²⁶ The *Sun*, April 13, 1982. In his discussion of the media portraying the Falklands War, Monaghan points to the carefully crafted way in which Thatcher evoked WWII in her rhetoric to advance her broader ideological goals. See especially 14-37.

²⁷ *Reconquista de las Malvinas*. 2nd ed. of *Convicción* 2 Apr. 1982. Print.

Christianity [...]. We have to see this as a defense of the nation in honor of Jesus Christ. (qtd. in Kasanzew 160, my translation)²⁸

In times of war, disputed territory offers the opportunity for narratives to reaffirm the nation. Definitions of the nation may be complicated and abstract, but the powerful patriotic symbols and narrative discourses used in war make the nation visible and real.²⁹ Recurrently, values and conflicts of the past that once united a nation to confront a foreign enemy are reaffirmed in the present. In this way, past and future come together to form what Ernest Renan called the ‘soul’ or ‘spiritual principle’ of the nation. During armed confrontations, internal differences are smoothed over to reaffirm and legitimize the nation. Thus, the military government that on March 30, 1982, had witnessed massive protest against its economic policies and human rights violations two days later, on April 2, saw the same citizens mobilized in support of its reclaiming of the Malvinas.

The daily newspaper *Crónica*, with its yellow press-approach, recurrently used the image of piracy, but the most telling use of pirate imagery that the media offered was the cover of *Tal Cual*, another weekly tabloid, in which Margaret Thatcher appeared with an eye patch under the bold heading “Pirate, Witch and Assassin: Guilty.”³⁰ The simple but striking image of Thatcher’s serious face with a black eye patch summarized perfectly how the past engulfed the present to transform the war into a question of national pride. Another monthly

²⁸ “Nuestro Pueblo Argentino que es católico porque es hispánico, porque es romano, hoy ha prorrumpido en la gesta de la reconquista de un territorio para la Nación. Nación que tiene como origen el cristianismo [...]. Tenemos que ver esto como la gesta de la defensa de la Nación para Jesucristo.”

²⁹ For a discussion of the use of patriotic symbols in Argentine history see Buch.

³⁰ Margaret Thatcher was also popularly known as ‘Lady Death’ (‘Dama de la Muerte’). During the war, Carlos Andaló, the editor-in-chief of the magazine, made her appear as a violent and angry Wonder Woman, a Nazi, and as Dracula. However, according to Andaló, his most popular image was the image of Thatcher dressed as a pirate (cf. Ulanovsky 298). For additional information on the media coverage of the Malvinas/Falkland war see Blaustein and Zubieta (esp. 443-98).

magazine, *El Porteño*, offered a similar version. In addition to the eye patch, Thatcher, dressed in fatigues and sword in hand, wears a colonial hat with the signature image of skull and crossbones. The caption reads: “North against South” (my translation). The war was not only a territorial dispute between Great Britain and Argentina, it was reframed as a fight for freedom against the imperial greed of the North: the United Kingdom and the United States.

USTED PUEDE AYUDAR A GANAR LA GUERRA

TAL CUAL

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**HISTORIA SECRETA de
Margarita Thatcher,
57 años,
Primera Ministro
Británica**

**PIRATA,
BRUJA
Y ASESINA**

¡CULPABLE!

Figure 1 Cover of *Tal Cual*, April 30, 1982.

The importance of the tabloids in representing the war is due to the censorship imposed by the government. Continuing its oppressive control of all media (TV, radio, and the national press), the military junta carefully supervised all information that was transmitted regarding the war. In fact the national press had so few war correspondents on the front (only three were allowed) that the information it could relay beyond the official military dispatches was insignificant (cf. Ramires 4).³¹ Throughout the war, the Argentine military endorsed a triumphant rhetoric that was aggrandized by the tabloids, such as *Gente* did as it summarized the war on its front pages in clear and simple terms: “We Are at War!,” “We Are Winning!,” “We Keep Winning!,” to the final unveiling of the truth of Argentina’s defeat: “The War We Never Saw!” (my translations).³² The use of the first person plural intensifies the action while striving to enhance a sense of national unity. Ultimately, Argentina’s defeat and the government’s role in misleading the population and withholding information throughout the war was the final blow for the dictatorship.

The iconography of the pirate helped Argentines update the colonial rhetoric to underscore the continuity of Britain’s imperial greed. It enabled the population to envision the war as a fight for independence from the North. Whether it is through film or other media, popular culture can actualize the cultural heritage of a community through the immediately visible. With one swift stroke, Thatcher’s pirate image condenses and visualizes the history of confrontations with the British. This is one of the most powerful operational strategies of popular culture. The danger lies in its elimination of all nuances and complexities, a reductiveness which characterizes nationalist discourse.

³¹ For an excellent discussion of the narrative strategies investigative reporters and the media at large used under the censorship see Escudero.

³² The original *Gente* front pages are: “Estamos En Guerra!” (April 22, 1982); “Estamos Ganando!” (May 6, 1982); “Seguimos Ganando!” (May 27, 1982); “La Guerra Que Nunca Vimos” (June 24, 1982). According to Escudero (68), during the war 90% of *Gente*’s coverage was dedicated to the war.

Unresolved Images, Semantic Entanglements

Given its intimate connection with violence, the icon of the pirate as a national symbol flourishes during moments of political crisis, when the need to reinforce a national identity is imperative as a means of justifying an armed confrontation. In this sense, the pirate not only articulates popular myths of adventurers and traitors, but more importantly exemplifies the power that popular culture has in visualizing the enemy and reaffirming specific political and cultural values that define a community. As liberator and plunderer, the pirate becomes a social signifier capable of embodying the enemy just as well as the hero, depending upon the gaze appropriating its representation. The pirate has no fixed identity; he crosses cultural, political, and geographical boundaries, opening up the referential topography. Cultural and historical differences will assign the signifier with a particular meaning. When violence is the structuring axis delimiting frontiers, this Janus-like figure is the ideal image to articulate that confrontation. The pirate's mobility and lack of political anchorage grants him that power. Thus, behind the riveting Hollywood films, popular representations, and visual iconography, ideological battles are fought amidst the violent waves of national confrontations.

Perhaps this is an added criterion to bear in mind when analyzing the discourse regarding the Somali pirates. Whether in fiction or through the representation of historical events, power and global structures demand distinct categories to ensure a sense of comforting clarity. Hollywood's *Pirates of the Caribbean* reminds us that piracy, in addition to having multiple interpretations, can in fact be, if not the right course, at the very least a legitimate course.

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Illustration

Figure 1: Cover of *Tal Cual*, 30 Apr. 1982.

HEIKE STEINHOFF

Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and the Pirate as Mobile Signifier in *Captain Blood*, *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean*

There is no wind, no water, not even a sign of the hustle and bustle of the crew. The ship is stuck in an empty and sterile desert, and the pirate's world has grinded to a halt. In the third part of the hugely successful film series *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003-),¹ the protagonist, pirate Captain Jack Sparrow, finds himself confined to a world of absolute immobility. He is caught in Davy Jones's Locker, a place not of death but of eternal punishment. Visually, the Locker is depicted as an enormous desert that stands in stark contrast to the liquid infinity of the sea. Whereas the sea with its tides, waves, and winds represents a mobile space, the Locker is introduced as a place of stasis. Hence, the film represents the pirate's hell as a place that restricts movement (cf. von Holzen 291). It is a place that inhibits the pirate's inherent need to travel, change, and move on.

As an enemy of all mankind, the pirate is excluded from and persecuted by the dominant societies and nation-states and thus forced to be always on the run.² As a rebel and anarchic individualist, s/he is driven by her/his desire to separate herself/himself from these dominant cultures and is dedicated to a nomadic life-style that runs counter to their hegemonic policies of conquest and settlement.³ In both fictional and historical accounts, pirates have been first and foremost constructed as

¹ The fourth part of the series (*On Stranger Tides*) was released in May 2011.

² For a study of the pirate as an enemy of all mankind cf. e.g. Turley.

³ In the second and third installment of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, a film series that introduces supernatural and fantasy elements into the pirate genre, the pirate Captain Jack Sparrow is moreover haunted by the undead pirate Davy Jones and his monstrous sea creature, the Kraken.

liminal, restless, and rootless figures. Spatially and metaphorically, they have been linked to the fluid element of the sea, and their representations have suggested that pirates transgress not only numerous geographical but also cultural borders. In Hollywood films, this representation of the pirate and his/her inherent mobility has served to challenge but also to re-inscribe various spatial and cultural boundaries, evoking different, and often ambivalent, meanings of gender, sexuality, and nationality.

This essay investigates the representational politics and power relations of four Hollywood productions, *Captain Blood* (1935), *Anne of the Indies* (1951), *Cutthroat Island* (1995) and *Pirates of the Caribbean* I-III (2003-2007) with the aim to analyze the meanings and functions that mobility and piracy have had in the US-American cultural imagination over time. Focusing particularly on the representation of gender, nationality, and the intricate interrelations of geographical mobility, cultural mobility, and piracy, I will argue that in Hollywood films of the 20th and early 21st centuries, the pirate functions both as a signifier of mobility and as a mobile signifier. S/he stands for progress, freedom, and opportunity, as well as for deviance, threat, and resistance, and thus personifies the multiplicity of meanings associated with mobility in the modern Western world (cf. Cresswell, *On the Move* 1-2).

After elucidating typical recurring features of the pirate genre with regard to gender, nationality, and mobility, based on an analysis of the classical pirate film *Captain Blood*, this essay will focus on the representation of the female pirate in the classical pirate movie *Anne of the Indies* and the post-classical pirate film *Cutthroat Island*, as well as on the representation of the female and male pirate in the post-classical film series *Pirates of the Caribbean*.⁴ These films, which place a female

⁴ The distinction between classical and post-classical Hollywood films that is used in this article refers to historical differences in filmmaking traditions, i.e. in terms of production, distribution, style, cultural politics, and storytelling. However, it is mainly based on the definition proposed by Elsaesser and Buckland, who argue that the main difference of the post-classical from the classical is “a different kind of self-display or ‘knowingness,’ a special sort of awareness of the codes that govern classical representation and its genre conventions, along with a willingness to display this knowingness and make the audience share it, by letting it in on the game” (78).

character in a central role of the predominantly male/masculine genre of the pirate film, challenge as well as re-inscribe socio-historically specific relations of gender, sexuality, and nationality, as well as the associated gendered, sexed, and nationalized notions of mobility. Moreover, the representation of the main male pirate character in *Pirates of the Caribbean* turns this figure into a mobile signifier who evokes a multiplicity of often contradictory meanings, values, and cultural categories. In this context, the pirate becomes a potentially transnational and specifically postmodern signifier.⁵

Mobility, Movies, and Pirates

According to Tim Cresswell and Deborah Dixon, mobility, just like space or identity, is discursively constructed (3):

[m]obility can [...] be thought of as produced in a social and cultural context; produced mobilities are then articulated in particular ways to reproduce and/or challenge social relations. Far from being considered a fact of real life, in film or anywhere else, mobility can be thought of as an element in the play of power and meaning within social and cultural networks of signification. (4)

In Western culture, when it is contrasted with stability, rootedness or order, mobility most often evokes notions of freedom and opportunity as well as of deviance and resistance (cf. Cresswell, *On The Move* 11; Cresswell and Dixon 3). In film, the motif of mobility functions to convey specific meanings and cultural relations of power and contributes to the complex cultural negotiations over the meaning of mobility itself. Noting the close connection of 'movies' and 'movement,' Cresswell and Dixon particularly point to the destabilizing moment of mobility in films:

⁵ The reading of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the notion of the pirate as a sliding or mobile signifier is partly based on my study of this film series in *Queer Buccaneers*.

[m]obility in film implies more than the unfixing of such staples as time and space; it also points to the transformation and even the dissolution of key social institutions such as family and home, flag and country, and even civilization and humanity. (11)

In Hollywood cinema, the motif of mobility and its destabilizing potential has often been associated with particular characters and genres. Apart from the Western or road movie, it is the pirate genre, and more specifically the figure of the pirate, that is closely linked to notions of mobility. Historically, pirates have posed a threat to economic, political, and cultural borders. Popular images of the figure of the pirate have mainly derived from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when pirates roamed the seas of the Caribbean. In this so-called 'Golden Age of Piracy,' pirates preyed on the trade routes of the European powers, showed no national affiliation, and posed a threatening 'alternative' to the dominant order of European societies. In fiction and film, the pirate has alternatively been represented as villain or hero, but most often as a romanticized antihero. Despite his at times overtly brutal and violent methods, US-American culture has been intrigued with the pirate's individuality, his wit, and, his transgressive or even revolutionary character.⁶

It is his potential to embody both hero and foe that has probably triggered the pirates' numerous incarnations in books and on screen. The pirate's ability to change and adopt various and often contradictory cultural meanings and positions results from and facilitates his inherent mobility, both in a spatial and cultural sense (cf. e.g. Gerassi-Navarro, *Pirate Novels* 187; Hofmann 336). As Nina Gerassi-Navarro writes in her study of Spanish-American pirate novels,

[t]he power of his [the pirate's] image lies in his double and contradictory life. Through his irreverence, he defies the law and inverts all hierarchies. His violent nature can be seen as a force to consolidate or sever a community. His mobility is his greatest asset, setting him free to embody [...] multiple imaginings [...]. (*Pirate Novels* 187)

⁶ Cf. also Turley's description of our fascination with 18th-century accounts of pirates (6-7).

In Hollywood films, the notion of the pirate as a mobile, restless, rootless, and ambiguous figure is evoked by his close association with the sea. In Western culture, the sea is often conceptualized as a changeable, flexible, and unpredictable element (cf. e.g. Connerey qtd. in Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn 848). Pirate films draw on this notion and construct an imaginative geography of the ocean that metaphorically connects it with chaos and transformation, life and death, liberation and freedom. In contrast, the mainland, which in pirate films is often a British or other European colony, carries connotations of fixity and immobility that take shape culturally in the form of strict and rigid class orders, as well as gender and racial hierarchies. Thus, when in the early pirate film *Captain Blood* (1935) the protagonist Peter Blood (Errol Flynn) starts the life of a pirate, this is indicated via the abandonment of his life on land and the setting out to sea. The former doctor, who was convicted for alleged rebellion against the British King and sold as a slave to Port Royal, a city in the British colony of Jamaica, uses the tumult caused by a Spanish attack to escape with a group of fellow slaves. Though the screen time devoted to Blood's life as a pirate is short, it is significant that his entrance into piracy is represented as a step towards freedom from oppression. Despite the fact that the film suggests that pirates are also violent and potentially treacherous (the 'evil' face of piracy represented by the French pirate Levasseur), it first and foremost represents this life-style as positively liberating. Much in line with later films of the genre, whether they depict piracy in a positive or negative light, *Captain Blood* equates the beginning of a mobile and piratical life at sea with a life apart from the fixed rules and governing regulations of society.

Nationality, Mobility, and the Classical Pirate Film

The representation of piracy as a deviant life-style is also evoked by the pirates' apparent lack of any explicit or fixed national or political affiliations. In *Captain Blood* this is particularly evident in a speech in which Blood outlines the principles of life and conduct for his crew which is framed by the words, "[w]e the undersigned are men without country, outlaws on land and homeless outcasts. [...] It is the world against us and us against the world!" These lines emphasize how the

pirates in Hollywood movies often explicitly separate themselves from any roots or obligations and how they dissociate themselves from the dominant society within – but maybe also outside – the diegetic world which defines them as different and Other. However, films that cast pirates in a positive or even heroic mold never represent their lives as truly lawless or anarchistic. Rather, the pirate society is represented as a different or alternative form of order. Thus, for instance in *Captain Blood*, as Gerassi-Navarro points out, “[t]he pact the [...] pirates agree on portrays them as men with a sense of justice, dedication to a cause and, of course, gentlemanly as the prohibition to take a woman against her will proves” (“Playful Subversions” 3). Paradoxically, it is exactly this portrayal of the pirate society in the film that also functions to re-invoke national affiliations. According to Benedict Anderson, nations are imagined communities, i.e. social constructs, in which notions of community are not based on face-to-face interaction but result from an imagined comradeship, “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). Movies as (re)producers of myths can both assist and challenge this construction by mobilizing and (de)naturalizing national discourses.

While pirate films often suggest that the pirate is an enemy of *all* states, they tend to reinforce certain national values and ideals at the same time. These can, but do not necessarily have to, coincide with the nations portrayed on screen. Hence, as Gerassi-Navarro argues, in *Captain Blood*,

[t]he nation has been temporarily displaced onto the ship, which metonymically represents England. The pirates are ‘desperate men’ seeking a ‘desperate fortune,’ but their ultimate goal is to be reunited with England. These outlaws institutionalize violence, but only to ensure their freedom; their violence is a form of resistance towards the injustice that reigns over England, and eventually will be rectified as Blood is repositioned into society. (“Playful Subversions” 3)

At the end of the film, Blood is pardoned for all crimes by the new British King William of Orange and assists the British in their fight against the French. This newly-found national affiliation is already foreshadowed in the narrative when Blood kills his temporary ally, the French pirate Levasseur (Basil Rathbone), after the latter has abducted Arabella Bishop (Olivia de Havilland), the British governor’s niece and

Blood's love interest. In the film's final scene, Blood even becomes the new governor of Jamaica,⁷ a narrative twist that indicates both his re-integration into the social order and the chance that this newly-found order will be more egalitarian and just.⁸ In this sense, piracy in *Captain Blood* primarily represents a transitory phase that facilitates the transition of the protagonist – and also the nation – towards freedom and liberation. Ultimately, the film strengthens patriotic values, as it “intensifies the experience of securing order while justifying the need to fight” (Gerassi-Navarro, “Playful Subversions” 5).⁹

The patriotic values and cultural ideals personified by the white male hero in *Captain Blood* are, in fact, not only coded as British but also, and particularly, as US-American ideals. As Brian Taves points out, Hollywood adventure movies often evoke specifically US-American national myths and experiences (cf. 200-20). In the pirate genre this results from a number of discursive and representational strategies. These include the depiction of the pirate's society as an at least tentatively, though often stereotypically, ‘racially’ and ethnically heterogeneous group guided by proto-democratic principles.¹⁰ Moreover, the films' narratives often dramatize the overthrow of or resistance to oppressive rule and can thus be read in analogy to narratives about the American Revolution.¹¹ Most significantly, the connotations of freedom and liberation that are often attached to the pirate and her/his inherent

⁷ *Captain Blood* was at least in parts based on the historical figure Henry Morgan, a 17th-century British privateer, who became Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica.

⁸ In pirate movies produced in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, this tendency to re-integrate the gentlemanly or romanticized pirate into the social order at the end of the film is abandoned and replaced by the tendency to indicate the continuation of adventure and piracy beyond the time span of the narrative (cf. von Holzen 146).

⁹ This has to be seen as a message and cultural function that can be situated in the particular socio-historical context of the film's time of production, when British and American society faced the rise of dictatorships in Europe (cf. Gerassi-Navarro, “Playful Subversions” 3).

¹⁰ Cf. also the articles agreed upon by Blood and his crew when they embark on their piratical journey.

¹¹ Cf. also Taves's remarks on the adventure genre (210).

mobility can be situated in the context of the myth of the American frontier and the centrality of mobility for the ‘American way of life.’ In this context, the representation of pirates as uprooted, restless, and mobile individualists evokes the US-American historical and mythological tradition of the outlaw, cowboy, and pioneer.

Whereas the pirate and her/his inherent mobility present a potentially threatening force that undermines national and social values, in Hollywood films s/he often predominantly reinforces and perpetuates dominant US-American values and norms. The motif of mobility, as Cresswell argues in his analysis of Kerouac’s *On the Road*, is after all “both deeply antagonistic to and deeply rooted in the dominant mythology of America” (“Mobility as Resistance” 260). The representation of the female pirate’s mobility troubles and, particularly in the case of the post-classical female pirate, re-genders the hegemonic coding of many of these national myths and values as masculine, but this reconfiguration does not necessarily challenge the films’ reiteration of other aspects of dominant narratives of US-American history and exceptionalism. As I will elucidate in the following analyses, in the case of Hollywood pirates, the double-edged role of mobility gives rise to the pirate’s position as both a ‘troubling’ and ‘iconic’ figure in the US-American cultural imagination.

Gender, Mobility, and the Classical (Female) Pirate Film

Pirate films not only (re)produce national myths and nationalized meanings of mobility, but also specific discourses of gender and sexuality, as well as gendered and sexualized forms of (nationalized) mobility. The construction of gender and sexuality is always conditioned by the medium, its materiality, and its discursive structures. Hence, configurations of gender are, for instance, influenced by filmic conventions and at the same time constitute these conventions. They are shaped by genres and simultaneously function to establish generic boundaries, which are always in play, ambiguous, and hybrid (cf. Liebrand and Steiner).

Constructions of gender are tied up with particular constructions of space and thus intersect with notions of (im)mobility. Filmic representations of mobility are constructed in a gendered way, and the meanings that such movements carry (re)produce and contest gender itself (cf.

Cresswell and Uteng 2). Hegemonic discourses and filmic representations have often coded masculinity as 'active,' 'extending,' and 'mobile,' and femininity as 'passive,' 'inhibited,' and 'stationary.' The dominant national myths and figures of mobility in US-American culture such as the cowboy or frontier hero have also been gendered as masculine, and the spaces these heroes venture into, such as the frontier or 'wilderness,' have been coded as spaces of masculine exploration. The pirate genre has (re)produced this predominantly masculine US-American mythology and its specifically gendered notions of (im)mobility. The adventurous and mobile pirate who sails the seas has usually been represented as an 'active' white man. In contrast, women have predominantly been relegated to minor roles and have been represented as 'passive' objects of exchange or reward (when cast as damsels in distress) or have been confined to a life on land (when cast as wives or whores). In *Captain Blood*, the male hero, Peter Blood, sets out on a journey across the sea, while the main female character Arabella Bishop is at first tied to the domestic sphere and later on abducted by the French pirate Levasseur – only to be saved by Blood. This exemplifies the pirate genre's tendency to perpetuate rather conventional gender ideologies. These representations have, however, never been unambiguous or gone unchallenged. Female characters in this genre have often displayed a certain amount of 'activity' and empowerment even when they were confined to apparently conventionally feminine roles. Thus, at the beginning of *Captain Blood*, Arabella Bishop purchases the hero on a slave market. Consequently, and as a result of her superior position in terms of class (a typical motif of the genre), she is able to exercise a certain amount of power and control over the male hero throughout the first part of the film.

It is the figure of the female pirate that has, however, most explicitly challenged and re-inscribed the genre's as well as US-American culture's hegemonic notions of gender, nationality, and gendered (and nationalized) mobilities. Though far outnumbered by their male counterparts, female pirates have repeatedly appeared on the movie screen since the beginning of the pirate genre. As Jeanine Basinger argues, "[t]he feminizing of an established genre [...] [has always been] a standard Hollywood device" and "[a]lthough genres such as [...] the pirate/swashbuckler story, were [...] thought of as stories about men in an action-oriented universe, female versions [...] do exist" (463). Similarly,

Brian Taves suggests that the ranks of Hollywood pirates even “include an unusually large number of fiery women of the sea who take active roles as the equal or superior of men, [...] [although] the independence of such characters is frequently undercut through their portrayals in situations where they become largely dependent on men” (29).

An early example that centers on the adventures of a female pirate protagonist is *Anne of the Indies* (1951). The film tells the story of Captain Anne Providence (Jean Peters), who was raised by the pirate Blackbeard and seeks revenge for her brother’s death at the hands of the English by raiding their ships. In accordance with the narrative conventions of the adventure film and in line with dominant cultural notions that being a pirate captain is a man’s job and the sea journey is a male experience, the female protagonist is introduced dressed in male attire. She is characterized by stereotypically masculine features such as toughness, endurance, and a disinterest in or even disdain for conventional femininity defined by care-taking, obedience, and softness. Thus the film suggests that a woman’s entrance into the male/masculine spaces of the film’s setting as well as into the male/masculine space of the film genre itself is enabled by and results in her ‘masculinization.’ This includes the woman’s appropriation of masculine forms of mobility which facilitate and at the same time result from the representation’s destabilization of conventional gender roles. As it inserts a female character in the masculine role of the pirate, *Anne of the Indies* partly re-inscribes and troubles the dominant patriarchal order and the conventions of the genre (cf. Basinger 481) as well as the hegemonic gender and spatial ideologies of US-American culture in the 1950s.

This re-inscription of dominant masculine and national myths is already evident in the pirate’s name, Captain Providence. It indicates that Anne has usurped the traditionally masculine position of Captain and suggests that this usurpation has been predestined and thus is to a certain extent legitimate. As it alludes to the notion of Divine Providence, a concept that is central to the United States’ founding mythology and that evokes other key national myths such as Manifest Destiny, her name suggests that Anne not only symbolically appropriates masculine power but also inscribes herself into a national US-American history of masculine expansion and exploration. Moreover, when the pirates’ booty is distributed in a scene towards the beginning of the film, Anne chooses the sword, whereas, in a reversal of gender roles, the

Frenchman Pierre La Rochelle (Louis Jourdan) chooses a flamboyant dress. Equipped with phallic signifiers, cross-dressing as male, and venturing into masculine space, the female pirate challenges the culturally constructed notion of gender binaries, gendered spaces, and expressions of (im)mobility. According to Marjorie Garber,

[o]ne of the most important aspects of cross-dressing is the way in which it offers a challenge to easy notions of binarity, putting into questions the categories of 'female' and 'male,' whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural. (10)

Cinematic cross-dressing, although it is often accompanied by a moment of revelation of the cross-dresser's presumably 'true' gender, thus can have a destabilizing effect (cf. Tasker 29). In *Anne of the Indies*, the female pirate's representation denaturalizes the idea that gender follows from sex in the form of male/masculine and female/feminine and suggests that mobility and mobile spaces like the sea bear a potential for female empowerment.

This becomes particularly evident when the pirate is contrasted with the second female character in the film (cf. Tasker 82 and Basinger 480). Molly La Rochelle (Debra Paget), Anne's rival for the affection of the Frenchman Pierre La Rochelle, is represented as the loyal wife and impersonation of domesticity and femininity. In contrast to Anne, Molly wears a dress, displays a more 'refined' demeanor, defines herself primarily through the relation to her husband, and sees her place at home on land rather than at sea. While Anne has independently sailed the rough seas, Molly has waited at the shore for Pierre to return from his adventures. Situated in the cultural context of the time of the film's production, Molly's representation can be related to hegemonic notions of gender roles and gendered spaces in the 1950s and evokes associations with Betty Friedan's "feminine mystique." In contrast, the representation of the female pirate suggests a life outside of the confinements of the domestic sphere and its class (i.e. upper and middle-class) as well as racially (i.e. white) specific regulations of femininity.

Significantly, although the movie at first challenges traditional male and female roles and mobilities, it very much reinstalls them in the end. One of the film's most subversive moments, i.e. when Anne's and Pierre's choice of a piece of the booty (sword and dress) bends gender stereotypes, in fact also signals the beginning of the female pirate's

transformation into a more feminine character (cf. Basinger 480). Ultimately, the film suggests that Anne's journey with the French naval officer is a lesson in 'appropriate' female (here equated with feminine) behavior. It is in this sense that the film presents a typical narrative of the tomboy that "functions as a liminal journey of discovery in which feminine sexuality is put into crisis and finally recuperated into the dominant patriarchal order" (Creed qtd. in Tasker 84).¹² In accordance with this narrative pattern, when Anne falls in love with Pierre, she not only tries on his dress but is also taught about femininity, beauty, and the 'nature' of men, women, and heterosexual love (cf. also Johnston 68). In line with the centrality of this concept to the genre and the pirate figure, mobility is key to these lessons and negotiations: when Pierre literally and metaphorically assists Anne in closing the corset of her dress, she complains about its tightness and asks, "[w]enches are mad. How can they move tied up like this?" And Pierre, who has already told her that "[w]enches who would be fashionable endure this every day of their life" and that "[t]hat's the proper hour-glass figure," replies: "[t]hey wait for the man to make the move." Without irony and accompanied by romantic music, the scene culminates in a kiss, after Pierre has assured Anne that it is the nature of man to like "this," i.e. a woman who is immobile, 'passive,' constricted, and ready to please him. According to Sandra Lee Bartky,

a space seems to surround women in imagination that they are hesitant to move beyond: this manifests itself both in a reluctance to reach, stretch, and extend the body to meet resistances of matter in motion – as in sport or in the performance of physical tasks – and in a typically constricted posture and general style of movement. Woman's space is not a field in which her bodily intentionality can be freely realized but an enclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined. The

¹² According to Tasker, "the image of the 'tomboy' captures a sense of immaturity – of both a freedom from the responsibilities of adult life and a sense of incomplete development. A mapping of transgression that can be contained, the tomboy signals a composite of experience and innocence – of capabilities and energies together with sexual *naïveté*. Or rather she is a sexually ambiguous figure. [...] She is a kind of cross-dresser, discreetly, rather than excessively muscular in her proletarian male guise" (84).

‘loose woman’ violates these norms: her looseness is manifest not only in her morals, but in her manner of speech and quite literally in the free and easy way she moves. (66)

In *Anne of the Indies*, the female pirate represents exactly such a ‘loose woman.’ Although Anne resumes her role as a ‘tough’ and independent woman after she realizes that Pierre has deceived her, her final self-sacrificing death undermines the film’s emancipatory potential. As Janine Basinger puts it, “Anne of the Indies is tough, but she is a woman, so she ends up a victim of love, sacrifice, and fashion” (481). Whereas the movie begins with a scene which shows the crossing out of male names in an official register that lists British trade ships, their captains and cargo, to indicate that these men and their ships have been captured or destroyed by the female pirate, the film ends with the crossing out of Anne Providence’s name in a similar register. This indicates that at the end the trouble-maker has been eliminated and the official gender and spatial order has been restored (cf. also Johnston 66). *Anne of the Indies* eventually seeks to fix the female pirate and the potentially transgressive meanings she generates. Yet, it does not do so without first offering the spectator a number of contradictory images and messages that might work against the dominant ideology of the film. Eventually, however, more than forty years passed before female pirates on the Hollywood screen displayed a delight in movement and were not so explicitly punished for this in the end.

Gender, Mobility, and the Female Pirate at the End of the 20th Century

“You’re more active than other women I’ve known.” William Shaw (Matthew Modine), the male companion (or rather sidekick) of the female pirate Morgan Adams (Geena Davis), utters this remark when the two fight their way through the British colony in a long action sequence at the beginning of the 1995 pirate film *Cutthroat Island*. Constituting a moment of filmic self-reflexivity, this comment perfectly captures the film’s representation of the female pirate and playfully alludes to the audience’s potential responses to this heroine. Whereas in *Anne of the Indies*, male comments about the female pirate’s ‘unconventional’ or even ‘unwomanly behavior’ pave the way for her transformation and

final doom, William's words are accompanied by a tone of bewilderment that is encoded to evoke laughter yet first and foremost indicates surprise, even awe. In *Cutthroat Island*, Morgan Adams is characterized as a strong, resolute, and independent-minded woman whose athletic abilities and delight in physical movement in fact excel not only that of the few female but also that of all male characters in the film, as well as that of many of her female predecessors on the Hollywood screen. Her representation challenges the logic of feminist film theory as it was typified by Laura Mulvey in her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) and as it has by now been criticized and revised (also by Mulvey herself): Morgan's representation subverts the assumption of an active male subjectivity and a passive female object (cf. Brown's remarks on the action heroine, 56). *Cutthroat Island* fuses ingredients of the classical pirate movie with that of the 1990s action adventure comedy and is characterized by an often excessive use of spectacle and comic action scenes.¹³ Thus, even more explicitly than *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* conveys a sense of female empowerment via the female pirate's mobility.

Similar to *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* situates the female pirate in the tradition of the tomboy by stressing both her strong relation to her father/male mentor as well as her masculine and boyish characteristics (Tasker 82). During her wild ride through the British colony, Morgan rids herself of her dress because it confines her ability to move. Just like *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* uses costumes and their associated (gendered) inhibitions or facilitations of movement as a filmic device to metaphorically link the pirate's transgression of spatial, physical, gender, and class restrictions. Hence the film illustrates Pam Cook's observation that "costume drama with its emphasis on masquerade, is a prime vehicle for explorations of identity" (6). Moreover, the film conveys the female pirate's non-conformist gender behavior by its specific employment of camera angles and montage. The action scene of the carriage chase is characterized by a series of shots from very high,

¹³ Yvonne Tasker suggests that it might have been the shift from the more serious action films of the 1980s, with their emphasis on a suffering and often embittered male lone hero, to the more comic and parodic action movies of the 1990s that has actually facilitated the integration of female characters in central action roles (73).

low, and sometimes canted camera angles. These shots that present an alternation of medium and long shots, close-ups, point of view shots, and fast tracking shots, not only create an action spectacle with many comic effects but also produce a visual instability that reflects the disruptive effects that Morgan's demeanor and appearance have on the British colony.

Unlike *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island*, however, does not suggest that this disruptive potential needs to be contained and the tomboy 'feminized' and re-integrated into the patriarchal order. Even heterosexual romance does not signify the end of Morgan's 'active,' empowered, and mobile life as a female pirate. In contrast, Morgan's representation suggests that femininity/female sexuality and power/'activity' are not mutually exclusive. Already at the beginning of the film, Morgan is introduced as a sexually active, confident, and powerful woman. In the film's first scene she leaves a lover who tries to trick and capture her because he wants to receive the bounty offered on her head. In anticipation of this plan, Morgan has, however, already taken the bullets out of his gun and mocks him with the ambiguous comment, "I got your balls."¹⁴ This play with male fears of emasculation and castration and the female pirate's appropriation of the phallus (and by analogy of masculine power) is a recurring feature. Particularly in situations when she appears in a stereotypically feminine role, Morgan wields phallic symbols: she threatens to cut a man's genitals with a knife when she masquerades as an aristocratic lady, reveals a gun under her dress when she poses as a whore, and discloses a huge cannon when she is threatened by her uncle and nemesis Dawg (Frank Langella) with a long sword. In all of these moments, Morgan's representation destabilizes the notion of stereotypical femininity as 'passive,' submissive, and weak. As Judith Butler argues, "because it is an idealization, one which no body can adequately approximate, the phallus is a transferable phantasm, and its naturalized link to masculine morphology can be called into question through an aggressive reterritorialization" (86).

¹⁴ The fact that the lover speaks with a French accent could also be read as an intertextual allusion to the betrayal of Anne Providence by a Frenchman in *Anne of the Indies*. In such a reading, the reversal of power relations in *Cutthroat Island* can not only be read as a comment on but also as a late 'revenge' for the fate of this early female Hollywood pirate.

While similar to *Anne of the Indies*, *Cutthroat Island* often links the female body's acquisition of the phallus and masculine power to the heroine's display of certain masculine characteristics. The film's most powerful and disruptive 'reterritorialization' of the phallus occurs in the scenes when it fuses phallic and feminine signifiers. In these moments, the film exposes and amplifies the 'active' and emancipatory potential that to a certain extent has always already been displayed, yet never been ultimately actualized, by many of the feminine female characters in the genre (cf. Arabella Bishop in *Captain Blood*). As it removes the phallus' naturalized link to masculine morphology by turning phallic symbols into mobile signifiers that can also be attached to the female body and to femininity, the film re-inscribes conventional roles of women in the pirate and action genre and explicitly re-enacts them with a twist of female empowerment and subversion. Simultaneously, Morgan's excessive and self-reflexive display of (sexual) power also presents a parody of and ironic comment on the (stereotypical) representation of the male hero and his display of sexuality and masculine power in the pirate and action genre.

In the cultural context of the late 20th century, Morgan Adam's representation as an 'active' and dominant yet simultaneously feminine and sexual(ized) woman can be read as the expression of a post-feminist media discourse which suggests that the embrace of conventional femininity does not necessarily go along with a renunciation of female power. This notion manifests itself in representations of women as "active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so" (Goldman qtd. in Gill 151). As Mary MacDonald defines it, "postfeminism takes the sting out of feminism" and "the subjectivities of femininity" are re-enacted "with a twist of humor and a dash of self-conscious parody [...], with a wink to the audience" (qtd. in Richardson 164). Such representational politics have alternatively been considered a shift within feminism or a backlash against it, i.e. they have been considered a way of putting "the 'traditional' performances of femininity [...] back into feminist politics" (Richardson with reference to Moseley, 164) or, conversely, a way of undermining the ideas of second-wave feminism and "a marketing ploy by companies to sell more products to women" (Richardson with reference to Modleski, 164).

In *Cutthroat Island*, the specific representation of the female pirate's conscious appropriation of the signifiers of stereotypical femininity hints at the performative aspect of gender and thus first and foremost bears a deconstructive potential that can be aligned with feminist politics. As Yvonne Tasker argues, in the film "it is [after all] not the masculinised hero(ine) in 'male' clothes that is most explicitly to do with cross-dressing [sic]. It is when Davis is dressed as a 'lady,' and later as a 'whore,' that she is most apparently cross-dressing, performing an artificial identity with the aid of elaborate 'feminine' costume" (68). This self-conscious and parodic re-enactment of stereotypical femininity can be described as a form of 'camp.' According to Susan Sontag, camp is a sensibility, particularly but not exclusively homosexual, whose "essence [...] is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration." It is "a certain mode of aestheticism" that is characterized by artificiality, theatricality, and stylization. Camp "is the love of the exaggerated, the 'off,' of things-being-what-they-are-not." In *Cutthroat Island*, Morgan's representation is marked exactly by such a high level of artifice, exaggeration, and stylization, and it is suffused with moments of self-conscious parody, filmic self-reflexivity, and irony. Though Sontag states that "[c]amp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized – or at least apolitical," various critics have argued that camp can indeed be political (cf. e.g. Meyer). This is also true for the campy representation of the female pirate in *Cutthroat Island*: by exposing the constructedness of (her) gender roles, Morgan's representation has a denaturalizing effect and functions to deconstruct the (genre's) idealizations of femininity and, by implication, masculinity. As it places the female pirate in a position of superiority to the other, exclusively male, characters on screen in terms of wit and combat and endows her with certain masculine characteristics without necessarily compromising her femininity, *Cutthroat Island* puts hegemonic gender roles and hierarchies into playful motion. They are subverted and reversed, and the female pirate's mobility disrupts the 'naturalized' link of female/feminine and male/masculine as well as the respective cultural and yet naturalized associations of such characteristics as 'passive' and 'active,' 'fixed' and 'mobile,' 'confined' and 'loose.'

At the end of the film, Morgan does not "retire to Bermuda to drink camomile tea on the porch," which is one of the choices she offers her crew, a comment on the typical fate of previous female characters in the

genre. In contrast, she continues her mobile life as pirate captain and sails off to new adventures; William Shaw sails with her as her companion and lover.¹⁵ While the female pirate has thus apparently succeeded, this film re-genders the pirate genre in an often exaggerated and parodic fashion that to some extent also mitigates its own potentially feminist message, perhaps in an attempt to make it more accessible to mainstream audiences. In the end, the film became a major box office flop. Alternatively, it has been suggested that this was the result of disadvantageous marketing and distribution policies, narrative ‘weaknesses’ or a sign that audiences might not yet have been ready for a powerful and ‘active’ female protagonist (cf. von Holzen 201). Almost ten years would pass until another woman followed in Morgan’s piratical footsteps in a major box office success.

Gender, Nationality, Mobility, and Becoming a Female Pirate in the 21st Century

When in 2003 the first film of the wildly successful *Pirates of the Caribbean* series opened in movie theaters, audiences would encounter a female heroine who at first sight seems to fit the image of the pirate genre’s stereotypical female character of the governor’s daughter as damsel in distress. In 2007, when Disney launched the third installment of the series, this heroine would have transformed into a female Pirate Lord.¹⁶ In the meantime, i.e. in the course of the series, Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley) develops into an increasingly independent, strong, and empowered character who turns from an ‘object of male exchange’ into an ‘active’ agent. Following the representational strategies of *Anne of the Indies* and *Cutthroat Island*, this development is indicated by an increasing codification of the heroine as masculine (e.g. when she is

¹⁵ The power relation between the two is still playfully negotiated, yet the narrative suggests that Morgan takes the dominant role in the relationship: Will hands her the captain’s sword and she orders him to her cabin, suggesting that she wants him to fulfill her sexual desires.

¹⁶ In *At World’s End*, Elizabeth is elected Pirate ‘King.’ The masculine word choice hints at her ‘masculinization’ and empowerment within a pirate world governed by masculine structures.

cross-dressing as a male sailor to pass onboard a merchant ship in *Dead Man's Chest*, or when she is characterized by a tomboyish appearance in *At World's End*) and a simultaneous subversion of the equation of femininity with 'passivity' via the heroine's employment of normative femininity as a subversive strategy (e.g. when the heroine uses the hyperfeminine characteristic of fainting as a device of manipulation and deceit at the end of *The Curse of the Black Pearl*). Moreover, though not as excessively as Morgan Adams, in the course of the trilogy Elizabeth Swann is increasingly equipped with phallic signifiers such as swords and guns: whereas in *The Curse of the Black Pearl* Elizabeth reaches for a sword only to discover that those in her reach are solely for decorative purposes, in *Dead Man's Chest* she is equipped with two of them, and *At World's End* shows her wearing a whole arsenal of weapons on her body. This symbolic 'phallicization' coincides with her increasingly powerful position within the narrative.

Significantly, the heroine's gaining of independence, strength and authority goes hand in hand with her increasing spatial mobility and development into a pirate. In fact, in *Pirates of the Caribbean* the centrality of mobility to the construction of the (female) pirate in Hollywood films is even more evident than in the two films discussed above. This results at least in part from the fact that Elizabeth Swann only develops into a pirate in the course of the film series: whereas Anne Providence and Morgan Adams are already pirates at the beginning of the narrative, Elizabeth Swann assumes various different and sometimes conflicting identity positions in the course of the series. In line with the films' intertextuality, these representations often draw from previous representations of women in the pirate genre and other filmic and cultural representations. Thus, *Pirates of the Caribbean* directly links Elizabeth's representation to that of the female pirates Anne (e.g. in *The Curse of the Black Pearl* Elizabeth displays Anne's table manners) and Morgan (especially *At World's End* emphasizes the heroine's heavy armament), but also to that of the more conventional Molly (e.g. *The Curse of the Black Pearl* visually refers to her treatment onboard the pirate ship).¹⁷ This intertextuality as well as the films' self-reflexivity

¹⁷ In *Anne of the Indies*, Anne forces Molly to wear the dress that Pierre has given to her. In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the cursed pirate Captain Barbossa

and seriality highlight the constructedness of these (gender) roles. Each film in the series is characterized by an open-endedness that guarantees the possibility of a sequel and at the same time enables the re-construction of characters and character constellations in sometimes unexpected ways. The resulting continuities, discontinuities, ruptures, and revisions underscore the shifting and transitory character of gender and identity in the films, in the genre of the pirate film and, by implication, in (post-modern) culture in general.

Paradoxically, Elizabeth initially experiences empowerment in the formal and thematic frame of a captivity narrative. Captured by the 'evil' pirates in *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, Elizabeth is positioned in the typical role of the damsel in distress. Yet, her abduction to a pirate ship also signal the heroine's beginning of a journey towards maturity and liberation in terms of gender roles and class expectations. Though in *Pirates of the Caribbean* the pirate ship primarily constitutes a male space and thus continuously threatens to reinforce the dominant patriarchal order (e.g. via the threat of rape), it simultaneously functions as a place of female deviance, resistance, and liberation from social and cultural constraints. Hence, onboard the ship the heroine is able to break out of her corset, the symbol of confinement that characterizes her life in Port Royal. She puts aside aristocratic and normatively feminine behavior and acts in a less obedient, more aggressive and passionate manner: she changes her table manners, attempts to stab the pirate Captain Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush), and in the final fight against the evil pirates even commands a ship.

In *Pirates of the Caribbean* the heroine's transformation into a 'loose' and transgressive woman is equated with her development of piratical features. This is not only indicated by her venturing into the mobile and male spaces of ship and sea, but also by her more pragmatic and masculine costume, the accordingly less inhibited and increasingly athletic movements of her body, as well as her acquisition of non-aristocratic manners and verbal expressions. While at the end of the first film, Elizabeth returns to the colony, starts wearing her corset again and apparently resumes the role of romantic and melodramatic heroine in

forces Elizabeth to wear a similar dress in a scene that presents a direct visual and narrative link to the earlier film.

classical Hollywood manner, the sequels disrupt this impression and continue to represent her development into a female pirate. In this context, her representation increasingly blurs masculine and feminine features and, once again, the female pirate can function to denaturalize the associations of masculinity/femininity, male sex/female sex, and notions of activity/passivity and mobility/immobility.¹⁸

When in *At World's End* Elizabeth assumes the role of Pirate King, her representation not only blurs masculine and feminine features, but ethnic and national markers as well: the white heroine, whose skin appears increasingly tanned, is dressed in Asian clothes and is heir to the pirate Lord Sao Feng. This ethnic hybridity and positioning of the heroine as captain of an Asian pirate crew can be read as both a sign of colonial domination of Asian countries and a reference to the instability and constructedness of national identity. In the tradition of the Hollywood pirate's shifting, mobile, and yet often implicitly US-American national affiliations, in *Pirates of the Caribbean* Elizabeth Swann is marked by multiple identifications which link her simultaneously to more than one nation. Thus, before the pirates' final battle, she delivers a speech that resonates with notions of freedom and a subtext that suggests a reading of the multi-cultural micro-society of the pirate ship as a 'city upon a hill':

[t]he other ships will still be looking to us, to the *Black Pearl*, to lead, and what will they see? Frightened bilge rats aboard a derelict ship? No, no, they will see free men and freedom! And what the enemy will see, they will see the flash of our cannons, and they will hear the ring of our swords, and they will know what we can do! By the sweat of our brows and the strength of our backs and the courage of our hearts! Gentlemen, Hoist the Colors! (*At World's End*)

Though this scene is not marked by any visual national symbolism or any visible bonds to the geographical location of the USA, it evokes the master-narrative of US-American exceptionalism and alludes to the event of the American Revolution. Catering to a global audience,

¹⁸ In this context it is also significant that the actress Keira Knightley becomes increasingly emaciated in the course of the series, a development that contributes to the female pirate's androgynous appearance in *At World's End*.

Pirates of the Caribbean re-enacts US-American history in an imaginary location and displaces US-American national values onto a group of Caribbean pirates and two British heroes who have turned against their nation's colonial establishment. By representing the pirates' fight against British imperialism and oppressive domination as a metaphorical re-enactment of the American Revolution, *Pirates of the Caribbean* picks up a typical feature of the genre, but repeats it with a gendered twist: in *At World's End*, Elizabeth Swann's deliverance of the speech suggests that female leadership plays a decisive role in the gaining of New World independence. The film mobilizes the figure of the pirate for a specifically female-centered re-imagination of the national past and thus, for a brief moment, provides the audience with a glimpse of US-American history as *herstory*.

The empowerment of the heroines in both *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Cutthroat Island* is facilitated by and results in the simultaneous weakening of the male hero and the representational loss of his phallic power. Whereas in the first installment of the trilogy Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) is still predominantly positioned as the white male hero who saves his damsel in distress, in the course of the second and third film this role is increasingly troubled. Similar to his namesake in *Cutthroat Island*, though with less parodic impulse, Will Turner is feminized in his actions and, in *At World's End*, has to be saved by the heroine repeatedly. Yet, whereas the end of the main action indicates that just as in *Cutthroat Island* also in *Pirates of the Caribbean* heterosexual romance does not necessarily signify the end of female independence and mobility, the trilogy's epilogue suggests otherwise. After the credits, the audience is presented with a scene in which Elizabeth Swann, who is apparently no longer a pirate but has in the meantime assumed the role of a mother, is waiting on the shore for Will Turner to return from the sea. Throughout the trilogy, the heroine has transcended spatial, gender, and class boundaries and thus facilitated her romantic union with Will Turner, and in the end it is exactly this union that seems to relegate her to a role of immobility and conventional femininity.

By affording its heroine narrative agency and destabilizing gender boundaries, *Pirates of the Caribbean* could appeal to an audience with a feminist consciousness, yet Elizabeth's ultimate confinement in a conventionally (hetero)normative frame resolves these transgressions with a

reactivation of traditional gender roles and the reinstatement of gendered notions of space and mobility. Just as in *Anne of the Indies*, in *Pirates of the Caribbean* the destabilizing potential of the female pirate can, however, hardly be recuperated completely. The credits have disrupted the audience's immersion in the diegetic world. Temporally and structurally marked off from the main action of the film, the conventionality of the epilogue is thus at least very likely to catch the viewer's eye. Moreover, due to the serial character of the films the audience has experienced that any narrative and character developments can always be reversed not only within a single film, but particularly from one installment to the next. The after-credit scene of *At World's End* thus presents a circular return to the beginning of the first film (and also to the beginnings of the representations of women in the genre) and hence a form of (conventional and heteronormative) closure, as well as a potential starting point for new disruptions. As the film series repeats and recycles previous filmic representations of female characters in the pirate genre, it also fuses the different representational politics and gender ideologies of these films. Hence, *Pirates of the Caribbean* creates a filmic text and female piratical figure that inherits both the genre's early politics of 'containment' (e.g. *Anne of the Indies*) and the more explicitly (post-)feminist agendas of its later variations (e.g. *Cutthroat Island*). In its reconfiguration of the female pirate and heroine, *Pirates of the Caribbean* is characterized by a 'knowingness' that does not manifest itself with the same level of exaggeration and parody as in *Cutthroat Island*, but that can nevertheless trouble and put quotation marks around those moments of representation that carry an air of 'innocence' and, from a feminist point of view, could be considered regressive. Ultimately, the meanings attached to the female heroine and pirate will remain mobile and thus enable both conservative and progressive readings of the female pirate and the pirate trilogy.

Gender, Sexuality, (Trans)Nationality, and the Pirate

When the pirate Captain Jack Sparrow and the hero-to-turn-pirate Will Turner, in *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, set out to find Elizabeth (and the ship, the *Black Pearl*), Sparrow remarks: "[i]f you're intending to brave all, hasten to her rescue, and so win fair lady's heart, you'll have

to do it alone, mate.” Anticipating the stereotypical task of the male hero, the pirate discloses the whole classical heteronormative plot-line which the film sets out to reproduce and at the same time draws attention to the story’s conventionality, constructedness, and potential inconsistencies. His words, in fact, establish the pirate as a prime cause of these inconsistencies and disruptions: not only do they indicate that he might not ‘play along’ within the diegetic world, but they also turn him into a source of filmic self-reflexivity that functions to disrupt the films’ reality effects and present him as a deconstructive force with regard to the films’ (hetero)normative narrative.

Pirates of the Caribbean is a series of films in which meanings, characters, and character constellations are continuously changing, and the series’ ambiguities are primarily epitomized by Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp).¹⁹ This character, whose representation constantly oscillates between heroic and antiheroic, serious and comical/campy, is a mobile figure both in a spatial and cultural sense. Never ultimately tied to any of the rivaling parties on screen or bound to any place but his ship, Sparrow is constantly in motion. Like the archetypical trickster, this “mythic embodiment of ambiguity and ambivalence” (Hyde 7), Sparrow is a crosser of boundaries or rather, as Hyde writes of the trickster, “the boundary is where he will be found – sometimes drawing the line, sometimes crossing it, sometimes erasing or moving it” (8).

The pirate seems to be driven only by his own desires and is characterized as a narcissistic individualist. This is for instance symbolized by his compass, which does not point north but in the direction of what he desires most. In apparent contrast to this egocentricity, Sparrow is, however, also repeatedly characterized by benevolent gestures and actions, for instance when he saves or assists the other heroes of the films. His outward appearance, gestures, and speech are equally ambivalent and present a bricolage of highly stylized and performative acts. Particularly with regard to gender and sexuality, Sparrow’s representation is highly ambiguous. His representation parodies and at the same time celebrates Hollywood’s generic portrayal of the ‘piratical

¹⁹ Paradoxically, it is his ambiguity that turns Captain Jack Sparrow into the only character of the film series who does not change his traits from one installment to the next.

subject' and updates and deconstructs the myth of the heroic and hypermasculine pirate in campy manner. The pirate's flamboyant costume, make-up, moves, and facial expressions are highly theatrical and always border on exaggeration. His gestures reproduce stereotypically gay or effeminate moves. With his dreadlocks, kohl-black eyes, gold teeth and numerous rings, the captain appears like a piratical diva, marked by a spirit of glamorous extravagance (cf. Sontag's description of camp). Though not cross-dressing in any literal sense, Captain Sparrow thus presents a dandified version of the hypermasculine pirate. His representation reveals that camp often "embodies a specifically queer cultural critique" (Meyer 1):²⁰ as he fuses stereotypically effeminate and hypermasculine traits, the pirate presents a gender and sexual ambiguity that troubles the genre's and the series' heteronormativity. Sexual double entendres and subtexts in fact characterize his relation to both female and male characters on screen and thus leave the audience wondering about the pirate's gender and sexual orientation (cf. Steinhoff, "Queer Positionalities").

As a hybrid figure, Sparrow blends different ethnic and national markers as well. Whereas his pronunciation and Johnny Depp's established position within mainstream Hollywood provide Sparrow with connotations of whiteness, his dreadlocks and dark make-up mark the pirate as non-white. In this context, the filmic representation does not position Sparrow as decidedly Other, nor does it necessarily constitute a form of white hegemonic appropriation or 'colonization' of signifiers of (ethnic) differences. Though racial and ethnic stereotypes are clearly at

²⁰ The representation of Morgan Adams in *Cutthroat Island* also bears a queer potential due to the lesbian connotations that are often attached to the active and 'masculinized' female body (cf. Creed, qtd. in Tasker 72). The film self-reflexively plays with these connotations when Morgan looks a prostitute up and down before she asks her "how much?" The notions of lesbian desire and queer sexuality that are evoked in this scene, are, however, quickly undermined and used for comic effect when the film shows that it is only the prostitute's dress that the female pirate is interested in (cf. Tasker's reading of this scene, 72). On the one hand, the female pirate's queer potential is contained within a heteronormative matrix, while on the other hand this 'heterosexualization' also destabilizes the stereotyping of the 'masculinized' action heroine as homosexual.

work in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the pirate's ethnic ambiguity primarily contributes to his fleeting identity and de-centering impulse within the trilogy.

At the end of the film series, the audience is left with the impression that Sparrow is an assemblage of apparent contradictions. Ultimately, the pirate's ironic remark that "[y]ou will always remember this as the day that you – *almost* – caught Captain Jack Sparrow" suggests that any attempt to finally fix this piratical figure is meant to fail. After all, these words present a comment on both his continuously successful escapes from those who seek to capture him in a physical and spatial sense and his potentially equally successful escape from those who seek to classify his actions, behavior, or outward appearance in clear-cut and permanent cultural categories.

Despite his gender, sexual, and ethnic ambiguities, the emphasis on Sparrow's mobility evokes a number of US-American myths and (white) masculine values such as rugged individualism, the frontier spirit, self-reliance, courage, and freedom. Hence, when at the end of the first film, Sparrow sails towards the horizon, the scene clearly resonates with the hegemonic image and romantic motif of the American outlaw or cowboy. Moreover, particularly in *At World's End*, Sparrow and his crew of disparate characters function as personifications of US-American society, its national myths and ideals. The pirate's mobility in terms of meaning and his/her lack of any permanently fixed affiliations, however, renders this association significantly unstable. Thus, in the last part of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, the signifier 'pirate' assumes a diversity of meanings that turns him/her not only into an impersonation of key US-American national myths but conversely also functions to construct a transnational and subversive image of the pirate community (with anti-globalization undertones).

In the course of *At World's End*, the pirates form a transnational community of resistance, fighting the homogenizing forces that dominate and control the flows in the film's increasingly globalized/mobilized world. Whereas these forces are represented by the cool and manipulative Lord Beckett (Tom Hollander) and the imperial regime of his East India Trading Company, the pirates are represented as the common folk threatened by extinction. United by a common goal, yet differentiated via a filmic play with ethnic and national stereotypes, they form a pluri-local community, "constituted through their own trans-

national political and social processes, existing within but constituted apart from the larger states and societies within which they are situated" (Smith qtd. in Pries 19). Their representation evokes associations with contemporary grassroots movements, transnational organizations, and the network society: dispersed in different countries and oceans, the pirates seem to communicate via mystic songs and magic coins. The ocean appears as a particularly apt space for such an envisioning of communities in terms of networks, flows, and webs that transgress national boundaries. By portraying the ocean as a transnational social space and at the same time representing the pirate community as one that crosses national borders, *Pirates of the Caribbean* can be said to engage in what Peter Hitchcock calls "transgressive imagiNation." This occurs if the literary (or here, the filmic) "exceeds, challenges, demystifies, or transcodes the components of national identity" (9). As an embodiment of a postmodern cultural moment in which culture is often understood as "hybrid [and] dynamic – more about routes than roots" (Cresswell, *On the Move* 1), the representation of the pirate in *At World's End* negotiates the hopes and perils of a contemporary world that is (or is perceived to be) increasingly mobile, i.e. marked by the movement of ideas, goods, people, and money.

Paradoxically, while the film's critique of globalization is 'safely' directed at the British imperialist machinery within the diegetic world, it can easily be turned against Disney itself. Given its position as a transnational blockbuster, *Pirates of the Caribbean* is haunted by its own critique. As a mainstream Hollywood film and part of a multi-billion dollar Disney franchise, *At World's End* is part of the very flow of global consumer culture that it seems to denounce. As protests in the Caribbean (cf. Forte) and the Chinese censorship of parts of *At World's End* (cf. "China Censors 'Pirates'") indicate, for some of its transnational audiences Disney does indeed present a modern-day analogy to its own portrayal of the East India Trading Company. In such a reading, British imperialism stands in for contemporary notions of American empire as they are voiced in critical discourses about the USA's global military, political, economic, and cultural role. Moreover, in the cultural context of its time of release, the film's portrayal of a white Anglo-Saxon patriarchy in a state of emergency can evoke uncanny memories of more recent US-American history. In this context, the equation of the US-American nation with the film's 'evil' and controlling forces

challenges the dominant reading of the pirate as an idealized personification of (US-American) freedom. As the film represents the pirates as figures who disturb, raid, kidnap, wreak havoc, and fight for freedom, it, after all, also points at this figure's striking resemblance to the post-modern terrorist (cf. Beasley 224).

Once again this shows how the pirate, whose inherent mobility is always already linked to various forms of transgression within the filmic text, functions as a mobile signifier that enables various, often conflicting, and more or less dominant readings. With its ambiguities, self-reflexivity, and incorporation of contradictory cultural meanings, *Pirates of the Caribbean* can be characterized as a post-classical and double-coded film series that provides multiple entry points for diverse audiences. According to Elsaesser and Buckland,

[f]rom the perspective of production post-classical films stand in a tradition: they have mastered the codes of the classical, and they are not afraid to display this mastery as 'play,' in the way they are able to absorb, transform, and appropriate also that which initially opposed the classical, be it other filmmaking traditions [...] or be it oppositional theories and political practices such as the critical discourses around the formation of 'race,' class, gender and nation. From the perspective of reception, it is this knowingness about itself as self-display, as well as about its role in the marketplace of popular culture and cultural politics that gives with its several reflexive turns, the label 'post-classical' its most defensible validity, and, perhaps more problematically, its only stable application. (78-79)

In *Pirates of the Caribbean*, but also in *Cutthroat Island*, "this knowingness about itself as self-display" and the incorporation of various contradictory cultural discourses are particularly tied to the figure of the pirate. As Geoff King argues, "[t]he desire to appeal to a mass market is likely to produce a degree of built-in incoherence and conflicting demands" (4). Accordingly, *At World's End's* openness to contradictory political interpretations and its self-subversiveness also present powerful strategic and economic devices to guarantee that the movies themselves can travel across national and cultural borders. The film series' representational plurality and the ambiguity of the mobile signifier 'pirate' in particular, moreover fit a postmodern Western consumer culture that is governed by notions of flexibility, mobility, and

contingency, and a capitalist system in which cultural differences present a key aspect of revenue and identification (cf. Jain 5). In this sense, films like the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series constitute parts of broader socio-cultural and political-economic tendencies that turn hybridity, however imaginary or simulated, into valuable cultural and symbolic capital. This has a double-edged effect: while, on the one hand, the tendency to integrate cultural differences into consumer culture carries a message of democracy and an acknowledgment of cultural (e.g. gender, ethnic, sexual) diversity, these politics of appropriation and commodification can, on the other hand, simultaneously contain the radical and disruptive potential of the previously 'marginal,' keeping existent hegemonic power relations intact. As my analysis of *Pirates of the Caribbean* has shown, this does not, however, necessarily fix the pirate as a figure that perpetuates dominant cultural and national discourses and master-narratives, just as his/her mobility does not designate his/her ultimate subversiveness.

Conclusion

In Hollywood cinema of the 20th and early 21st centuries, the pirate is a figure closely linked to notions of mobility that have taken shape as various forms of spatial and cultural transgression, deviance, and resistance. In the films examined in this essay, these have alternatively or sometimes simultaneously been romanticized (e.g. *Pirates of the Caribbean*), idealized (e.g. *Cutthroat Island*), or criticized (e.g. *Anne of the Indies*). Via the mobile signifier of the pirate, the films negotiate socio-historically and culturally specific constructions and interrelations of gender, sexuality, nationality, and mobility. As a product and embodiment of its respective cultural moment, the representation of the pirate in Hollywood movies often functions to strengthen but also to challenge dominant discourses. S/he can assume different meanings in different times and filmic productions, as well as generate both dominant and resistant readings. Particularly the representations of the female pirate in *Cutthroat Island* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* show how this figure can function to (re)produce both hegemonic and oppositional discourses: to different degrees, these films construct an image of the female protagonist that self-reflexively integrates conventional or presumably pre-

feminist notions of femininity with (an acknowledgment of) feminist ideas and politics. By reproducing and challenging basic tenets of both the pirate genre and US-American mythology, the female pirate's mobility becomes a source of resistance to dominant US-American social norms and conventions (especially in terms of gender) as well as an embodiment of these values, ideals, and myths (especially egalitarianism and the notion of US-American exceptionalism). In *Pirates of the Caribbean* the female pirate's ambiguity in terms of national and ethnic identity evokes connotations of US-American multiculturalism at the same time that it raises questions about the notion of the pirate as an 'American hero.'

A similar – or even heightened – ambiguity with regards to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality also characterizes the representation of the male pirate in the series. The post-classical pirate films play with the codes of the classical and fuse them with other genres (e.g. action, comedy, and fantasy), new media technologies (e.g. CGI) and cultural discourses. In the course of this process, they position the pirate at the center of these fusions, negotiations, and contradictions. *Pirates of the Caribbean*, in particular, turns the pirate into a mobile signifier, a personification of the multiplicity of meanings, and an icon of Western postmodern consumer culture. In fact, I would suggest, his/her inherent mobility also makes the pirate available as a figure of thought for recent cultural theories that emphasize mobility, flux and flow. However, it is important to note that the meanings given to the pirate and his/her mobility are always culturally and historically contingent and marked by the traces of gender, sexuality, 'race,' ethnicity, class, and nationality.

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DRIFTERS

PETER KURAS

On the Spaces of Hobos, Railroads, and of the Law

I. Introduction

I am a lonesome hobo
Without family or friends
Where another man's life might begin
That's exactly where mine ends
I have tried my hand at bribery
Blackmail and deceit
And I've served time for ev'rything
'Cept beggin' on the street
Bob Dylan, "I Am a Lonesome Hobo"

On the morning of September 8, 1938 Agnes Neering was raped and beaten by a hobo while on her way to work. This fact would be tragic, and tragically unremarkable, were it not for the lawsuit she subsequently filed against the Illinois Central Railroad. She had been taking the same train, from the same station, at the same time (4:30 AM) for several years. At that hour, the only people Neering saw on her commute were "hoboes and tramps" whom she encountered "once or twice, and sometimes three or four times a week" (*Neering v. Illinois Central R. R. Co.* 369). Neering had repeatedly complained to the station manager and to conductors, saying that she felt threatened by the presence of these hobos. Her complaints were ignored.

A jury trial found the Illinois Central Railroad Company liable for the amount of \$5,000, a decision that was overturned and later reinstated by the appellate court, which commented that

[t]he law recognizes, and it is generally understood, that where lawbreakers congregate they are dangerous to society and are likely to break other laws, and we do not see how it could reasonably be said when vagrants are permitted to congregate they will not become a menace to the public peace or that under such conditions one could not reasonably anticipate they might commit some unlawful act or become

dangerous to society. It necessarily follows that, when such a condition is permitted to exist at a passenger station, reasonable and ordinary precaution must be observed for the protection of persons who are patrons of the road and using its passenger station. (ibid.)

This decision rests on an assumption that the court felt should have been obvious to the railroad: that the “hoboes and tramps” gathered on the platform were lawbreakers. This is, in fact, a non-trivial assumption: the mere fact of presence on the platform is no crime and nowhere are the hobos discussed as being convicts or suspects in other crimes. Instead, it is their status as hobos or tramps, and not simply the offense of riding on a train without paying, that the court assumes to be criminal.

This legal treatment makes little distinction between the hobo and other indigent figures. A tradition of sociological and linguistic work (as will be discussed in more detail below) testifies to the existence of a more subtle classification of the indigent, a classification that assigns the hobo a pride of place because, as one typical account puts it: “[t]he hobo wanders and works” while “[t]he tramp wanders but does not work and the bum neither wanders nor works” (Wormser 12).¹ This classification rests on two separate qualities: the willingness to labor and a commitment to travel. The hobo proves his allegiance to one set of American values by always remaining open to the possibility of work even as he challenges other values by refusing to settle down. The hobo is thus a figure caught between two different American narratives: on the one hand, he is a figure of mobility, on the other hand, he is a figure who takes his domesticity with him. This intermediary position can be ascribed, I will argue, to the hobo’s status as a medial figure. As the *flâneur* was defined by his movement through city streets, the hobo was defined by his (the gendered pronoun is, for both the hobo and the *flâneur*, deliberate) relation to the railroad tracks; just as the *flâneur* served as a diagnostic for the conditions of 19th-century urban life, the hobo embodied the complex ideological and economic conditions of late 19th- and early 20th-century rural America.

That the railroad played an integral role in the settlement of the West is well-known; that the laying of railroad tracks was the cause of

¹ See also Cotton 260; Klein.

frequent domain disputes constitutes a veritable trope in the Western;² but the rise of the railroad also caused a number of other legal and cultural transformations. In this paper, I will argue that the hobo is a figure defined by the technological development of the railroads and the legal discourse accompanying it. The hobo must be differentiated from other kinds of wanderers because he inhabits a space that significantly challenges older forms of travel. The hobo must be understood primarily as a response to the railroad, and, like the railroad, he simultaneously becomes a figure of union and division. The hobo is a figure of contradiction. He is at once committed to notions of domesticity and defined through movement; he simultaneously embraces labor while standing in opposition to the dominant conditions of labor; and he is stereotypically assumed to be a criminal while obeying an alternative code of law.

II. Vag Taxonomies

Beginning with Cesare Lombroso's classification of "born criminals," the rise of criminology was largely an attempt to classify humans who were assumed to be degenerate into biological and physiological types.³ It should come as no surprise that the contemporaneous discourse on wanderers similarly divided and subdivided vagrants into groups. In addition to the distinctions that were made between hobos, tramps, and bums (outlined above), a number of sub-divisions were developed both by the hobos themselves and by the sociologists who studied them. This commitment to taxonomy seems, however, not to have been limited to academics. Indeed, the classical division between the tramp, the hobo, and the bum seems to have arisen within the community of vagrants, and seems to have been of particular importance to hobos. As Tim Cresswell points out in his seminal *The Tramp in America*, both academic approaches to the tramp, such as Alice Solenberger's important early study *One Thousand Homeless Men* (published in 1914), and the auto-ethnographic efforts of Ben Reitman's Hobo College in Chicago had

² See, for example, *The Iron Horse* (dir. John Ford, 1924); *Union Pacific* (dir. Cecil B. DeMille, 1939).

³ See, for example, Wetzell; Becker and Wetzell; Sekula.

largely focused on distinctions between different types of tramps and hobos (cf. Cresswell 81). The majority of these distinctions, especially those produced by academic studies of tramps, focused largely on “issues of work and mobility,” with an important secondary focus on the question of the tramp’s moral character (ibid.). The auto-ethnographic approaches to the tramp, however, contained far more subtle categorizations – categorizations that revealed a complex social hierarchy within the community of American vagrants. James Moore, a.k.a. “the Daredevil Hobo,” in a classification commissioned by Nels Anderson, a former tramp who had gone on to do a PhD at the University of Chicago, divided tramps into five main classes. The top of the hierarchy was formed by what Moore termed “[t]ramps of society (Those who have some graft or excuse),” while the bottom was formed by the so-called “Other Classes (Insane, venereals, dope-heads, women, men with fits).”

While Moore’s categorization is marked by a unique humor – listing missionaries as the top of the heap in “trampdom,” for example – his categorization of the more traditional tramp “classes” largely makes reference to long established slang. He lists “pikers,” “yeggs,” “rattlers,” and “ramblers,” for example (bums who wander highways, rogues, bums who ride freight trains, and bums who ride passenger trains, respectively). Though these terms are probably unfamiliar to contemporary speakers of English, Moore, in using them to form the basis of his categorization of different types of tramps, was merely reflecting common linguistic usage among early 20th-century American vagrants.

Hobo slang is well documented – the journal *American Speech*, for example, began publishing in 1925 and featured regular articles on the vocabulary of hobos and tramps, for example Nicholas Klein’s “Hobo Lingo” (1926), Howard F. Barker’s “More Hobo Lingo,” Charlie Samolar’s “The Argot of the Vagabond” (both published in 1927), and Vernon W. Saul’s “The Vocabulary of Bums” (1929).

These records of the early-20th-century American tramps’ sociolect indicate subtle distinctions among the indigent of the period: a “Gay Cat,” according to Klein, was “a tenderfoot in Hobodom,” while a “Jungle Buzzard” was “one who begs off the hobo,” a “Jocker” was “an older hobo traveling with and protecting a younger hobo,” “Rank Cats” were “at the very lowest scale in bum life,” while “Speck Bums” referred to the “lowest form of bum,” a “stiff” could be used to describe

“any class of hobo workers, such as ‘cattle stiffs,’ ‘harvest stiffs,’ etc.” (652-53). If academic categorizations of hobos were, as Cresswell has argued, based primarily on issues of mobility and labor, the language of hobos indicates that their own categorizations concerned not only mobility and labor, but also their experience as hobos and the adherence to certain norms common among tramps and hobos of the period. Hobo language simultaneously isolated vagabonds from the mainstream, and reconfigured many values of the mainstream within the community of vagabonds. The derogatory terms of hobo slang were applied to vagabonds who refused to abide by the values of the community as well as to the local citizenry, the police, or officers of the railroad.⁴

The language of the hobos simultaneously reflected and ironized the academic distinctions between different kinds of vagabonds – hobo slang, like academic studies on vagrants, was invested in the categorization of different kinds of vagabonds, but beyond that, it made distinctions between various types of labor and mobility that were of no importance to an outsider; whereas hobos, for example, distinguished between those who rode the freights and those who rode passenger trains, contemporaneous academic studies and popular opinion saw both simply, and collectively, as itinerant law breakers and public nuisances. Vagabond slang also contained a form of apparent hypocrisy. It reserved special censure for those who transgressed the norms of their communities. One could be celebrated, among tramps, for a refusal to work, for a willingness to steal or beg, but one who behaved in that way within his community was considered a dangerous nuisance – a “buzzard” (Samolar 386), “Speck Bum” (Klein 653), or “Mush Fakir” (Saul 342).

This hypocrisy is, however, only apparent. The hobo, as I will argue below, deliberately fashioned himself as a figure defined by the railroads; in so doing, he set himself against contemporary legal norms and allied himself with earlier traditions of mobility, thus creating a culture parallel to that of mainstream society.

⁴ One author, for example, offers the following: “[a] bread and butter John, or punk and plaster John, is one who makes a specialty of battering back doors; bread and butter is so often his usual spoil. He is also known as a chronicker. All three terms are sneering ones, as the all-around vag has a poor opinion of specialists” (Samolar 386).

III. Crimes of Condition

The decision in *Neering v. Illinois Central R. R. Co.* was the result of a development in American jurisprudence and culture toward the condemnation of the tramp and the hobo. As soon as the railroads became a fixture of American life, tramps and hobos started stealing rides, and as soon as they started stealing rides, they became the target of increasingly harsh vagrancy laws. These laws differed from earlier vagrancy laws in that they punished specific forms of mobility with exceptional severity – the possibility of vagrancy on a continental scale was perceived as a threat to American domesticity (cf. Cresswell 48-55). Still, the decision in *Neering v. Illinois Central R. R. Co.* is surprising in that it dispenses with certain conventions of earlier tramp laws; whereas the earlier laws had differentiated between tramps and hobos on the basis of their distinct patterns of movement, the court in *Neering v. Illinois Central R. R. Co.* had determined that proximity to a railroad and a particular appearance should have been reason enough for the railroad company to have regarded the men as criminals.

Ten years later, Forest W. Lacey submitted an essay to the *Harvard Law Review* that chronicled the kind of logic applied by the court in *Neering v. Illinois Central R. R. Co.*, as well as in succeeding cases related to hobos, both directly and tangentially:

CRIMES are traditionally defined in terms of acts or failure to act, and it is usually stated that an act or failure to act is an essential element of a crime. However, a recent dissenting opinion by Mr. Justice Black calls attention to the fact that there are in our legal system several crimes the essential element of which consists not in proscribed action or inaction, but in the accused's having a certain personal condition or being a person of a specified character. Not only are such crimes well recognized by the courts, but in recent years several states have created new crimes of this nature, and there is a persistent demand by law enforcement officials and legal writers for their extension. Vagrancy is the principal crime in which the offense consists of being a certain kind of person rather than in having done or failed to do certain acts. Other crimes of this nature include being a common drunkard, common prostitute, common thief, tramp, or disorderly person. (Lacey 1203)

What does it take to mark a person as ‘existentially’ criminal?⁵ In what ways does the law have to be rethought or reformulated in order to permit this shift towards a criminality of condition?

Crimes of condition have historical precedents, of course; the special status of vagrants and indigents forms the basis of Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* (cf. esp. 7-13). But these precedents differ in important aspects from the crimes of condition described by Lacey. For Foucault, the question of vagrancy is deeply intertwined with the question of madness, and had been so since the rise of the *Narrenschiffe* (“ships of fools”) of the 1400s. Unlike the hobo, however, these “fools” were often viewed as unwilling to work. The impetus to the invocation of an extrajudicial authority that mimicked and replaced juridical practices of confinement was, in that case, largely connected to questions of labor. Despite these important differences there were also similarities. In the case of the *Narrenschiffe*, the “fools” were detained on ships that were themselves in motion, but in what Foucault refers to as the “Classical Age,” the “semijudicial structure” (40) that organized the confinement of the “mad” was tied to certain kinds of fixed spaces: hospitals and asylums.

In contrast, the crimes of condition Lacey refers to are exactly that: crimes, in the limited juridical sense of the term. One can be punished for them in a court of law. The mechanisms of social control applied to hobos were, as is indicated in Lacey’s argument, not merely extra-judicial, nor was it only for the act of boarding a train without paying for a ticket that the law punished hobos; the hobo, as the figure of vagrancy *par excellence* in early 20th-century America, was criminally liable for his failure to commit to a certain kind of space. To put it another way, the criminal liability of the hobo, insofar as his crime was a crime of condition, derived from a commitment to certain aspects of bourgeois order on the one hand and to the rejection of key elements of that order on the other. In insisting on domestic order and a certain kind of rule of law on the one hand while violating the tenets of the law of the land on the other, the hobo enacted a critique of the established legal system and

⁵ I use “existentially” here to imply that the type of criminality in question is neither the result of a specific transgression nor necessarily connected to the kinds of innate criminality proposed by Lombroso, and many other criminologists of the period.

attempted to replace it by returning to a vision of the law that has both historically and theoretically defensible aspects.

IV. Housekeeping in the Jungle

Hobos congregate in jungles.⁶ These jungles correspond, in some ways, to Deleuze and Guattari's differentiation in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* between smooth and striated spaces. These two kinds of spaces, for Deleuze and Guattari, are marked both by certain geographical features and by specific forms of social control. Smooth space and striated space are, for Deleuze and Guattari, marked respectively as "nomad space and sedentary space – the space in which the war machine develops and the space instituted by the state apparatus [...]" (474). These two types of spaces are "not of the same nature" but nevertheless "exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space." Deleuze and Guattari invoke a number of different models of the mixture of these kinds of spaces, from the musical to the textile.⁷

The hobo jungle is positioned normally in, or adjacent to, urban spaces, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the "striated spaces par excellence" (481). "Smooth or nomad space," they tell us, normally

lies between two striated spaces: that of the forest, with its gravitational verticals, with its grids and generalized parallels, its now independent arborescence, its art of extracting the tree and wood from the forest. But being "between" also means that smooth space is controlled by these two flanks, which limit it, oppose its development, and assign it as much as possible a communicational role; or, on the contrary, it means that it turns against them, gnawing away at the forest on one side, on the other

⁶ See, for example, Klein.

⁷ The railroad is not a model for Deleuze and Guattari, who mention it only twice (7, 197-98). Later commentators have read railroads through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's work, however. See, for example, Latour 117; Lecerclé 41-61.

side gaining ground on the cultivated land, affirming a noncommunicating force or a force of divergence, like a “wedge” digging in. (384)

The smooth space Deleuze and Guattari are describing here is figured as the habitat of traditional nomads: the desert, the steppes, and the sea. In these spaces the prerogatives of the state – to divide, to striate – are subordinate to the prerogatives of the nomad. These prerogatives are harder to define than those of the state: investigating the nomad, and the nomad’s relation to space, is not merely a matter of imagining a stunted development of the state; to investigate the nomad is a matter of imagining an organizational logic other than the state – an organizational logic capable, in Deleuze and Guattari’s argument, of producing its own brand of science, its own art, its own seamanship, its own mathematics, and so on.

Hobo jungles thus represent a particular and peculiar kind of ‘invasion’ of the smooth into the striated; it is not, unlike the sea or the desert, the barrenness of the space that makes it smooth. It is, rather, the overwhelming fecundity of the space that makes it impossible to divide effectively, except through destruction: a path cut through the jungle must be vigorously maintained in order to preserve the kind of striation necessary to even walk through it; any striations of the jungle can only be achieved through violence.

The hobo jungle is an ironized space. It simultaneously is a space of dissolution, a fluid space both created and controlled by a disenfranchised class, and a space bearing distinct traits of specifically bourgeois American cultural values. Defined by its poverty, by its transience, by its position next to train tracks, the hobo jungle is nonetheless designed to replicate middle-class structural order – the order of small towns and suburbs. Anderson’s 1921 sociology of the hobo makes these elements of the jungle clear:

[t]he hobo who lives in the jungles has proved that he can become domesticated without the aid of women. He has established the habit of keeping his clothes and person clean. It is not difficult to select from a group of transients the men who have just come from the jungles. Their clothes will be clean and even bear evidence of jungle sewing. Overalls that have seen service will be bleached almost white from numerous washings. The hobo learns here the housewife’s art of keeping pots clean and the camp in order. The man who cannot, or will not learn these few

elementary principles of housekeeping is likely to fare ill in the jungle. (18)

The insistence of the jungle code on hygiene and cleanliness, in short, on domesticity, is not, however, limited to the individual; in larger or more permanent jungles, Anderson tells us, a committee is instituted to enforce a limited code of conduct with its own laws and punishments:

[j]ungle crimes include (1) making fire by night in jungles subject to raids; (2) “hi-jacking” or robbing men at night when sleeping in the jungles; “buzzing,” or making the jungle a permanent hangout for jungle “buzzards” who subsist on the leavings of meals; (4) wasting food or destroying it after eating is a serious crime; (5) leaving pots and other utensils dirty after using; (6) cooking without first hustling fuel; (7) destroying jungle equipment. (21)

Possible punishment for these crimes includes “expulsion, forced labor, or physical punishment” (20). The jungle is thus a space which, placed outside the law of mainstream society, is marked by its adherence to a different form of law; it is, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, a space caught in its simultaneous allegiance to the nomadic and to the State.

V. The Wrong Side of the Tracks

The rails are literally composed of the smooth and the striated: the smoothness of the rails themselves is essential to the safe and efficient functioning of the train, while the tracks are held in place by a series of ties that cut horizontally across the rails, holding them in place and distributing the weight of the train. The rails both smooth and striate the landscapes through which they pass: they smooth the landscape by enabling the easy movement of cargo, human and otherwise, across natural striations (e.g. mountains and rivers); but they also striate them by serving, linguistically and literally, as the figure of sociological division in American life. Furthermore, the railroad has the power to distort geographical space; the distance between locations matters less, in the era of the railroad, than the frequency and speed of the rail connections between those locations.

One could, of course, make the same argument about roads and rivers. But the railroads were different in important ways from other forms of transportation: Roman law already grants access to waterways to everyone, and even private roads often had to be made available for public use.⁸ Roads and rivers are historically open; they are accessible to everybody. In part, because one can get on and off the road when one pleases, and one can moderate one's speed to pass, or wait for, other travelers. This is, however, not the case with the railroad, which is both technologically and legally closed: only vehicles authorized and administered by a central authority may travel on the train tracks. One may only board and exit these vehicles at officially designated junctures. If roads and rivers are historically public in an emphatic sense (they both belong to the public and the public is almost always allowed to make relatively unrestricted use of them), the railroad is emphatically private: it belongs to a corporation, and the public is allowed to make only very restricted use of it.⁹

This special status of the railroad as a 'closed' means of transportation was codified in a series of extremely influential Supreme Court decisions in the late 19th century. The railroads had been accused of prejudicial pricing patterns that discriminated unfairly against smaller towns and businesses in favor of metropolitan centers and major users of the railroad's services. The Court's first approach to these questions had been resolved with reference to a tradition in the common law of subjecting businesses that operated in the public interest, such as "[...] common carriers, millers, ferrymen, innkeepers, wharfingers, bakers, cartmen, and hackney coachmen," to scrutiny not normally applied to private enterprises. Because, the reasoning went, providers of transport relied on common goods (e.g. roads and waterways) to provide their services, they might be subjected to exceptionally strict regulation (Kitch and Clara 313-14). A 1886 decision, however, reversed the Court's tendency towards treating the railroads as private businesses that

⁸ For a general overview of the importance of Roman roads and their legal and technological status, see Ray. On the legal status of roads in the Roman Empire and the relevance of that legal status to contemporary debates, see Carol.

⁹ Thus the first expansive treatment of the law of the railroads begins with the question of their status as corporations. See Isaac.

operated in a manner akin to public utilities – in the *Wabash Case*, the Supreme Court held that the railroads were not analogous to the ferrymen and cartmen of common law tradition;¹⁰ the railroads were not so much an alternative to ferrymen but to rivers, and the states were thus prohibited from regulating commerce on the railroads. The Supreme Court, in *Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railway Company v. Illinois*, had thus not only created a special category of protection for the railroads, it had created a legally novel form of transportation – one that was closed, in the sense that it was operated primarily in the private and not the public interest, yet could be regulated only through national consensus.

In refusing to pay for transportation on trains, and in catching trains at junctures not designated by the railroads, hobos, then, were not merely violating a specific law; they were, in fact, adhering to an ancient legal tradition that viewed roads as open spaces, free for all to use in the course of legitimate business. Their adherence to a specific legal code of their own creation can be read as a radically different interpretation of legal history, one that saw access to any mode of transportation as essentially and fundamentally a right of the public, regardless of whose capital had financed its construction.

VI. The Medium in the Middle

The hobo is a fiction. A taxonomical category from an era obsessed with taxonomies, the concept of the hobo was a useful means of creating or reinforcing distinctions between different kinds of vagrancy. The men, and occasionally women, who rode the rails in the late 19th and early 20th centuries may have frequently conformed to the general provisions of the categorizations available to them, but the figure of the hobo as I have presented it is still doubtlessly overly general. But if the hobo is a fiction, he is a useful fiction: useful for contemporaneous commentators in that the figure of the hobo allowed for a counterpoint both to prevailing notions of the vagrant as lazy and dangerous, and

¹⁰ Cf. *Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railway Company v. Illinois*. For an overview of these cases and their impact on American law more generally, see Cortner.

useful in that the hobo points to the contingency of legal responses to the railroad in the period. Useful for current commentators in that the hobo is a figure comprised of his tensions – between mobility and domesticity, lawlessness and legal order, the smooth and the striated. He is a figure defined by his relation to the railroad tracks, and as such he is a figure of perpetual motion, but also a figure whose trajectory is determined, a figure who subverts the corporate intentions of the railroad but who is also reliant on them for his very existence. He is the sum of his contradictions.

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MARTIN BUTLER

Ramblin' Man: The Hobo in American Folk Culture¹

I. Gettin' Goin': On the Cultural Significance of the Hobo

In 1940, when the United States was still in the grip of the Great Depression, the October issue of the *American Sociological Review* featured an article entitled "Transiency as a Cultural Pattern," which examined hobo life in the US. On the basis of "data [...] informally obtained" (731) while being on the road himself, the author of the article, Theodore Caplow, observes that "the transient pattern becomes more and more an acceptable and recognized mode of behavior" (739). Though he admits that "[t]he conclusion that transiency [thus] represents an aspect of general mobility rather than of social pathology may be biased" (731), he remains keen to prove his thesis that individual mobility in the shape of vagrancy – in his own words: "[t]he tendency for 'the road'" (739) – was turning into a central ingredient of the American way of life and should no longer be considered "a danger to property and morals" (738), a widespread notion which, as Caplow explains, may be grounded in the "natural animosity of a relatively stable society toward the stranger" (739).

For an essay that aims at shedding light on the significance of the hobo² figure in American folk culture³ and beyond, Caplow's argument

¹ I am grateful to Anna Canoni, Tiffany Colannino, Nora Guthrie, and Michael Kleff for their generous support of my research. All writings by Woody Guthrie, © WGP, Inc. Parts of this article first appeared as "'Always On the Go:' The Figure of the Hobo in the Songs and Writings of Woody Guthrie." *The Life, Music and Thought of Woody Guthrie: A Critical Appraisal*. Ed. John S. Partington. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011. 85-97.

² The origin of the term 'hobo' is not clear, and there are a number of different theories concerning its origin. Jessie Ryon Lucke states in her essay "The Origin of Hobo:" "[d]ictionaries have proposed a variety of etymologies for

is fruitful at least in two respects: first, it epitomizes the central role mobility has played in US culture and society, no matter if this mobility has been socially acknowledged or sanctioned, legal or illegal, mainstream or alternative. His article also draws attention to the fact that mobility does not only denote particular forms of physical movement, but also possesses a symbolic, at times highly ideological momentum that enables it to expose and critique power constellations and structures of authority.⁴ Second, Caplow's article helps explain the continuing

the word *hobo*. Partridge's *Dictionary of the Underworld* [...] lists *ho[meward] bo[und]*, *ho[mo] bo[nus]*, *hoe boy*, *hautboy*, and finally *Ho! beau!* [...]. A similar explanation, according to the *DAE*, appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch*, 23 October 1895: “[h]obo’ is only a vulgarized ‘hello beau’ and was first applied to the knight of ‘side-door Pullmans’ by brakemen who were used to hearing them say to each other ‘Ho! beau.’ The *Webster’s New World Dictionary* also offers this etymology. *W3* says ‘perh. alter. of *ho*, *boy*, a call used in the northwestern U.S. in the late 1880’s by railway mail handlers when delivering mail.’ Other dictionaries are more skeptical, such as the *American Heritage Dictionary*, which simply states ‘origin unknown.’” (303, original emphases). H.P. Wise, in another attempt at tracing the word’s origin, pointed out in 1922 that ‘hobo’ had been derived from the Japanese language, as “in the Japanese, hobo is a plural form of *ho*, ‘side’” (422), which, “in the plural, [...] takes the meaning ‘all sides’ or ‘everywhere,’” thus corresponding, as Wise has it, “so closely with the current American idea of hobo” (422). Let me add that the terms ‘hobo,’ ‘tramp’ and ‘bum’ are used somewhat interchangeably in this essay (and, at times, are subsumed under the umbrella term ‘itinerant man’). The three terms ‘hobo,’ ‘tramp,’ and ‘bum’ “constituted the triadic folk typology that was particularly prominent in the vernacular of the road during the first third of the century, especially among the hobos (migratory workers) [...] who looked down scornfully on the tramps (migratory nonworkers) and the bums (nonmigratory nonworkers)” (Snow and Anderson 1354).

³ Though there is no universally accepted definition of ‘folk culture,’ I use this term to denote a non-institutionalized system of cultural articulation and communication: “[f]olk culture, unlike elite culture or popular culture, is usually passed on in face-to-face interactions” (Graham 29) and thus heavily relies on oral traditions and the maintenance of a communicative memory (*sensu* Assmann).

⁴ In a similar vein, Stephen Greenblatt elaborates on the Roman Empire’s ritualized form of symbolic “appropriation” (“Cultural Mobility” 8) of

fascination with the hobo and his recurring appearance in literature and other media, as it hints at the controversial reception of hobodom, which, more often than not, has been regarded both as an act of deviancy and as a "definite [...] American pattern" (Caplow 739).

This essay sets out to examine how the hobo as a 'figure of mobility' has contributed to shaping American folk culture as a recurring figure in cultural texts and as a role model to be emulated for a variety of different purposes. It will be primarily concerned with the oeuvre of the American folksinger Woody Guthrie, who gave shape to the ever-wandering figure of the hobo in a number of his songs and writings. Taking into consideration both the literary and cultural as well as the political and socio-economic contexts of the 1930s, this essay looks at the ways in which Guthrie used the figure of the hobo as a central point of reference both in his lyrics and in his numerous practices of self-fashioning. It reveals how Guthrie contributed to creating a character which, in various shapes and nuances, has become central to American folk culture and popular culture,⁵ where it appears repeatedly as the protagonist of an ideologically charged narrative of mobility. Against the backdrop of the analysis of Guthrie's negotiations of the hobo as well as a number of hobo songs by other singers and songwriters, I argue that the concept of mobility embodied by the hobo allows for an integration of hegemonic and subversive discourses and has therefore taken such a prominent position when it comes to defining 'the American self.'

cultural goods (as "tangible emblems of authority" 7) after having conquered a people; though Greenblatt is concerned with the symbolic potential of cultural artifacts here, his ideas may also apply to cultural practices or modes of performance (cf. 7-8)

⁵ The term 'popular culture' is here used to denote the realm of cultural production which is, to a considerable extent, shaped by an institutionalized framework of market-oriented production and distribution and thus geared towards a 'mass' audience, in other words, "transmitted through mass media and through participation in mass culture in our society" (Graham 28). Cf. Graham (esp. 28-29) for a distinction between folk, popular, and elite culture.

II. The Hobo's 'Golden Age' and the Rise of 'Hoboemia'

Long before Woody Guthrie would give shape to his version of the itinerant man in song, a particular set of images and notions of the hobo had already become part of the American folkloric repertoire. The hobo figure gained cultural significance predominantly with the emergence of two complementary discursive threads around the turn of the 20th century. On the one hand, the hobo became the protagonist of a particular form of literary writing, or genre, the development of which gathered momentum in the late 19th century. Back then, according to Josiah Flynt Willard's account, "railroads had resigned themselves to the 'unavoidable nuisance' of free riders" (qtd. in Hunt 37), which eventually resulted in the rise of what William R. Hunt has called the "Hobo's Golden Age."⁶ This rise of "hobodom" (23) also found expression in a number of literary representations of this form of living 'on the move.' Authors such as Maxim Gorky, Jack London, W.E. Davis, Harry Kemp, or Jim Tully contributed with their narratives to the tradition of 'hobo writing' (cf. Hunt 23) and, what is more, "their writings sometimes inspired other young men to take up the life of adventure they recounted" (23). According to Hunt, this 'Golden Age of the Hobo' lasted until the beginning of the Great Depression, when "mass unemployment made tramping less an adventure than the leading national enterprise" (37).

Yet, the figure of the hobo was also employed (and thus shaped) by a radical political movement which came into being at the beginning of the 20th century and was mainly represented by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the International Brotherhood Welfare Association (IBWA), both founded in 1905.⁷ The IWW, which played a major role in promoting what Todd DePastino has called "hoboemia" (61 et passim), was the result of a fusion of the Socialist Labor Party, the Western Federation of Miners, and the American Labor Union (cf.

⁶ Hunt elaborates on the public image of the hobos at that time, pointing out that "[i]n the eyes of many observers the bums were something other than degraded beggars: they were free, untrammelled adventurers who openly – and justifiably – flaunted a society they despised" (23).

⁷ The overview of the political contexts that contributed to shaping Guthrie and his songwriting is, if not otherwise noted, indebted to Todd DePastino's study on hobo culture throughout the 20th century.

Greenway 173). It was, as Bryan Garman has it, the first union “in which workingmen and women of all skill levels, colors, and ethnicities could unite” (92) and, as an openly radical labor organization, “opposed the elite craft unionism of the American Federation of Labor” (92).

Whereas “the I.B.W.A.’s organizational and propaganda efforts centered around the *“Hobo” News*, a monthly paper distributed through street sales” (DePastino 106) and helped to “shape hobohebian identity and politics” (106), the IWW concentrated on songs in order to promote its ideology – songs which “were frequently heard in the fields and in the jungle camps under the railroad bridges” (McWilliams 157; cf. Garman 92) and which were used to spread the IWW’s political message. Within this singing culture of the IWW, people like Joe Hill, Harry “Haywire Mac” McClintock or Ralph Chaplin became most prominent,⁸ and hobo life as an embodiment of anti-capitalist values was celebrated in a number of their songs, such as the famous “Hallelujah I’m a Bum!,” which suggests that “the hobo’s exploitation and detachment from the bonds of ‘civilized’ society provided a freedom to discover an authentic proletarian identity” (DePastino 114), or “The Big Rock Candy Mountains,” “which describes a cheerfully hedonistic hobo utopia complete with ‘cigarette trees,’ a ‘lake of stew,’ and ‘little streams of alkyhol’ (M. 320):

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
 There’s a land that’s fair and bright,
 Where the handouts grow on bushes
 And you sleep out every night.
 Where the boxcars all are empty
 And the sun shines every day
 On the birds and the bees
 And the cigarette trees,
 The lemonade springs
 Where the bluebird sings
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
 [...]
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

⁸ For a more detailed account of the IWW and its singing culture, see e.g. Greenway 173-204, who also includes a history of “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum!” (cf. 197-202); see also Garman 92-94.

You never change your socks
 And the little streams of alkyhol
 Come trickling down the rocks
 The brake men have to tip their hats
 And the railway bulls are blind
 There's a lake of stew
 And whiskey too
 You can paddle
 All around them in a big canoe
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains (McClintock)

Both the IBWA and the IWW “considered hobohemia as on the vanguard of larger social changes” (DePastino 110). “To both groups,” DePastino explains, “hoboes were ‘a chosen people’ burdened by the world-historical mission of ushering in the glorious socialist future” (110). In the IWW’s newspaper *Solidarity*, one contributor even called the hobos “the guerillas of the revolution” (qtd. in DePastino 110), thereby underlining the oppositional potential of this marginalized figure and laying the grounds for later representations. As part of the “imaginative body of hobo folklore” (DePastino 111), songs like “The Big Rock Candy Mountains” were eventually collected in the IWW’s anthology of songs of work and protest called *The Little Red Songbook*, which significantly contributed to shaping hobo identity at the time and, consequently, influenced Guthrie to a considerable degree, as it added to his fascination with the hobo both as a topic and as a role model for himself – a fascination which found expression in a range of different representations of this figure in his songs.⁹

II. Variations of the Hobo Figure in the Songs of Woody Guthrie

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, born on July 14, 1912, and named after the governor of New Jersey who had been nominated as presidential can-

⁹ Garman elaborates on Guthrie’s and the Almanac Singers’ fascination with the IWW’s singing culture, particularly with Joe Hill, one of its leading figures (cf. 93-94).

didate only twelve days earlier (cf. Cray 11), is an American icon.¹⁰ His position in the American collective memory is uncontested: he embodies "Whitman's working-class hero" (Garman) who raises his voice for the down-and-out, while, at the same time, praising the values of the American people and the beauty of the American landscape. As a social critic and a "prophet singer" (Jackson), he incorporates political radicalism and patriotic idealism in his work, which has been considered a major contribution to American folk culture. When Guthrie self-reflectively asserts, "I don't know, I may go down or up or anywhere / But I feel that this scribbling might stay" (qtd. in Jackson 253), he anticipates the leading role he would play for many artists from many different genres, ranging from folk to punk, jazz, rock, and bluegrass (cf. Jackson 255) ever since his oeuvre was rediscovered during the folk revival of the 1960s.

For Guthrie, the figure of the hobo indeed plays a significant role, both as a topic in a number of his songs and writings and as a template for the creation of a particular image for himself.¹¹ His songs about life on the road show deep solidarity with the wandering men they portray, the protagonist at times appears as an author-persona who evokes an 'authentic' autobiographical narrative, thus allowing Guthrie to fashion himself as one of the tramps he sings about. In his song "Fruit Tramp," for instance, Guthrie sings that "I see tramps of every color / I see tramps of every size" before he eventually concludes that "I [am] known

¹⁰ The term 'icon' here denotes a representative of a particular culture who can be instrumentalized for various cultural, social or political purposes and who usually serves to establish a feeling of shared identity among those who belong to the culture represented (cf. Engler and Klaiber 9-28).

¹¹ One may well argue that Guthrie's dealing with the hobo figure was, at least to a certain extent, a result of his own way of life, which was indeed characterized by restlessness: "Guthrie was restless, always restless," insisted his wife Mary once (qtd. in Cray 78), pointing out that Guthrie "was not one to do the same thing over and over. He was not an eight-to-five man, no way in the world" (qtd. in Cray 78). Guthrie traveled, "stomp[ing] the railroad tracks, to swap songs with the men huddled in hobo jungles or listen to stories about a fearsome railroad detective known as East Texas Read" (79), 'hitting the road' again and again to gather material that he would later rearrange in songs, stories, or cartoons.

as the [wandering?] fruit tramp / my life travels lots of trails."¹² A similar strategy is used in his song "Left in this World All Alone." It also provides a first-person account of hobo life, which, as Guthrie points out in a note on the typescript page, relates to an autobiographical episode: "I wrote this song and sung it over KFVD [...] as I hitched my way back and forth from Glendale to third and western every day [...] I felt it then and I sung it a good bit." Both the persona as well as the note to the song here function as a means of authentication and authorization – Guthrie sings about tramping and fashions himself as a tramp at the same time.

Even when he does not use the first-person perspective, Guthrie's solidarity with the hobo seems to be unbroken. In his song "Lost Boy,"¹³ for example, the speaker reveals himself to be a kind of 'patron of tramps' who takes care of "[m]y lost boy on that highway" who only sees "[f]rowny faces [...] each place he goes." Although the song laments the precarious situation of the itinerant man, the speaker's tone is not only one of despair, but also one of appreciation and acknowledgement of a character who will eventually be able to overcome his plight: "I say to you that the bee / That gets the honey / Is the bee that flies the farthest from the hive." The speaker proclaims and eventually admonishes the listeners to "be kind to your boy," who might indeed be a "vanguard of larger social changes" (DePastino 110): "Remember, no matter where he goes / Those men that wrote your bible / And built up your brightest cities / Were like lost boys when they left from their homes" ("Lost Boy"). Thus, though "Lost Boy" as well as a number of other songs stress the wandering figure's loneliness, his being burdened with "a heavy load [and] a worried mind" ("Hard Travelin'" 28) and his being constantly chased by the police,¹⁴ they also hint at the potential of

¹² In general, the quotations from Guthrie's songs and writings are left in their original spelling, i.e. I did not correct occasional typographical or grammatical errors.

¹³ The official title of this song is "Be Kind to the Boy on the Road."

¹⁴ Another very popular hobo song which belonged to Guthrie's repertoire but which was originally composed by the American folk singer Goebel Reeves is "Hobo's Lullaby," in which the hobo is consoled by the promise that "when you die and go to heaven / You'll find no policemen there" (cf. Brennan and Manheim).

this figure, whose marginal position is understood both as a hazard and as a benefit.¹⁵

There are many more examples of Guthrie's singing and writing¹⁶ about hobos, some of which I will analyze in closer detail in order to specify the ideological implications and connotations of the hobo figure. The above may be sufficient to illustrate that Guthrie's characterization of the itinerant man basically oscillates between lamenting the figure's outsider position and its quasi legal or illegal status on the one hand and appreciating exactly this position as one of moral elevation on the other. This ambivalence allowed Guthrie to use his hobo figures as a projection screen for both political radicalism as well as patriotic idealism. In other words: for Guthrie, the hobo turned out to be a highly versatile character and soon became an ideal focal point for his political and ideological convictions.

It was precisely this ideological versatility of the hobo figure Guthrie drew upon when he took up and continued the tradition of hobo writing in the middle of the 1930s. At the time, the United States witnessed the dislocation of hundreds of thousands of people, most of them working class, with the 'national enterprise' of tramping spearheaded by an interstate migration of unprecedented scale that began in the middle of the decade, the so-called Dust Bowl Migration. In the course of this mass

¹⁵ Next to these songs which – despite their implicit characterization of the hobo as a *vir bonus* – are dominated by a rather sad mood and which rearticulate the romantic topos of the lonely wanderer, there are a number of songs that explicitly highlight the positive aspects of 'hobodom.' His song "I'm Always On the Go," for instance, underlines the very idea that free and limitless mobility is indeed desirable, something which is, quite paradoxically, necessary to feel at home in a country as wide as the United States: "I'm always on the go / [...] I'm rough and tough and rowdy oh / I'll fight and die to make my home / The U.S.A. of Americo," sings Guthrie and eventually concludes that "I like to look it over so / I'm always on the go." Moreover, songs such as "Ramblin Gambler" (as the title already indicates) stress the trickster character of the hobo as someone who regularly bends the law and thus takes an outsider position: "Call me the ramblin gambler / I deal from town to town / It's when I walk into your town / I roll your dollars down, folks / I roll your dollars down."

¹⁶ For instance his autobiography *Bound for Glory*, which I cannot take into account here.

migration, thousands of farmers and sharecroppers left the American Southwest due to a terrible drought, land erosion, and a series of devastating dust storms, and migrated to California in the hope of finding new opportunities there (cf. e.g. Stein; Gregory);¹⁷ most of those migrants encountered an extremely hostile environment as they were discriminated against by the Californian landowners who exploited them as a cheap labor force (cf. McWilliams; Starr 61-69 et passim; Gregory 36-77 et passim). For Guthrie, as well as for hundreds of thousands of his contemporaries, mobility would thus become a central issue. Indeed, during the Dust Bowl Migration, the very concept of mobility, which had become a central ingredient of the American ideology long before Frederick Jackson Turner would outline his thesis of the frontier (cf. Cresswell, "Mobility" 259; Turner), was seriously called into question. The dream of roaming the country suddenly turned into a horrible nightmare of expulsion and forced migration during the Great Depression. The adventurous character of being on the move – to pick up Hunt's argument again – was replaced by the dire need to make one's living elsewhere; mobility was no longer a choice, but a strategy of survival.

The changing perception of mobility during the Great Depression had strong repercussions on the political implications of the hobo figure as rendered in Guthrie's songs and writings. By employing this figure at a time when the fundamentals of American society were being deeply shaken through "socially produced motion" (Cresswell, *On the Move* 3), Guthrie contributes to deconstructing the discursively established 'myth of unfettered mobility' and unfolds a "tale [...] of marginality and exclusion, which cast[s] a different light on the grand narratives of nationhood, of progress, of democracy and of modernity" (Cresswell, *The Tramp* 20). At the same time, however, Guthrie also maintains the

¹⁷ Gregory points out that of the masses of the so-called Dust Bowl migrants, "less than 16,000 people from the Dust Bowl proper ended up in California, barely 6 percent of the total from the Southwestern States" (11). He goes on to explain that "[j]ournalists are to blame for this misunderstanding. Confusing drought with dust, and assuming that the dramatic dust storms must have had something to do with the large number of cars from Oklahoma and Texas seen crossing the California border in the mid-1930s, the press created the dramatic but misleading association between the Dust Bowl and the Southwestern migration."

very idea of mobility – albeit in an alternative shape – as one of the ingredients of the American way of life by turning the hobo into the central character of this ‘tale of marginality’ and into a role model for his own self-fashioning. It seems that for him, resistance to and affirmation of an American myth go hand in hand.

What, then, is the cause of the hobo figure’s ambivalence? What turns this figure into an ideal embodiment of a social critic and a patriotic American at the same time? An answer to this question can be found in numerous literary representations of outcasts, drifters, and other seemingly rootless and placeless characters (including Guthrie’s version of the hobo), in which marginalization and exclusion have not been portrayed as destructive but as constructive: indeed, in the long tradition of narratives on the ‘itinerant man,’ their marginality often contributes to turning the protagonists of these narratives into ideal observers who are, despite (or rather, due to) their position on the edge of society, able to analyze it and to identify its problems. As a combination of the ancient topos of the *homo viator* (with its distinctly religious implications manifest in narratives such as John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*) and of the outcast (especially in romantic poetry such as Byron’s *Don Juan* or William Blake’s *London*), the character of the marginalized itinerant has indeed turned into a literary commonplace, a figure for which, as George H. Tucker argues, the margin turns into “an alternative, ever shifting, vantage point of critical freedom [...] enabling him continually to re-assess his own culture and to relativize the very perceptions of the world and habits of thought that he has inherited from it” (279).

Mobility is a *conditio sine qua non* for a change of perspective and, consequently, a warrant for observation and representation. Guthrie himself, in a note to his cover version of Jim Garland’s famous song “Wild and Reckless Hobo,” points to this alleged objectivity based on the hobo’s outsider position. Commenting on Garland’s protagonist, Guthrie emphasizes that

[t]he hobo here is just telling you some honest facts, no mushy sentiments, hokus pokus, no bowing and scraping to get you to listen. He don’t use any tricks of Hollywood or the smooze [sic] of Broadway or Tin Pan Alley. I got the feeling of so much honesty that it must be a song made up by a rambler. (“Wild and Reckless Hobo” 95)

In the last part of this evaluation, Guthrie even infers that the portrayal of the hobo in Garland's song as a very honest and truth-loving fellow indeed tells us something about the composer himself. "[I]t must be a song made up by a rambler," Guthrie concludes.

For Guthrie, the hobo watches, observes, and, at times, evaluates and criticizes from the outside. He thus lives a life that is, according to Guthrie,

another life, drawn apart from the one you know, yet wound inseparably all through it all. A hobo's life moves swiftly, broadly, talking and moving in terms of states, countries, seasons; instead of the narrow, suffocating, life of city living so hemmed in on every side. [...] Yes, the hobo lives in his own world, a world that you cant [sic] know. For you see, he is seeking a freedom that you have only dimly felt at times. ("Hobo's Lullaby")

More often than not, Guthrie stages this free and unrestricted life on the move not as a deviation from the (alleged) norm of a settled life, but as the natural state of being in this world, which has not yet been corrupted by what he refers to as "city living." As he sings in "Natural Man:"

I have rode your lonesome freight train
I have walked your lonesome road,
All I am is a natural man, natural man,
I have worked your field and factory
I have begged at your back door
All I am is a natural man, natural man.

Mobility here constitutes the default condition, and, what is more, is charged with moral connotations in a number of other, quasi-anthropological considerations made by Guthrie. In the notes to his song "Little Baby Birdy," for instance, he points out that "[p]eople are just like little birds. When you get big enough you'll have to fly out on your own away from your mommy and your daddy, and learn how to [do] the things you want to do under your own power." For Guthrie, mobility is an obligation, a moral duty which every human being has to accept as an integral part of existence. "I'm a ramblin' man, and I ramble all the time," he sings, and concludes that "every good man has got to ramble when it comes his time" ("Ramblin' Blues"). At the same time, being 'on the

move' seems to become a necessary precondition for poetic inspiration. "I'll pause right here in the big middle of the book and call it: A Book of Things that I have seen along the Road" (Typescript page 33), Guthrie scribbles into one of his notebooks, underlining a romantic notion of writing. Likewise, in a note to his song "Runaway Train," he points out that he "made this song up sometime in nineteen thirty nine down on the southerly side of the Mexico border one night on a fast street."

Guthrie's hobo is indeed what Partridge, in his *Dictionary of the Underworld*, assumes is an abbreviation for 'homo bonus,' (cf. Lucke 303), the good human being whose marginal position turns him into an ideal observer and into an epitome of moral superiority. Guthrie thus counters the negative stereotype of the homeless poor which, "[t]hroughout much of the nation's history [...] were defined as outcasts to be removed from the community by techniques of separation such as incarceration and institutionalization or by actual physical expulsion" (Lindquist et al. 692). All these methods of dealing with the homeless poor were also used during the Dust Bowl Migration in the second half of the 1930s, when the Southwestern migrants were indeed treated as inferior by the Californian citizens. Guthrie took up these issues in a number of his songs, such as "Do Re Mi," in which he proclaims, through the voice of a police officer at the Californian border, that "California is a garden of Eden / A paradise to live in or see / But, believe it or not / You won't find it so hot / If you ain't got the do re mi" (Leventhal and Guthrie 82-83).¹⁸ Through its close connection to poverty, mobility, in the minds of the majority of Californians, constituted something uncontrollable, dangerous, and even criminal, and the California administration set out to eliminate this threat by implementing a radical border policy (cf. Gregory 80-88 et passim).

Indeed – and certainly not only during the Great Depression – "[h]omeless persons were frequently conceptualized as transients and drifters who wandered the landscape seeking an adventure and avoiding responsibility and commitment" (Lindquist et al. 692). Guthrie claimed, however, that the 'itinerant man' did not at all "avoid responsibility and

¹⁸ The term "do re mi" was a contemporary slang expression for money. For a more detailed reading of Guthrie's representations of the Dust Bowl Migration, cf. Jackson, esp. chapter two; cf. Butler.

commitment.” On the contrary, his songs and writings portray the figure of the hobo as a “cultural custodian” (M. 320) and underline the significance of mobility as one fundamental ingredient of the American ideology when this ideology seemed to be losing ground dramatically.¹⁹ For Guthrie, being on the move was something desirable, something that neither the Great Depression nor capitalist bankers nor discriminatory migration policies could limit. Thus, in spite of all the woes and worries of a hobo’s life, Guthrie’s songs about the ‘itinerant man’ also reveal a genuinely patriotic attitude – an attitude that, among others, finds expression in the chorus of his song “This Road.” Here, the speaker of the song, in a mood quite similar to that of Guthrie’s famous hymn “This Land,” underlines his undeniable right to move freely and to travel “[a]ll along this long and shining highway / Up along your light and feathery skyway / Here along my streets and trails and byways / In our land created here for you and me.”

III. Mobility as a ‘Cultural Pattern’ and the Workings of the American Ideology

The image of Guthrie as a wandering balladeer promoting radical politics made its way into the archive of American folklore, and it was this

¹⁹ My use of the term ‘ideology’ follows the broad definition suggested by Sacvan Bercovitch, who described it as “the system of interlinked ideas, symbols, and beliefs by which a culture – any culture – seeks to justify and perpetuate itself; the web of rhetoric, ritual, and assumption through which society coerces, persuades, and coheres” (635). The American ideology, then, “reflects a particular set of interests, the power structures and conceptual forms of modern middle-class society in the United States” (636). Bercovitch states that the American ideology seems to have been particularly successful in incorporating dissent, arguing that “the immemorial response of ideology [to protest], what we might call its instinctive defense, has been to redefine protest in terms of the system, as a complaint about shortcomings from the ideal” (644). Following Bercovitch, I argue that this idea of the necessity of protest for the maintenance of a collective identity and the ideals of a liberal and pluralist society lies at the heart of Guthrie’s vision of the hobo, who embodies a social critic and a patriot at the same time.

image that the folk revival of the 1960s rediscovered for a range of ideological purposes.²⁰ Bob Dylan was among those who used Guthrie's symbolic capital in order to create an image for himself, at least in the first years of his career, when he was exuberantly celebrated as *the* American protest singer, until he switched on the electric guitar at Newport in 1965. Dylan indeed took Guthrie as a role model and fashioned himself as an ever-wandering figure observing, chronicling, and criticizing society, emulating Guthrie's way of life and way of writing.²¹ The figure of the 'itinerant man' has thus been re-imagined in very different shapes, always according to particular cultural environments and/or a particular autobiographical trajectory. And, to be sure, it is still extant in popular culture today: a striking example of a contemporary appropriation of this ever-wandering figure is provided by the solo project of Tom Morello, member of the band Rage Against the Machine. Interestingly, Morello, in this solo project, calls himself 'The Nightwatchman' – another attentive character who may be envisioned as a 'cultural custodian' who takes care of people's well-being, a modern or even postmodern hobo who takes up and continues the tradition of Guthrie and Dylan, raising his voice for the poor and unemployed. As he sings in "The Road I Must Travel:" "So tonight I walk in anger / With

²⁰ Guthrie's image as a wandering singer and Dust Bowl chronicler was not only shaped by himself but was, to a large extent, the result of a set of strategies employed to market Guthrie as one of the transient poor, a Dust Bowl migrant, who he never really was. In order to create an 'authentic Guthrie,' a Guthrie that embodied the toil and hardship hundreds of thousands of migrants had experienced, ethnographers such as Alan Lomax or marketing agencies of publishing houses more or less consciously contributed to fashioning Guthrie as a typical representative of the down and out, as being constantly on the move, restless, uprooted, and dislocated (cf. Morgan).

²¹ Dylan's 'hoboism' was also shaped by an important facet of his biography: growing up in a small diasporic Jewish community in an otherwise largely anti-Semitic region, as Josef Raab argues, Dylan continuously struggled with his own Jewishness and, sooner or later, must have come across the myth of the Wandering Jew. Thus, Dylan created his own version of being constantly on the move, changing places, changing perspectives, and – what has become particularly characteristic of Dylan – changing identities (cf. 168).

worn shoes on my feet / But the road I must travel / Its end I cannot see.”

The hobo, it seems, remains a fascinating topos and also a role model emulated by singers and songwriters in the domain of American folklore and beyond. Being on the move still seems to represent a particular kind of freedom which works as a quintessential prerequisite for the articulation of critical opposition and resistance. Individual mobility as embodied by the hobo is thus charged with a particular symbolic potential: for the artist as observer, to be on the move definitely includes a ‘messianic’ mission. The wandering singer adopts the role of a prophet bringing light into the darkness, as Guthrie did during the Great Depression, as Dylan did during the Civil Rights Movement, and as The Nightwatchman does today. Thus, mobility, in the case of the hobo figure and its culturally and historically specific equivalents, may well be conceived of as “a strategic act of individual agents [which disrupts] seemingly fixed migration paths,” as something which is “unexpected, unplanned, entirely contingent” (Greenblatt, “Manifesto” 252). By hinting at the subversive potential of mobility, Greenblatt convincingly argues that “moments in which the social structure applies the fiercest pressure on the individual may in fact be precisely those moments in which individuals are exercising the most stubborn will to autonomous movement” (“Manifesto” 251-52): mobility, imagined or empirical, will surely remain a highly political and highly effective instrument of protest and resistance.

But then again, would it not be far too simplistic to characterize Guthrie’s ‘hoboism’ exclusively as a form of social critique debunking the myth of unlimited mobility? Would it not be too easy to characterize it as a form of resistance against the hegemonic ideal of family life, of home, and of rootedness? Of course, there is no doubt that Guthrie’s hobo figure *does* contain these two elements of criticism and resistance. However, his songs and writings were not entirely oppositional to dominant discourses then prevalent in American society. Instead, it seems that, at least at times, Guthrie preferred the idea of a harmonious and settled family life – for instance, when he proclaims that “I’d give up road today for a honest job at honest pay [...] I’d give up this ramblin life to own my home and a good warm wife,” or when he sings that “I know that you’ll be waiting / An’ I know I’m gettin’ home / I’ll know you hug and kiss me / I’m a gettin’ home an’ I know I’m gettin’ home”

("I'm Always on the Go"); or when he, in the last verse of his song "Ramblin' Reckless Hobo," admonishes his listeners: "Remember wherever you travel, wherever you may roam / You'll never find what you left behind / Your loved ones and your home." Here, Guthrie perpetuates a very traditional ideal of family life: mobility, as the songs imply, is a male prerogative, with the institution of the family ("home") maintained through female domesticity.

Guthrie, like other writers who have been concerned with the theme of mobility, is stuck in a paradox here – a paradox which Tim Cresswell has also identified in his reading of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (cf. "Mobility" 258-60). Guthrie's portrayal of the hobo draws on and oscillates between two central American myths which, as Cresswell argues, seem to be "unresolvable" ("Mobility" 260), i.e. the myth of mobility and the myth of home, of settling down, of finding a place. Thus, once again, Guthrie's songs and writings about the hobo are not straightforwardly resistant or subversive, but essentially ambivalent. His narratives about life on the road also celebrate American values, the American landscape, and the freedom of individual mobility, and the hobo is adequate as a figure that allows for a fusion of Guthrie's patriotic attitude and his critical stance.

Against this backdrop, the figure of the hobo no longer appears as excluded, or detached from society, but as part of the social and cultural fabric. In this light, Guthrie's idea about 'life on the road' comes close to what Sacvan Bercovitch, in his reading of Thoreau's *Walden*, has described as a "ritualized jeremiad" (Alkana xi, drawing on Bercovitch's *American Jeremiad*), a cultural practice that, though apparently marginal, contributes to establish a "renewed sense of community." Its marginal character is given up, as "[t]he logic of the American jeremiad demands that the centrality of the community routinely be reconceived by the marginalized individual consciousness. And the individual consciousness, authorized by the community, no longer appears as a detached and a free point of origin for ethical action." In other words, "the very act of identifying malfunction becomes an appeal for cohesion" (Bercovitch 644).

Following this argument, Guthrie's hobo figure may well be considered to simultaneously embody dissent and cohesion (*sensu* Bercovitch; cf. Alkana), as it both articulates criticism and envisions a better America. Consequently, Guthrie's highly ambiguous concept of

mobility epitomized by his hobo figures give substance to Phillip Vannini's observation that "[w]hile it is tempting to equate a focus on alternative mobilities to a concern with the countercultural or subcultural aspects of mobility, such characterization would be partial at best" (12).²² For Guthrie 'life on the road' may have been an alternative to a settled life in a community that was in dire need of change. At the same time, he considered 'life on the road' as a prerequisite for both becoming aware of the status quo and of initiating change. In this vein, mobility indeed turns out to be what Caplow described as a "cultural pattern" and, as such, a quintessential momentum in the development of American society and the shaping of the American self.

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²² Cresswell argues that "[i]t is almost comforting to think of place and rootedness as 'dominant' and mobility as 'resistant.' The truth, however, is more subtle than this" ("Mobility" 260).

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KONSTANTIN BUTZ

Backyard Drifters: Mobility and Skate Punk in Suburban Southern California

Only when conditions directly related to literal movement are firmly grasped will it be possible fully to understand the metaphorical movements: between center and periphery; faith and skepticism; order and chaos; exteriority and interiority. Almost every one of these metaphorical movements will be understood, on analysis, to involve some kinds of physical movement as well.

(Greenblatt et al. 250)

Introduction

“And remember: no skateboarding until you’ve done your homework!” These are the words that introduce the theme of the 1986 music video for the song “Possessed to Skate” by Venice Beach hardcore punk band Suicidal Tendencies (referred to as “Possessed” in the following). A middle-aged father, ironically played by Timothy Leary, thus admonishes his son before he goes on vacation with his wife. As the parents depart in their minivan, the viewer catches a glimpse of the neighborhood: a suburb in Southern California. The son waves good-bye to his parents while standing in front of their home, a typical “McMansion,” surrounded by almost identical single-family houses, palm trees, and wide streets, before reluctantly starting to do his homework. When, out of frustration over his math assignment, he touches a wheel of his skateboard and starts to spin it absentmindedly, suddenly distorted guitar chords can be heard. A burning pentagram appears on his exercise book, and after a few shots of the neatly decorated living room and the luxurious swimming pool in the backyard, a group of skateboarders

enters the house, headed by Suicidal Tendencies' lead singer Mike Muir, who kicks in the door and shouts: "[I]et's skate!" The skateboarders literally start to tear the place apart, skate on the furniture, and spray-paint the walls. The homeowners' son joins the gang in destroying the house's furnishings and in performing various maneuvers on their skateboards. The swimming pool is drained and turned into a makeshift skate park as well as a stage for a concert by Suicidal Tendencies. The video ends with the parents' return and their shock at finding their home destroyed.

The video presents a condensed account of the "corresponding cultures" of skateboarding and of hardcore punk, which can be subsumed under the term 'skate punk.'¹ In the video, punk rock and skateboarding turn an apparently average teenager against his middle-class home and into an "outcast of society," as the lyrics of "Possessed to Skate" suggest. A few chords and a skateboard seem to be enough to disrupt the orderliness of a wealthy Californian neighborhood: parental and educational authority is disregarded, math assignments are put aside, paintings are torn from the walls and are replaced by graffiti, and the living room and the swimming pool are re-appropriated for skateboarding. The pool's significance for the plot is obvious from its prominent position in the video's *mise-en-scène*: as a "saturated symbol of luxury," the swimming pool stands for the family's upper middle-class affiliation; its re-appropriation by teenage skate punks thus represents a direct attack on the values of suburban prosperity (Halberstam 81). The pool is sonically 'under attack' by the punk band playing next to it and by the skateboarders scratching its concrete surface. The homeowners' version

¹ I use Emily Yochim Chivers' concept of "corresponding cultures" to avoid the ambiguous term 'subculture.' Whereas the term 'subculture' implies a strict separation from an alleged 'mainstream' culture, Chivers explains that "[c]onstantly in motion, a corresponding culture is a group organized around a particular life-style or activity that interacts with various levels of media – niche, mainstream, and local – and variously agrees or disagrees with those media's espoused ideas" (5). The verb form of "corresponding" suggests a constant movement which does not only "bridge a false [and static] dichotomy between 'subculture' and 'mainstream'" but also perfectly works for my inquiries about the interplay, i.e. the correspondence, between skateboarding and hardcore punk (3).

of the American Dream is assaulted by virtually everything that happens in the music video. Its protagonists rebel against the domesticity associated with a suburban life-style and try to escape it through physical movement. Rebellion in this music video is ultimately articulated through the movement of the body. The tranquility of middle-class life is disrupted by the bodily movement of rebelling skate punks, and although they do not actually leave the suburban locale, they try to escape the constraints of this conservative environment.

In what follows I will explicate to what extent skate punk provides an opportunity for teenagers of the American middle class to ‘bodily’ distance themselves from their social background and from middle-class normativity. I will approach the skate punk’s body as a bearer of cultural as well as material mobility. The notion of movement and mobility that pervades the depiction of skate punks in “Possessed” can be analyzed with reference to what has recently been termed the “mobility turn,” and subsequently “mobility studies” (cf. Urry; Greenblatt et al.). I will seek to illuminate both the contradictory aspects of skate punk as a rebellious activity dominated by white middle-class males and the critical potential of skate punks physically engaging with Southern California’s suburban landscape. I will investigate how mobility constitutes the basis for the corporeal contestation of a conservative environment that secures the privileges of white middle-class America while simultaneously enforcing conformity: how do skate punks deploy cultural and physical mobility? What role does the body play in their allegedly rebellious acts? Is their rebellion credible? In what way does their culture depart from ‘mainstream’ values and to what extent do they unwittingly reproduce those values?

Bodies, Movement, and Politics

Since movement and mobility are linked to the body, it is necessary to start out with a closer look at the connection between them. In their 2007 anthology *Beyond the Body Proper*, Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar begin with the notion of the “lived body” (1). “To make bodies a topic for anthropological, humanistic, sociological, and historical research,” they explain, “is to ask how human life can be and has been constructed, imagined, subjectively known – in short, lived” (2). They

do not see lived bodies as proper entities, but “as contingent formations of space, time, and materiality, [which] have begun to be comprehended as assemblages of practices, discourses, images, institutional arrangements, and specific places and projects” (1). Opposing “the impossible poles of a Cartesian social science,” they suggest a more flexible approach (15). Whereas Descartes thought that “we perceive bodies only by the understanding which is in us, and not by the imagination, or the senses, and that we do not perceive them through seeing them or touching them, but only because we conceive them in thought” (33), Lock and Farquhar’s notion of lived bodies escapes this mind/body split:

[r]ather than taking (apparently) empirical bodies and (apparently) interior experience as a starting point (this is, we think, the central limitation of many phenomenological approaches), comparative scholarship in anthropology, history, and the humanities shows that the problem of the body can be read from many kinds of discourses, mundane practices, technologies, and relational networks. The bodies that come into being within these collective formations are social, political, subjective, objective, discursive, narrative, and material all at once. They are also culturally and historically specific, while at the same time mutable, offering many challenges to both scholarship and the everyday politics of a world compressed in time and space. (9)

If bodies come into being within “collective formations” that range from the discursive to the material, it is impossible to speak of “the body” as a single and finite entity. Rather, “bodies” should be approached in the plural. In “The Mobilities Paradigm,” John Urry argues against fixity as well and adds the notion of performance to create a flexible approach to bodies and their movements:

[b]odies are not fixed and given but involves [] performances especially to fold notions of movement, nature, taste and desire, into and through the body. Bodies navigate backwards and forwards between directly sensing the external world as they move bodily in and through it, and discursively mediated sensescapes that signify social taste and distinction, ideology and meaning. The body especially senses as it *moves*. It is endowed with kinaesthetics, the sixth sense that informs one what the body is doing in space through the sensations of movement registered in its joints, muscles, tendons and so on. Especially important in that sense of movement, the ‘mechanics of space,’ is that of touch, of the feet on

the pavement or the mountain path, the hands on a rock-face or the steering wheel. (48)

Urry's insistence on the importance of movement reverberates with his essay's question how bodily movement mediates a rebellious momentum in skate punk culture. It relates movement, or what Urry calls the "mechanics of space" (48) to the touch of pavements, mountains, rocks, and steering wheels. Feet on a skateboard, a hand on a microphone, bodies touching in front of a concert stage – all these examples are analogous to Urry's. The fact that skateboarding and hardcore punk both rely on movement in its various meanings – to skateboard is literally to move on a wooden board with four wheels, and hardcore punk involves the 'movement' of chords, dancing, and touring – proves that these phenomena constitute valuable examples that, through their relation to movement and the body, incorporate discursive as well as material ramifications in a moment of allegedly rebellious mobility.

Lock and Farquhar state that although "some philosophers have done much to overcome these invidious classifications, perhaps no writing in modern Western languages can entirely escape the persistent dualism of body and mind. It is this dyad that serious thinking about collective, material human life [...] must work to overcome" (111). Urry provides a useful step in that direction. Although the navigation between an assumed "external world" and "discursively mediated sensescapes" seems to reinstall a binary between the realm of corporal materiality and the realm of thought, the strict division between the two is done away with through the notion of movement. According to Urry, the body "senses as it *moves*" – be it in sensescapes or be it in the external world. He shifts the focus from a Cartesian bipolarity to a circular flux that merges these opposites through movement. Whereas bipolarity suggests rigidity, movement implies flexibility; thus, the ideas of thought (or "discursively mediated sensescapes") and materiality (or "the external world") are folded into each other.

This assumption enhances the conception of the body as involved in a "political field," a term from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (28). Foucault explains that "power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs," which, in his view, composes a "political investment of the body" (25). While it is

still possible to speak of a politically motivated struggle which characterizes the forces that constitute the body, Foucault points out to what extent this relationship is bound to the body's "economic use" (25-26). He adds that

it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. (26)

Foucault suggests that resistance against a system informed by economic modes of production and consumption can be articulated through bodily activism. If the body is constituted through political power that seeks to subject the body to "economic terms of utility" as well as "political terms of obedience," then, so it seems, the bodily investment in *disutility* and *disobedience* mark ways of rebellious counter-engagement (138). Skate punk clearly embraces such an approach, given punk's sympathy for (if not direct affiliation with) anarchism and skate culture's disdain for its capitalist cooptation (cf. Brooke 95; Macleod 128; Weyland 28).

Bodies, Postmodernism, and Capitalism

Foucault's notion of a body's "economic use," i.e. its "constitution as labour power" (25-26), is applied to the postmodern consumer culture of 1980s America in Donald M. Lowe's monograph *The Body in Late Capitalist USA*. Lowe expounds the problems of "embodied existence in a world where all aspects of our lives, the environment we live in, and everything in between, have become means, or signifiers, of exchange value" (Lowe 15). While cautioning against a "fall back on the body as an individual identity, subjectivity, private self, or any other autonomous, stable, unitary entity" (175), Lowe uses his conception of the body referent to delineate its entanglement in the material realm of "space/time" as well as the socio-historical field of "the construction and satisfaction of needs" (174). He acknowledges the body's uniqueness as an "embodied being-in-the-world" (174-75), i.e. a "lived body" whose materiality is "constructed and realized within social practices to satisfy

changing needs” (1), and he simultaneously avoids reducing it to an essentialist entity able to escape the postmodern “politics of decoding and recoding” (175). Thus, Lowe’s work builds upon Foucault’s argument about the disciplining powers that organize the economic use of the body and applies it to the “Late Capitalist USA.” While Foucault asks for the “mode of investment of the body [that] is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours” (*Power/Knowledge* 58), Lowe pursues the question of active resistance. He explains that “[r]esistance is the negation of, i.e., the active opposition to, capital” (175). His study refers back to the idea of the body as the nexus of activism against the social constraints of capitalist society. He is no longer concerned with the modes that are required for capitalist society to function but with the investment that disrupts it.

An analysis of skate punk can build on Lowe’s conception of resistance:

[r]esistance as counter-practice must seize and recode issues of bodily needs which the hegemony of exchange practices have provoked. It must be founded on class/gender/race differences, not because they are essential, but because capital accumulation exploits all these differentials. Resistance must be discursively coherent and plausible, yet transgressive against existing discourses, in order to mobilize different groups and sorts of peoples. It must take into account the weight of cybernetic systems, which favor the established power. And it must be semiotically sophisticated in its counter-practices. Otherwise, it can mount no effective opposition to capital’s combination and recombination of structural, discursive, systematic, and semiotic practices. (176)

According to Lowe, an effective critique of capitalism is bound to bodily needs and their multilayered entanglement in the differentiating categories of race, gender, and class. An analysis of a youth cultural phenomenon in postmodern California needs to incorporate these categories in order to examine their role in bodily mediation: if race, gender, and class are deployed to organize capitalist society, then they consequently need to be taken into account by a rebellion against society. In the case of California skate punk it is important to complement the triad of race, gender, and class with the notion of space, i.e. the site-specific characteristics of suburban Southern California, since it constitutes the

environment in which the cultures of skateboarding and punk first merged.

With the concept of intersectionality, these differentiating variables can be approached critically² “as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis [sic] of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts” (Brah and Phoenix 76): the concept helps to identify space, race, gender, and class within skate punk culture as axes of differentiation. They literally intersect in the specific context of 1980s Southern California where they function as affective elements of the lived body. Being entangled in categories of privilege, i.e. white middle-class masculinity, the protagonists of “Possessed” may be seen as trying to overcome these categories of differentiation in an act of rebellion against the society that produces them:³ their bodily movement is a means of resisting the categories imposed by the mainstream.

“Possessed to Skate:” An Intersectional Analysis of Skate Punk

Dewar MacLeod, in his essay “‘Social Distortion:’ The Rise of Suburban Punk Rock in Los Angeles,” explores the emergence of Californian hardcore punk, an important component of skate punk culture. He describes hardcore punk as a subculture that “opposed fundamentally that mass culture which [the participants] sat at the center of in suburbia” (129). He illustrates this statement by quoting from the liner notes of an early hardcore punk compilation:

[f]uck Authority. I hate war and I hate big business and I’m glad that other people feel the same way. Isn’t it great that not *all* teenagers are

² For seminal work on intersectionality cf. e.g. Crenshaw; Collins.

³ The assertion that all hardcore punks or skate punks in California have a white middle-class background is questionable. The fact that members of Suicidal Tendencies have a Latino background constitutes only one example of diversity within (skate) punk culture. However, the protagonists in “Possessed” are all middle-class whites.

sucking bongs on the way to play Pac-Man at some sick zoo of a shopping mall? (qtd. in MacLeod 128)

MacLeod not only characterizes suburbia as a consumption-oriented site of capitalist exchange – represented by the shopping mall – but simultaneously evokes the postmodern notion of hyperreality through the quotation’s mentioning of a computer game (Pac-Man) that takes center stage in teenagers’ lives. His conception of 1980s suburbia can be used as the background for the analysis of “Possessed.”

The shots of a suburban environment in the opening sequence of the video locate the song within the culture of suburban hardcore punk. The scenario can be interpreted as a citation of the front cover of the 1978 seven-inch record *Out of Vogue* by the band Middle Class⁴ from Santa Ana, Orange County. The record’s “front cover photo depicts a mundane Southern Californian suburban scene” and focuses on “two young girls [that] stand in the middle of a street, surrounded and almost dwarfed by the still life of a housing tract with Big Wheels, a basketball backboard, and a VW bus in a driveway” (MacLeod 126-27). The image and the setting of the video do not entirely match but they certainly depict basically interchangeable representations of a prosperous middle-class neighborhood. MacLeod refers to *Out of Vogue* as the “first suburban punk rock record” and thus helps to locate “Possessed” within youth culture and its ties to Californian suburbia via its deployment of suburban imagery (126).⁵ In addition to *Out of Vogue* he mentions the seven-inch record *Nervous Breakdown* by Hermosa Beach’s Black Flag, published in the same year. “With these two singles,” MacLeod states, “hardcore was born” (127). The fact that Black Flag “developed an

⁴ The name of the band ironically references its members’ social background.

⁵ Additionally, the scenario appears to be an almost one-to-one recitation of the TV documentary “We Destroy the Family – Punks vs. Parents” that was aired on Los Angeles’s KABC in 1982 and presented the suburban punk scene as a dangerous threat to American family life. The documentary introduces a middle-class couple whose son and daughter turned from high school football star and cheerleader into punks. Their home matches the style of the single-family house in the video by Suicidal Tendencies, and even the minivan in the driveway matches the model depicted in “Possessed.”

especially rabid following among young surfers and skateboarders from Southern California's beach towns" anticipates the correspondence of punk music and skateboarding that is manifest in "Possessed" (Moore 53). The video not only references the geographical origin of American hardcore music in suburbia but also the interconnections with skateboard culture that reach back to the first recordings of the genre in 1978.⁶ MacLeod emphasizes the importance of suburbia for hardcore:

[s]etting its protest solidly in American suburbia, hardcore removed the working class and artistic connotations from punk. While suburbia had always been essential to punk, as the place to leave and destroy, now suburbia was subject to attack from within. (127)

This claim again suggests how suburbia, as a category of intersectional differentiation, is implicated in skate punk. It seems crucial that the homeowners' son in "Possessed" remains within the suburban environment while his parents go on vacation. Enmeshed in the discourse of tourism – symbolically signified by the Hawaiian shirts they wear – the parents appear to hold the most mobile position within the narrative: they are free to leave while their son must stay behind and is faced with the boredom and bleakness of suburbia, which the video presents as a space of ultimate immobility. Whereas the parents enjoy the mobility that their middle-class prosperity provides, their son is faced with the fact that "[l]ife in the suburbs [is] limited and dull to young people who [are] anxious to experiment and explore the world" (Sobin 80). Rebelling against a site where "the local movie house, bowling alley, or pizza place is expected to take up the slack and energies of the adolescent" thus seems to be centered on matters of mobility (85). In "Possessed," the skateboard provides the only opportunity for the 'backyard drifters' to move despite restrictive middle-class surroundings.

⁶ Parts of the lyrics for the song "Wasted" from the *Nervous Breakdown* seven-inch read as follows: "I was so wasted / I was a hippie / I was a burnout / I was a dropout I was out of my head / I was a surfer / I had a skateboard / I was so heavy man, I lived on the strand" (Black Flag). It is evident that from its beginning in 1978, the hardcore movement was closely connected to the Californian beach, surf, and skateboard cultures.

The negotiation of suburbia in “Possessed” heavily depends on the role of the parents; their authority is installed at the very beginning by the father’s instructions to his son, and the parents’ return at the end of the video completes the framing of the narrative and symbolically captures the restrictive mechanisms the son is subjected to. It becomes evident that the parents’ mobility and motorized movement is very different from their son’s skateboarding because their mobility as tourists is implicated in modes of capitalist exchange mechanisms. The portable TV they carry with them appears as crucial evidence of the fact that they do not try to escape the postmodern, mass-mediated consumer culture of suburbia, but on the contrary travel precisely within this discourse. The parents, and by implication, suburbia in general are thus framed within a “Bourgeois Utopia” that is “based on the economic structure and cultural values of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie” for which “the home [was] more sacred [...] than any place of worship” (Fishman 24, 21). Although suburban family life began to change with the beginning of the 1970s (cf. Baldassare viii), the video foregrounds the privileged prosperous suburbs of Southern California. To counter the fixity of suburbia, the skate punks deploy not only physical movement (i.e. skateboarding), but also redefine their status as affluent white middle-class suburbanites in regard to the discursive fields of race and class.

Steven Blush’s statement that “[t]he first HC [hardcore] bands came out of suburban LA beach towns, probably ’cause there they lived as close to The American Dream as you could get” underlines the privileged surroundings that hardcore punk emerged from as “a full-on white suburbanite rebellion” (Blush 13; Mugger qtd. in Mullen and Spitz 193). It is possible to read the self-fashioning of suburban hardcore punks as a form of “playing dress ‘down’ – a version of symbolic capital acquisition in the economy of youth culture” that deploys dichotomous racial and class signifiers in order to produce oppositions to an alleged American mainstream (Traber 53). As “whiteness is configured as the subject position of the center” and associated with the suburb, it appears logical that white suburban teenagers who want to rebel against the environment they live in try to do so by refusing that subject position (43). Traber explains that the middle class experiences “mobility as an unspoken birthright;” he thus sees social decline within the discursive realm of

race and class signification as providing an important anti-bourgeois component for hardcore punks (45).

Analyzed through the lens of intersectionality, it becomes evident that the narrative of “Possessed” is informed by this dynamic of physical movement and discursive mobility in suburbia and its reference to race, class, and gender aspects. The disruption of the suburban home’s order is enacted through male skateboarders who on the one hand re-appropriate the furniture and swimming pool of the house for their purposes; Borden suggests that

[b]y focusing only on certain elements (ledges, walls, banks, rails) of the building, skateboarders deny architecture’s existence as a discrete three-dimensional indivisible thing, knowable only as totality, and treat it instead as a set of *floating*, detached, physical elements isolated from each other. (145, my emphasis)

The skaters’ treatment of architecture as “floating” elements suggests that they perceive it as, or indeed turn it into something that literally is *mobile*. On the other hand, they also replace the suburban symbols of prosperity with markers of urban decay and attributes of lower class marginality. Traber describes a scene from the 1980 documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization* by Penelope Spheeris, in which Black Flag is portrayed in “a room brimming with signifiers of extreme poverty” that include “decrepit furniture” and “walls covered with spray-painted band names and profane slogans” (35). The fact that Traber reads these attributes as signifiers of poverty helps explain that what appears as the total destruction of the house’s living room in “Possessed” actually constitutes a quotation of preceding images of punk self-fashioning by which the protagonists are positioned in a discourse of urban poverty. Punk graffiti calls attention to “the dreadful landscape of decaying urban America” (Lewis 87), a specter of which middle-class suburbanites were afraid since the beginning of the 1970s, when “the influx of inner-city populations” or, as another author puts it, the “‘encroaching’ blacks or other nonwhites” were perceived as a direct threat to their privileged status as suburban homeowners (Traber 35; Parker 11). The graffiti and destruction in “Possessed” thus help the “invading” skate punks to place themselves within this discourse of urban decay, while gang insignia such as bandanas and the Suicidal Tendencies logo further strengthen the impression of the stereotypically racially connoted

threat of inner-city criminality.⁷ The skate punks' disruption of middle-class normality is enmeshed in a pattern of intersectional signification as it signals a rejection of this privileged environment through the evocation of cultural markers of marginality. Basically staging the "encroachment" or "influx" of exactly those populations that the skate punks' parents "fought [in] battles over taxes, property values, and neighborhood boundaries" (Traber 35), the protagonists in "Possessed" exemplify how references to the intersectional categories of space, race, and class can be deployed to critique the normativity of white middle-class suburbia. They do not only move within Californian suburbia on their skateboards but also and simultaneously within "discursively mediated sensescapes" that are demarcated by vectors of race and class differentiation which ultimately "signify social taste and distinction, ideology and meaning" (Urry 48). The fact that these interconnections are necessarily bound to the category of gender becomes evident through an analysis of how women are represented in the video's narrative.

The only female character directly involved in the video's plot is the mother. Together with the father she is part of the narrative frame, but whereas the father represents the authoritarian head of the family, the mother worries about leaving her son alone at home, tells him to eat the sandwiches she prepared for him and advises him about possible emergencies. This almost oedipal scenery is cut short by the father declaring that his son is a "big boy." He then leads the mother to the passenger seat of the van (needless to say that *he* is driving) and thus reinforces patriarchal order. The mother is represented as passively obeying the traditional hierarchies of suburban family life. Mary Woronov, who plays the mother, had already appeared in several films in which she represented a similar image of conservative femininity, most notably in the 1979 movie *Rock 'n' Roll High School* in which she plays an authoritarian school principle who confiscates the protagonist's ticket for a Ramones concert. To cast her as a conservative Californian suburbanite in "Possessed" thus consciously evoked the stock character of a white middle-class woman. The video reveals the patriarchal

⁷ Cf. Blush, who describes Suicidal Tendencies as a "loose-nit gang with *cholo*-style bandanas" (97).

organization of suburbia while articulating an ironic comment on the sexist heteronormativity of the American middle class in the 1980s. However, the narrative depends on – and thus reinforces – this image of femininity; it thus seems as if “Possessed” cannot offer an alternative to patriarchal gender hierarchies. The only other female characters in the video are two girls in bikinis who do not participate in the skateboarding at the swimming pool but are only cheering and admiring spectators. In this overly clichéd short sequence, it becomes evident that while the physical movement of the skate punks constitutes a challenge to suburban space and the middle-class values it represents, the video’s reinforcement of a stereotypical and sexualized femininity compromises its subversion of white middle-class gender politics. Whereas the lyrics of the song “Possessed to Skate” suggest that it is possible to become an “outcast of society” through skateboarding, the video’s depiction of female characters reveals to what extent the skate punks inadvertently adhere to a masculinist gender ideology.

Grinding on the Most Tenuous Borders of Discourse

Resistance not only needs to engage categories of intersectional differences, but must also be “semiotically sophisticated in its counter-practices” (Lowe 176). The analysis of “Possessed” has shown that the video does not meet this requirement as its representation of skate punk unwittingly relies on the discourse of patriarchal middle-class suburbia. The protagonists cannot escape the discursive restrictions of their ideological surroundings or, more precisely, the capitalist conformity of Californian suburbia. But I concur with Traber, who “[does] not accuse them of a ‘failed rebellion’ because they cannot get outside that system” (50). Rather, I intend to avoid a too pessimistic conclusion by insisting that a critical contestation of capitalism is possible and necessary. “There is only one culture: capitalist culture,” Félix Guattari states. “It is a culture that is always ethnocentric and intellectocentric (or logocentric), because it separates semiotic universes from subjective production” (*Molecular* 33). This explains why Lowe’s conception of successful resistance is always already undermined by the capitalist exploitation of semiotic representation. Following Guattari’s interventionist approach, it appears useful to shift the focus to the micropolitics

of skate punk culture and its deployment of mobility. With Guattari's conception of change on what he calls the "molecular level," skate punk can be read as an "apparatus [that is] changing the life of the neighbourhood" (Guattari, *Chaosmosis* 21). It is within the neighborhood of suburban California that skate punk operates and fosters "processes of singularization." Guattari defines these processes as "simply being able to live or to survive in a particular place, at a particular time, and to be ourselves," which applies to the skate punks' re-appropriation of their environment: skateboarding and hardcore punk music constitute their ways of being themselves (*Molecular* 94). Guattari adds that this

has nothing to do with identity (things such as: my name is Félix Guattari, and I am here). It has to do with the way in which, in principle, all the elements that constitute the ego function and are articulated; in other words, with how we feel, how we breathe, how we want to speak or don't want to, being here or going away. (*Molecular* 94-95)

Guattari avoids any kind of identity politics and thus indicates a momentum that challenges the categories of race, class, gender, and space differentiations. He shifts the focus to feeling and breathing, to aspects of agency in speech and, ultimately – via the notion of "being here or going away" – to mobility. Guattari's inquiries into the micropolitical processes allow for an analysis of skate punk as a "Molecular Revolution" (cf. Guattari, *Molecular*). Despite the inflationary usage of the term 'revolution' by youth cultures (which often just cater to mainstream conceptions of marginality in order to present themselves as credible 'outcasts') I regard Guattari's "Molecular Revolution" as a useful metaphor for the potentiality of skate punk, as it implies change or differentiation on a micro level. Additionally, the term 'revolution' references the movement of spinning or rolling, which makes it even more adequate in connection to the movement of a skateboard (i.e. the literal revolution of the wheel).

Micropolitics, or "[t]he attempt to assemble things in such a way that the processes of singularization are not mutually neutralized, not co-opted in the reconstitution of molar pseudoentities" (Guattari, *Molecular* 110) not only disrupt the essentializing fixity of a normative and masculinist white middle-class suburbia, but also open up "the existence of an entire world of unconscious micropercepts, unconscious affects, fine segmentations that grasp or experience different things" (Deleuze and

Guattari 235). “There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation, and so forth” which can be located in the tiny moments of skate punk articulation that loosen its discursive ties to suburban normativity (235). Butler notes that “there is an ‘outside’ to what is constructed by discourse” (8); thus, skate punk can enter that ‘outside’ in order to escape American middle-class normativity. However, she explains that

this is not an absolute “outside,” an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive “outside,” it is that which can only be thought – when it can – in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders. (8)

Applying this conception of the discursive and the “extra-discursive” to the physical movement and mobility in skate punk helps to locate its potential between discursive restriction and material contingency (cf. Butler 11). The skate punks skating in the swimming pool and moving their hands over the fretboards of their guitars in “Possessed” produce actions that literally *grind* on the “most tenuous borders” of discourse and thus create micro- or molecular moments of possible disruption (8).⁸ Despite being entangled in the restrictive discourse of Californian suburbia and thus in the contradictory effects that are produced by the categories of race, class, gender, and space, skate punk upsets its boundaries. The potentiality of skate punk culture is characterized by the moment when gravity is challenged in a skateboard maneuver and by the contingency of the maneuver’s outcome. Will the skater land the trick? Will the skater fall? The trick or the maneuver will never be the same. At least on a micro level it develops infinitely different forms and outcomes. The same holds true for the fraction of a second between two guitar chords in a punk song. The movement, the grinding momentum between the fixed frets of the guitar constitutes the micropolitical and molecular condition which provides for the possible expression of rebellion. Similar to gravity which pulls back a skater to the concrete surface of a swimming pool, the discursive grip of suburban normativity will constantly affect skate punk’s disruptive potential. Discourse thus

⁸ ‘Grinding’ in skateboarding refers to the maneuver of sliding over edges with the board’s trucks (axles). Additionally, ‘grinding’ is used to describe fast and aggressive guitar playing.

restricts skate punk rebellion to an infinitely short moment of disruptive relevance. However, as Rudolph Lablan notes, “[m]ovement can say more, for all its shortness, than pages of verbal description,” which indicates that the shortness of skate punk’s transgressive moments at the boundaries of discourse can be interpreted as its most important feature (qtd. in Adey 142). These moments cannot be co-opted; they can hardly be represented or linguistically grasped, and they do not dissolve into the normativity of “molar pseudoentities” (Guattari, *Molecular* 110).

The representation of skate punk in “Possessed” fails to evade normative discourses of race, class, gender, and space, but this does not prevent me from believing that skateboarding and hardcore punk have the potential to disrupt normative discourses and to provide an alternative to middle-class values. Ole B. Jensen, in the foreword to a recent anthology on *The Cultures of Alternative Mobilities*, mentions skateboarding as a counter-practice and reemphasizes the importance of movement for its success by reminding us that “we construct identities, constitute places, and make sense of our environment as we move” (cf. xv, xviii). By implication, this points towards the opportunity for skate punk culture to also question, alter, and challenge these constructions through movement. However, the fact that it mainly attracts young white men emphasizes the importance of Guattari’s demand that, in order to really generate effective change, “[i]ndividuals must become both more united and increasingly different” (Guattari, *Three Ecologies* 69). The example of skate punk shows that, even while drifting in the delimited space of a suburban backyard, it is possible to strive for this ideal as long as we

move.

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DOROTHEA LÖBBERMANN

Walking in the City: The Homeless Figure and the Artist in Late-Twentieth Century New York Novels

Introduction

In the last thirty years, homeless characters have come to populate contemporary North American urban novels almost to the same extent as homeless people have come to characterize the contemporary reality of urban space. In inquiring into the cultural fascination for the figure of the urban homeless in fiction – a figure predominantly imagined as male – this essay examines fictional representations of the homeless person's Walking in the City (capitalized in the following not only in reference to Michel de Certeau's essay of the same title, but also in order to pay tribute to the conceptual character of this pedestrian practice).

The powerful image of the urban vagabond stands in contrast to empirical research that argues that the stereotype of the drifter does not meet the reality of street people (see my discussion of Wolch et al., below). It also competes with fictional representations that connect homelessness with immobility rather than mobility. In Karen Tei Yamashita's novel *Tropic of Orange*, for instance, a homeless man stands as "a fixture" on an overpass over the Los Angeles freeway, directing the traffic below him like a symphony (Yamashita 36). In a novel where everybody and everything (even space itself) are in motion, the homeless man is the only person who does not move (see Löbbermann, "Mapping Transculturation"). This juxtaposition between the mobility of the American middle class and the permanence of the homeless person is paradigmatic for a number of fictional texts of the 1990s that employ homeless characters. Brett Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*, to give another example, opens with a taxi ride during which protagonist Patrick Bateman and a fellow banker are literally counting the homeless people they pass by. More homeless characters will be sitting or standing on the sidewalks throughout the novel, annoying Bateman through their mere presence when he walks past them; a homeless man will also be his first torture victim. The stationary homeless here represent the

losers of an economy that has made possible the success of those bankers whose mobility within the city is connected to their desire to endlessly move up on the scale of financial profit and narcissistic satisfaction.¹

Yet in spite of these examples, the homeless drifter who walks the streets rather than sits in them remains a powerful image in fiction, an often-used trope for a condition whose out-of-place-ness – in its literal and figurative meaning – is as stimulating for contemporary fiction as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the literal mobility of tramps, vagrants, and hobos sparked the cultural imagination. The preoccupation with people out of place is both part of a larger cultural tradition and an intervention into concrete, contemporary issues. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tramps and hobos, as Tim Cresswell and Ken Kusmer show, have served to either glorify or warn of the temptations of a life on the road (Cresswell, *Tramp*; Kusmer). This notion of freedom (from a confining home as well as from material wants) ties back to American myths of mobility, on the one hand – from the myth of the pioneers to that of class mobility – and to myths of self-reliance, on the other: myths that stand in stark contrast to, and gloss over, the increasing materialism and spatial division of their era. Beggars and bums, at the same time, were stock characters in what Alan Trachtenberg calls the “mysteries of the city”-genre who lead newcomers or unaware middle class residents (and with them, the reader) into the darker areas of the industrializing city – into an urban

¹ Another example is the vast literature on homeless people in the subway system of New York in the 1990s: Jennifer Toth’s journalistic collective portrait study *The Mole People* (1993), Margaret Morton’s volume of photography *The Tunnel* (1995), Column McCann’s novel *This Side of Brightness* (1998) – three books that cross-reference each other – or Marc Singer’s documentary film *Dark Days* (2000). Here, traffic movement is juxtaposed to homeless place-making: the subway and its tunnels have been turned into homes. While the rest of the population uses the subway as a means to go somewhere, homeless people use the trains, the subway stations, and the tunnels as places to rest, to explore alternative living arrangements, to turn into spectacular monsters (“mole people”) or to come to terms with themselves (see Löbbermann, “Exploring Post/Modern Urban Space”).

cosmos that was a new phenomenon in American culture (Trachtenberg 105).

Fictional homeless characters at the turn of the twenty-first century are inevitably tied to their literary predecessors. However, they appear at a time – from the 1980s onward – when not only homelessness has become a newly pressing social issue in American cities, but also when the “mysteries of the city” have undergone severe transformations. No longer a new phenomenon but rather a place that has become defining for American culture, the city concentrates an abundance of socially as well as culturally troubling phenomena, such as the increasing diversification and differentiation of urban space, the paradoxical simultaneity of social incoherence, and the commodification and simulation of urban space.² These phenomena point to urgent questions about the nature of the urban community and the relationship between the community, the individual, and urban space. Figures of homelessness, I argue, help negotiate these issues. They paradoxically point to the city’s strategies of exclusion – those processes of gentrification and “disneyfication” that exclude the homeless from public space – while simultaneously symbolizing its fragmented body (see Löbbermann, “Exploring Post/Modern Urban Space”).

Both modernity and postmodernity have established a climate that welcomes notions of homelessness. As Caren Kaplan states, “[the] prevalence of metaphors of travel and displacement [in modern theory-building] suggests that the modern era is fascinated by the experience of distance and estrangement, reproducing these notions through articulations of subjectivity and poetics” (1). Both she and Tim Cresswell argue that theoretical figurations of mobility, like that of the Nomad in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, with all their critical potential, ultimately romanticize the other’s experience of out-of-place-ness from a proper position that is safely in-place, even if the (post)modern theorists break into new theoretical territory (cf. Cresswell, “Nomad”).

Many characteristics of the homeless people who wander around in the texts discussed below – most prominently, in Paul Auster’s *City of*

² See e.g. Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (1995), Richard Sorkin, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park* (1992), Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (1996), Edward Soja, *Thirdspace* (1996).

Glass (1985) and George Dawes Green's *The Caveman's Valentine* (1993) – are foreshadowed by the figure of the pedestrian, as Michel de Certeau has developed it in his well-known essay "Walking in the City." De Certeau contrasts the pedestrian's walking practice to a voyeur's panoramic control of the city in order to analyze two different relationships to the urban system. In distinction to the powerful illusion of being able to read the city as "a text that lies before one's eyes" brought about by the view from above – famously exemplified by a description of the view down the World Trade Center – the pedestrians "down below," these "ordinary practitioners of the city," participate, through their acts of Walking, in the experience of the city even though in their entanglement, they are blind to its text: their "bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (92, 93). The suggestiveness of this juxtaposed imagery has stimulated much theoretical writing and reverberates strongly in fictional representations of the city; yet its critical potential is ambivalent. In turning the "very everydayness [of the pedestrian]" into a "heroic act of resistance against the disciplinary machinations of the city," as Cresswell interprets the passage, de Certeau ultimately romanticizes people's lack of power in their everyday lives ("Nomad" 363). There is nothing heroic in the everyday; in the same vein, there is no heroism in homelessness. As Cresswell argues in his study *In Place/Out of Place*, the (necessary) transgressions of the homeless are often wrongly interpreted as acts of resistance or even subversion. I strongly agree with his stipulation that it is necessary to point to the discrepancies between "the theorist and the source domain of the metaphors of mobility" ("Nomad" 379). To some extent, this also applies to the fiction writer and his/her relationship to the "source domain" of metaphors of homelessness, and it is with these warnings in mind that I look at fictional representations of homelessness and the walking practices described therein.

I focus on Paul Auster's *City of Glass* – and to a lesser extent, *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) – and George Dawes Green's *The Caveman's Valentine*, because these novels can be read through de Certeau's figure of the pedestrian. And although they represent completely different approaches to the motif of homelessness – approaches that are also indebted to the political shift from the 1980s, when Auster's texts were published, to the 1990s, when Green's was – they share another trait: they suggest a connection between the homeless figure and the

artist. In these texts, the walking practice of the homeless is closely connected to artist figures such as ragpicker-poets in a Baudelairean, respectively Benjaminian sense, or to characters that literally are musicians, writers, photographers, or sculptors. The identification of the homeless person with the artist harks back to Kaplan's claim about the poetics of alienation. Whether the author develops a rather solipsistic concept of the artist, as Auster does in *The New York Trilogy* (of which *City of Glass* is the first part), or whether he reflects on the artist's social situatedness, as does Green in *The Caveman's Valentine*, the suggested proximity between the homeless person and the artist also performs the self-reflection of the text in question, laying bare the text's own aesthetic and ethical principles as well as its respective concept of representation.

The homeless character's resonance with art may be connected to the artistic that de Certeau finds in everyday practice (the original title of his book, after all, is *Arts de faire*). This romance with the everyday seems to have a strong influence on postmodern theory's discovery of art in the everyday practices of pedestrians, nomads, and (by extension) the homeless, and the symbolic representation of these subjects as artists in fiction. But both these representations – that of theory and that of fiction – differ fundamentally from readings that abstain from interpreting the homeless pedestrian as a figure or symbol of something else. By beginning this analysis with an empirical study of homeless mobility, I seek the ethnographer's proximity to the "source domain" of the metaphor that homelessness has become. But I also follow the steps of an anonymous woman in Los Angeles with the cover name "Dee" because her researchers have represented them in the form of a map. This map, it seems to me, is a good starting point for a comparison between empirical and fictional representation. If we compare it to the map of a character's itineraries in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*, we can develop a notion of how the homeless' Walking in the City is turned from practice to representation to meaning production. The comparison of the mobility pattern of a homeless person with that of a fictional character makes visible the different reading strategies applied to the maps and brings into view the discrepant paradigms for the understanding of homelessness and its representation. It also calls into question the notion of mobility as a defining characteristic of homelessness.

Walking in the City 1: Making Sense of Homeless Mobility

The two kinds of maps that I compare belong in very different kinds of texts: one is taken from the article “On the Streets: Mobility Paths of the Urban Homeless” by urban geographers/anthropologists Jennifer Wolch and Stacy Rowe (1992); it depicts the mobility pattern of a homeless woman in Santa Monica. The other map is taken from Paul Auster’s novel *City of Glass*; it depicts the mobility pattern of a homeless man as interpreted by his detective observer. Both maps try to make sense of the movements of homeless people. While the geographers try to demystify the spatial behavior of the urban homeless, Auster engages in processes of mystification. While the geographers’ map remains tied to the contingencies of the everyday, Auster’s (or rather, his protagonist’s) maps yield to a meaning beyond these contingencies. In comparing the “real” and the “fictional” map, I intend neither to glorify the ethnologists’ map’s authenticity nor to condemn the fiction writer’s romanticization. Rather, I am interested in juxtaposing the two approaches in order to explore the relationship between the “source domain of metaphors of mobility” and its appropriation in fiction.

Dee’s Map: Reading Homeless Mobility

In a study of the mobility patterns of homeless men and women in Los Angeles, conducted over eighteen months in 1991/1992, Wolch and Rowe show that the daily movements of homeless people depend on the temporal and spatial structures of the service providers to which they have access. The daily routine of Dee, a woman in Santa Monica, between her sleeping spot in a parking garage, a storage locker, a vocational homeless center (where she goes for laundry, showers, work, food, and mail), a café, and open space hang-outs like the beach varies, for example, from that of a man in Pasadena whose movements are more constricted due to a rehabilitation program he is involved in (see his analysis in Wolch/Rowe 130-32). Although Dee’s voluntary movements are complemented by specific involuntary mobility patterns that include the complicated bureaucracy of homeless services and the evasion of police action, homeless mobility patterns, Wolch and Rowe state, are not very different from the mobility patterns of housed people. Wolch and Rowe’s findings contradict the stereotype that the urban homeless are

pathological drifters. To the contrary, they argue, the movements of the homeless are not signs of the street people's deviance but necessary steps to cope with their lives. As Wolch summarizes in another article, co-authored with Afsaneh Rahimian and Paul Koegel, the stereotype of the drifter does not typically fit.

The map of Dee's mobility routine in Santa Monica informs us about a very pedestrian practice, in both senses of the word. Dee's movements make a lot of sense to her. They attest to her resourcefulness, her sense of direction, and her knowledge about places, opening hours, and the like. They also make sense to Wolch and Rowe, her obser-

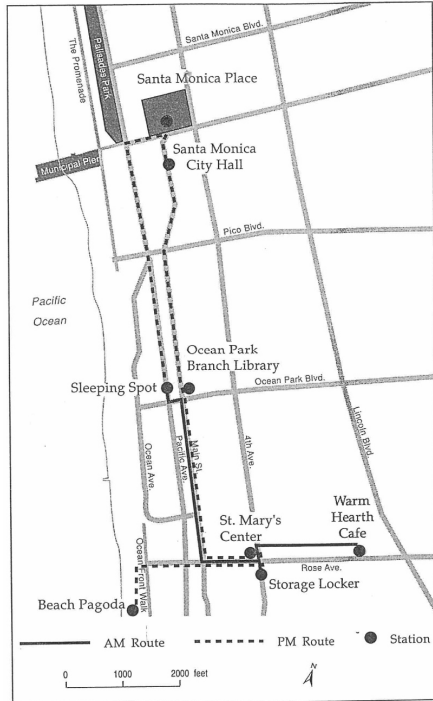


Figure 1 Dee's Mobility Routine in Venice/Santa Monica.

vers, who read them as an argument against the stereotype of the (pathological) homeless drifter.³ However, Dee's movements produce no transcendent or metaphorical meaning. This is in no way surprising, since homelessness has no meaning as such; it signifies nothing except the respective person's lack of housing. Using Dee as an example for Cresswell's ideas about the "source domain of the metaphors of mobility," it becomes clear that although Dee's movement is transgressive (e.g. when she and her friends re-appropriate a parking garage

³ Another stereotype that is perpetuated in fiction is that of homeless people's solitariness. As Wolch et al. show, homeless social networks are a vital resource for homeless people (e.g. 160).

as a sleeping place), there is little subversiveness in what she does. If Dee is one of the pedestrians in de Certeau's celebration of the urban Nomad, the "text" that her act of walking "writes," not surprisingly, produces no transcendent meaning. How can a woman like Dee become the "soul of Postmodernity," as Dean MacCannell has declared the homeless to be (111)? What is so mysterious about her routine that Auster dedicates a whole chapter to mapping the mobility pattern of a fictional urban drifter?

Stillman's Map: Fictionalizing Homeless Mobility

Paul Auster's writer-detective Quinn famously investigates the mobility pattern of a mysterious man named Stillman⁴ and tries to interpret it, not unlike the sociologists Wolch and Rowe. With his aimless wanderings and his habit of picking up stuff from the street, Stillman, the mad philosopher whom Quinn is commissioned to watch, complies with the iconography of the homeless man – a "shabby creature, [...] broken down and disconnected from his surroundings" (*CG* 56), shuffling about in "a brown overcoat that had gone to seed" (55). As a novelist temporarily acting as a detective, Quinn has to make sense of Stillman's perambulations, which he documents in a red notebook. Trying to find a meaning in the daily walks which never exceed a certain parameter, he transforms them into maps. It is when Quinn identifies the last three days' trajectories as letters (o, w, e) that he can decipher Stillman's walks as the fragment of the phrase "The Tower of Babel" – the central symbol of Stillman's philosophical book about the relationship of objects and language. This turns the practice of Stillman's meanderings into something that exceeds the merely "pedestrian," namely into the work of the writer-artist. Through Quinn's self-critical awareness that his interpretation might be nothing but the result of his own desire to find meaning, Auster reflects on the novel writer's own work of making sense of the existing world, which he simultaneously ironizes through

⁴ For the sake of argumentative clarity, I neglect all the novel's problematizations of identity here: neither is Quinn really a detective, nor is he sure that the man he is following is really Stillman.

the abundance of convoluted meanings that efface each other in the novel.

In a sense, Auster takes literally de Certeau's notion of the equivalence of walking and writing.⁵ Stillman clearly is a pedestrian who "writes" an "urban text," a text that is not read but performed by him, yet deciphered by Quinn, who, although on the same topographical level with him, is the voyeur figure who reads the "simulacrum" of the

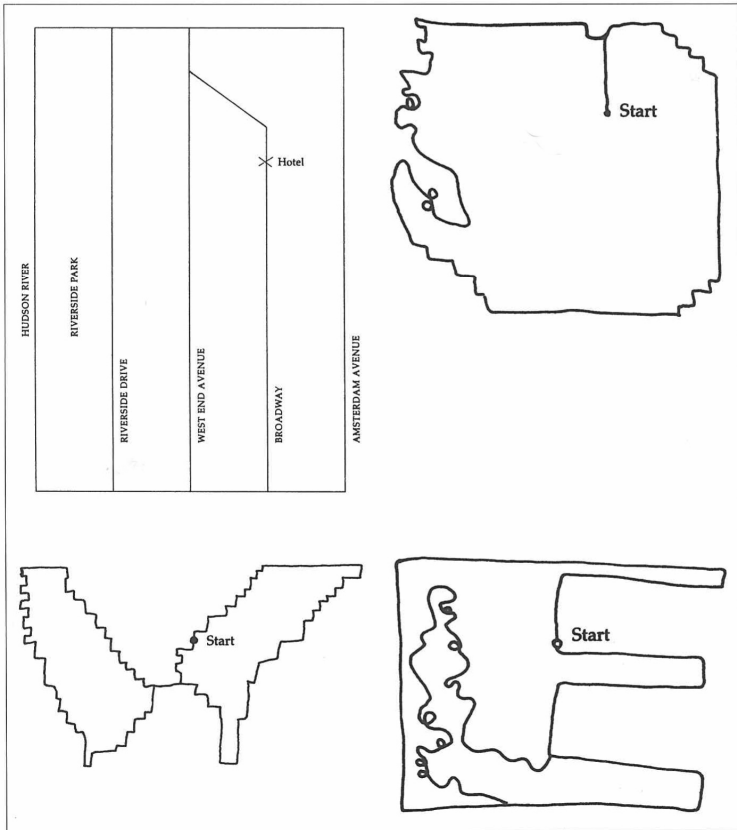


Figure 2 Quinn's Maps of Stillman's Walks

⁵ The proximity between the positions of Auster and de Certeau has been noticed by many critics, among them Tim Woods (111), Steven E. Alford (625-28), and Markus Rheindorf (par. 5).

“concept city,” momentarily enthralled by the “fiction of knowledge” (de Certeau 93, 92). For Auster, the idea of a text written into the city is one of the many images that the novel provides of the quest for a unity between objects (in this case, urban space) and language. Stillman’s “text” that the map suggests opens up the possibility of the transparency of urban space at the same time as it mystifies the practices of the homeless subject.

If we compare this to Dee’s map, the differences are apparent. While both maps stem from the desire to make meaning of movement, their presuppositions and the functions they (might) serve could not be more different. Where Wolch and her co-authors argue against the image of the homeless drifter – a stereotype perpetuated by texts like Auster’s – Auster uses the stereotype to philosophize about the nature of language. While the geographers try to de-pathologize and to demystify the homeless subject, Auster conspicuously dramatizes the mystification of the homeless wanderer and turns him, quite in Trachtenberg’s sense, into a potential guide to the “mysteries of the city.” While the texts by Wolch and her colleagues can be used to illustrate the criticism that Cresswell and others have voiced against the romanticization of the nomad, Auster applies and reflects this romanticization. In a work of fiction, homelessness can obviously unfold a poetic power that in a sociological analysis it cannot. If, as MacCannell holds, the homeless person signifies lack (111), then maybe it is the lack inherent in representation – and the according desire of replenishment – that makes the homeless person such a powerful figure in the cultural imagination.

Walking in the City 2: The Legacy of the Ragpicker

Urban Space and Homelessness in *City of Glass*

According to de Certeau, maps like the ones discussed above only refer to “the absence of what has passed by.” They “miss what was: the act itself of passing by.” Maps, de Certeau holds, are substitutes for practices. As visible representations, they have the effect of “making invisible the operation that made [them] possible” (97). In the case of the two maps discussed here, this observation – which is, after all, an observation about the work of representation in general – has quite divergent

consequences. Obviously, Dee is not “present” in the representation of her migrations; neither are her actions that have made the map possible. However, her own invisibility – in fact, her name and hang-outs have been rendered anonymous by the map’s authors – has the purpose of guaranteeing her personal safety and freedom, while the representation of her mobility pattern has been used in an attempt to assess her situation and that of other homeless people.

With Auster, however, the fact that the map denotes the absence and invisibility of the act of walking is highly relevant. His early novels enact that aspect of the work of representation that lies in the replacement of the material world. This is particularly true for *In the Country of Last Things*, where the disappearance of the material city is the novel’s central motif. But the act of disappearing is also important in *City of Glass*. As fascinating as the maps in Quinn’s notebook are, they are ultimately useless. Just as their meaning is more than doubtful, they do not help in understanding their “writer” Stillman, who, to make matters worse, disappears from sight.

The potential of the readability of Stillman’s walks turns out to be a deviation from Quinn’s own walking. After all, his tracking of Stillman is not the first act of walking he undertakes in the novel. On the contrary, he is introduced not only as a writer, but also as a walker who hopes to lose himself on his daily walks. The city thus is less his object of observation than a place to disappear in. And as long as Quinn wants to lose himself there, it will appear as a “nowhere” rather than as a material space: “[o]n his best walks, he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this, finally, was all he ever asked of things: to be nowhere. New York was the nowhere he had built around himself, and he realized he had no intention of ever leaving it again” (CG 4). In the act of walking, Quinn erases the material city. If, as de Certeau holds, “[to] walk is to lack a place” (103), Auster turns the act of walking into a sign of the disappearance of place. Like de Certeau’s, Auster’s walking produces a “nowhere” (de Certeau 103).

Yet within this nowhere, Quinn discovers the “tramps, the down-and-outs, the shopping-bag ladies, the drifters and drunks” (CG 108). He sees them at the end of a long day of purposeless walks through Manhattan after Stillman’s disappearance: “they seem to be everywhere the moment you look for them” (109). In the remaining pages of the novel, Quinn, whose detective mission has been aborted and has left him

without a purpose, will become like one of those homeless people who to him do not signify the necessity of social reform, but the promise of his own self-effacement. Like them, he will “[melt] into the walls of the city” (116).

The fact that he notices them at the very moment when he is drawn into his final quest that will eventually lead to the loss of his own home underscores Markus Rheindorf’s argument that in *City of Glass* the city functions as the exteriorization of self: the homeless people signal Quinn’s own (metaphysical as well as eventually material) homelessness (Rheindorf *passim*). However, they also maintain another function, namely that of a confrontation with the real that has not, until then, penetrated Quinn’s consciousness. In *City of Glass*, a novel in which almost everything is allegorical, absurd, and abstract, the encounter with the homeless people is remarkably realistic. It is important to notice that the three-page entry in Quinn’s notebook is placed between Quinn’s now-abandoned detective work and his final disappearance. With Stillman’s disappearance, the city as text has lost its writer, yet is not yet replaced by the “nowhere” that has characterized the ideal city of Quinn’s walks. For a whole day, Quinn wanders around town (CG 106-108), recounting the details of his walk diligently and with the same precision as the descriptions of Stillman’s walks – however, this time no intradiegetic reader of his itinerary tries to make sense of it.⁶ The aimlessness of Quinn’s walk characterizes a return to his former attitude toward the city that does not aim at a reading of, but at a disappearance into, the city. If the maps are the result of his “detective writing,” the description of this last walk is indeed “bum writing,” as Ross Chambers

⁶ Various readers of the novel have tried to interpret the maps they felt impelled to draw of Quinn’s walk. To one, Quinn’s itinerary takes on the shape of a skyscraper resembling the Empire State Building (turned upside-down), to another, a fountain pen, to yet another, the Hebrew letter *lamed*. But as Carsten Springer, who assembled these interpretations, notes, Quinn’s walk contains two topographically impossible turns. “Does Auster want to indicate the instability of the fictitious world in his novel?” he asks. “Or does the New York of the Trilogy differ from the ‘real’ one?” (103 fn20, fn21). This collection of interpretations suggests convincingly, I believe, that Quinn’s search for a message in the Walking in the City expresses a general desire.

has charmingly called it in his study *Loiterature* (110). In contrast to Stillman's perambulations, this walk cannot be read as a text; yet neither does it take place in the "nowhere" that Quinn usually builds around him. To the contrary, it is now that Quinn sees the homeless people he had heretofore ignored, who now appear as a substantial part of the "facts" that he feels an "urge to record" (CG 108; it is these recordings in the notebook that the reader reads). The passage (CG 108-10) reveals how the homeless alternate between factual objects of realistic description and the embodiment of Quinn's own absurdity and negativity. Homeless people figure as both a glimpse of the real beyond Quinn's New York of the mind and as the embodiments of his own "broken"-ness, "despair," "madness," and (possibly) ingenuity (all these are attributes he finds among the street people).

In a novel that mostly takes place in the minds, monologues, and writings of its characters, and much less in material urban space, the interest in "facts" and the realistic description of homeless people is significant. Particularly in the beginning of the passage, the author (Quinn) seems to aim for a representative, all-encompassing description, establishing a kind of catalogue of the homeless: from the "merely destitute" to the "wretchedly broken," from those who "beg with a semblance of pride" and those with "real talents" to those "with nothing to do, with nowhere to go" who lie "sprawled out on the sidewalk." He differentiates between types and classifies the resourceful and the insane, the men and the women, taking stock of everybody who penetrates his vision. There is a moment of surprise in Quinn's discovery of the urban despair that is reminiscent of Baudelaire's *choc* – and indeed, it is with a quotation by Baudelaire that the notebook entry of the day will end. As in Baudelaire, the confrontation with the materiality of the poor and destitute is an expression of the shock of modernity, and the relationship between the poet/*flâneur* and the urban riff-raff is one of interplay, of identificatory recognition and distancing, as is characteristic of the *flâneur* (cf. Neumeyer). This ambivalent stance between self and other also plays a role in Quinn's appropriation of the homeless people he is confronted with.

On the one hand, Quinn finds characters that mirror him: two people stand out in his description, both of them "artists" like him. One is a "genius" of the street, a clarinetist, who, accompanied by two wind-up monkeys, creates a rhythm in which the movements/sounds of the

musician and those of the wind-up toys mirror each other. Quinn's fascination with this man stems from the clarinetist's enclosure "in the universe he had created" (CG 109). Quinn yearns to "be inside that music, to be drawn into the circle of its repetitions; perhaps," he muses, "that is a place where one could finally disappear" (109).

The other character is another musician, yet one whom Quinn describes as "mad:" he goes around "with a set of drumsticks, pounding the pavement with them in a reckless, nonsensical rhythm [...], beating and beating away at the cement. Perhaps," Quinn muses again, "he thinks he is doing important work. Perhaps, if he did not do what he did, the city would fall apart" (CG 109). The clarinetist and the drummer represent the two ends of the spectrums of the artist: while the former, to Quinn, is the ideal artist who succeeds in disappearing inside his work, the latter is a self-important, if touching, caricature of Quinn's own absurdity: like the crazy homeless man who "thinks he is doing important work," Quinn has lived in the delusion that his detective work has importance. Now that both client and objective have vanished, Quinn's own city seems to fall apart.

But it is, on the other hand, not only his *flâneuristic* capability to identify with the people he encounters that characterizes Quinn's appropriation of the homeless; this appropriation is also the technology of turning practice/experience into writing. Quinn's catalogue eventually turns into powerful writing, and it is as if one of his prospective literary objects stages a last revolt against his act of capturing her reality into prose when a woman shouts (the reader does not know at whom, about what): "[w]hat if I just fucking don't want to!" (CG 110).

In a way, she is the last character who resists Quinn's interiorization and literary appropriation. Right after her exclamation of protest, the description of the homeless in New York culminates in a paragraph that functions as a kind of condensation of the preceding paragraph's catalogue; it is a collection of homeless individuals that are brought together on the page to form a grotesque parade:

[t]here are the women with their shopping bags and the men with cardboard boxes, hauling their possessions from one place to the next, forever on the move, as if it mattered where they were. There is the man wrapped in the American flag. There is the woman with a Hallowe'en mask on her face. There is the man in a ravaged overcoat, his shoes wrapped in rags, carrying a perfectly pressed white sheet on a hanger –

still sheathed in the dry-cleaner's plastic. There is the man in the business suit with bare feet and a football helmet on his head. There is a woman whose clothes are covered from head to toe with Presidential campaign buttons [...]. (CG 110)

Quinn's attitude toward the homeless is ambivalent: the repetition of the phrase "there is" signals the inability to see the homeless in context (cf. Chambers 109); yet the focus on their colorful attributes shows that the observer has become a skillful master of his objects, which he turns into a spectacle. This parade of homeless freaks plays with the strong visual effects that the street peoples' attributes (bags, boxes, flags, masks, clothes, football helmet, buttons) create, which make them visible and hide their individuality from sight at the same time, as the Halloween mask implies in particular. The insignia of American society, "abused" (or appropriated in a subversive manner) by the homeless, become a grotesque caricature of American cultural values.

Quinn thus alternates between observer and creator of the spectacle – thereby repeating the *flâneur's* alternating attitudes of identification and differentiation. This last paragraph displays the transformation of the experience of homelessness – the practice of Walking – into a meaningful text. In Quinn's notebook, this is the last reference to the larger social, economic, and political context: by turning the social into a grotesque spectacle, Quinn can rid himself of the material world. The representation thus makes way for his wish to be "[anywhere] out of this world," the wish he shares with Baudelaire, whom he is quoting here (CG 110). With this reference to Baudelaire's yearning for the "other place," the last paragraph of the notebook entry concludes.

The Poet as Object Hunter: Baudelaire's Ragpicker

The reference to Baudelaire is significant, not only because it prepares Quinn's journey "out of this world," but also because with Baudelaire, Auster quotes a poet of the city who has developed, besides an aesthetics of *flânerie*, an aesthetics of the down-and-out. From the beggars, prostitutes, and other lowlife characters who people Baudelaire's poetry and prose, one figure has particular importance in the context of Auster's work: the ragpicker. This goes not only for Stillman, the man who collects objects from the street, in *City of Glass*, but also for the "object hunters" in Auster's next novel, *In the Country of Last Things*.

Baudelaire's concept of the poet as ragpicker can be directly transferred to Auster's attempts to analyze the poet as an object hunter. This perspective helps understand the poetic function of the homeless figure in Auster's work – the contemporary dumpster diver as a modern-day ragpicker.

Like the *flâneur*, Baudelaire's (and Benjamin's) most commented-on figure for the observation of the city and the self, the ragpicker is a figure who comes into existence as he moves around the city (like the *flâneur*, the ragpicker is an inherently male figure – Auster's female object hunter in *In the Country of Last Things* is clearly an exception to the rule). Instead of enjoying himself with detached observation, however, the ragpicker physically interacts with the material city; instead of visual impressions, he collects the refuse of the street. Unlike the *flâneur*, whose detached stance originates in the in-between status of the bohemian and/or well-to-do loafer, the ragpicker's distance is the result mainly of the social exclusion brought about by his poverty. If the *flâneur* chooses to idle along the street, the ragpicker tries to survive on and through the street. If the *flâneur* is intoxicated by the spectacle of the city, the ragpicker is intoxicated by wine.

A ragpicker is the hero in Baudelaire's poem "The Ragpickers' Wine." In this poem, the ragpicker enters the vision of the poem's speaker "stumbling like a poet lost in dreams." Bent down by the refuse collected on his back – "the jumbled vomit of enormous Paris" – he lets his drunken voice be heard, "pours his heart out in stupendous schemes" (139). In his prose study *On Wine and Hashish*, Baudelaire explains the ragpicker's poetic quality. He is, writes Baudelaire,

a man whose task it is to pick up all the rubbish produced on one day in the capital. All that the great city has thrown out, all that it has lost, all that it has disdained, all it has broken, he catalogues and collects. He consults the archives of debauchery, works through the lumber-room of rubbish. He makes a selection, chooses astutely; he picks up, as a miser seizes on treasure, the refuse which, when chewed over by the divinity of Industry, will become objects of use or enjoyment. [...] He arrives, wagging his head and stumbling over the cobbles like those young poets who spend all their days wandering around in search of rhymes. (8)

Walter Benjamin famously declared that this description is "one extended metaphor for the poetic method, as Baudelaire practiced it." Both

ragpicker and poet are concerned with refuse, they work in solitariness while the rest of the city sleeps, even “[moving] in the same way.” Benjamin extends Baudelaire’s simile, referring to a contemporary’s description of Baudelaire’s own jolty walk: “[t]his is the gait of the poet who roams the city in search of rhyme-booty; it is also the gait of the ragpicker, who is obliged to come to a halt every few moments to gather up the refuse he encounters” (108-09).

Poet and ragpicker are thus connected by a combination of elements: urban space, walking, (used) objects, and language. What makes them good at their task is their ability to select, to collect, to combine, and to recycle (in the context of Auster, this would also relate to the intertextual qualities of his work: his recycling of other texts). In Baudelaire’s world, poet and ragpicker move in the “darker” urban spaces and collect what would otherwise fall out of urban representation (cf. Sanyal 63). As they hope to turn the refuse of the great city, and of the great literary traditions, into profit – material profit in the ragpicker’s case, poetic profit in the poet’s – they witness the changes in the city and in society and become heroes of the modernity they embody, “embracing its fleeting newness and collecting its waste” (Salzani 193). Their intoxication – with wine, with poetry, with drugs – provides them with visions.⁷

Auster’s characters, like the ragpicker, connect urban space, objects, and language. Stillman clearly is a case in point. He walks with his eyes on the pavement, “as though he were searching for something. Indeed,” the narrator goes on,

every now and then he would stoop down, pick some object off the ground, and examine it closely, turning it over and over in his hand. [...] [More] often than not he would open his bag and lay the object gently inside it. Then, reaching into one of his coat pockets, he would remove a red notebook [...] and write in it with great concentration for a minute or two. Having completed this operation, he would return the notebook to his pocket, pick up his bag, and continue on his way. (CG 59)

⁷ The ragpicker’s identity as a poet can be seen in connection with Marina Tsvetaeva’s observation that “all poets are Jews” (qtd. in Auster, “Book of the Dead” 189). Ragpicker and Jew connote different aspects of modern alienation. For a detailed study of Jewish spirituality in Auster’s writing, see Krämer.

Stillman collects objects in order to give them new names: in a world gone to pieces, his mission is to “invent new words that will correspond to the [broken] things” (*CG* 78). In order “to put [the world] back together again,” as he tells Quinn in one of their conversations (*CG* 76), he needs to reestablish the lost connection between objects and words. (The “Tower of Babel” reference refers to Stillman’s earlier book about the loss of and search for prelapsarian unity). For this ragpicker, New York, with its universal “brokenness,” is an “endless source of material” (*CG* 78) that he can collect, investigate, and name. His project has the madness of the drumming homeless man whom Quinn observes, but it is also part of Quinn’s own quest for the unity of word and object.⁸

Baudelaire’s ragpicker emphatically implies the encounter with urban poverty. His poet participates in the ragpicker’s self-abandonment to drugs and filth, and turns the experience into poetry. This is also how Stillman embraces the material of the city and turns it into language. Quinn, too, commits himself to the despair of homelessness, yet he loses himself altogether, vanishing – as does, ultimately, Stillman – into the text of the city, leaving nothing behind but his red notebook. Here, however, Auster stands less in the tradition of Baudelaire’s than of Benjamin’s interpretation of the ragpicker, whose mission is almost exclusively poetic: Benjamin’s “Lumpensammler” collects “Redelumpen” (rags of speech) and “Sprachfetzen” (language fragments). His place is less the streets of Paris than the library, as Harald Neumeyer quips (cf. 362). This shift from objects to language also characterizes Paul Auster’s own preference for language and prefigures the disintegration and disappearance of the material world in his novels. It might also signal the shift from an understanding of art as “contestatory intervention” to that of “withdrawal into artistic sovereignty,” to borrow two terms from Debarati Sanyal’s analysis of the politics of Baudelaire’s poetics (55).

⁸ This quest comes to an end at the end of the novel when, writing in his notebook, “[Quinn] felt that his words had been severed from him, that now they were a part of the world at large, as real and specific as stone, or a lake, or a flower” (130). Quinn’s experience of the identity of word and object, however, is cut off from himself; and what is more, it is no longer communicable, since it starts where his text ends: it is dependent on Quinn’s own longed-for disappearance (cf. Klepper 265).

If *City of Glass* describes the move from a real New York to a sovereign text, Auster's next novel, published shortly thereafter, sets out from within an urban structure that is almost indiscernible from its textuality and freed from references to the real place. Anna Blume, the protagonist-narrator of *In the Country of Last Things*, does not choose, but is thrown into the life of an object-hunter in the post-apocalyptic city that envelops her. Equipped with a shopping cart that holds her precious waste, she combines in her actions Stillman's rag-picking and Quinn's detecting. When Stillman is a philosopher by calling, and Quinn a writer by profession as well as a detective by chance, she is all of the above as she writes about the decaying world while she is looking for her lost brother. Clearly, however, like all of Auster's characters discussed here, she can be called a "poet without [her] knowing" (Rheindorf par. 29).

Like Baudelaire's ragpicker, and like Stillman, she is confronted with the waste of modernity: "nothing is really itself anymore. There are pieces of this and pieces of that, but nothing fits together" (*CLT* 35). As a poet and object-hunter it is her job to "rescue things before they reach this state of absolute decay" (*CLT* 35). She restores meaning to the broken objects that she "must examine, dissect, and bring back to life" (*CLT* 36).⁹ As a poet, Anna Blume, too, experiences her work as an examination of language at its moment of erasure:

[i]t is a slow and ineluctable process of erasure. Words tend to last a bit longer than things, but eventually they fade, too, along with the pictures they once evoked. [...] [For] a time you will be able to recognize those words, even if you cannot recall what they mean. But then, little by little, the words become only sounds, a random collection of glottals and fricatives, a storm of whirling phonemes, and finally the whole thing just collapses into gibberish. (*CLT* 89)

⁹ There are many links between and recurring motifs in *City of Glass* and *In the Country of Last Things*. Blume's urban landscape already appears in *City of Glass*, as Quinn dreams of "a neverland of fragments, a place of wordless things and thingless words" "in the town dump of his childhood, sifting through a mountain of rubbish" (*CG* 72). Many phrases are repeated, as e.g. the motif of "melt[ing] into the streets" (*CG* 116; *CLT* 57). Most famously, of course, Anna Blume finds in the rubbish "the passport of a man named Quinn" (*CLT* 36).

Words and things form a reciprocal relationship:

[b]ecause signifier and signified are so closely connected [in this novel], a change in the domain of the one will affect the other. In fact, no one can tell whether it is the shortages of virtually every known commodity that are affecting the linguistic and interior representation of things or the other way round. Words, in Auster's view, figure somewhere in between, as intermediaries between thing and thought, and are equally affected. (Rheindorf par. 23)

It is in this sense that *In the Country of Last Things* constitutes "Auster's parable of the poet as an exile in 'modern nothingness'" (Rheindorf par. 28, who is here quoting from Auster's memoir *The Invention of Solitude*). In the words of Anna Blume: "[I]et everything fall away, and then let's see what there is. Perhaps that is the most interesting question of all: to see what happens when there is nothing, and whether or not we will survive that too" (*CLT* 29).

The crumbling, post-apocalyptic city in this novel is de Certeau's urban space when completely reduced to practice. The "totalizing" "concept city," which still looms large in the background of *City of Glass*, is no longer functional. For Auster (as for de Certeau), within this hostile anti-structure lies the potential for a new beginning, as Anna Blume's social interactions in the course of the novel and her final departure to new lands show. This idea of self-effacement and subsequent rebirth is dramatized even more pointedly in Auster's next novel *Moon Palace* (1989), albeit within a much more realistic setting and plot. Here, the homelessness the protagonist experiences is a contained, temporary crisis of the self. In *Moon Palace*, homelessness no longer erases the self and the city: it is an intermediate state, a limited crisis necessary for salvation. When Auster takes up the motif of homelessness again in his novel *Timbuktu* (1999), the mobility of the homeless poet will no longer express the desire to disappear, but rather attest to his (tragicomic) engagement with the material world. *City of Glass* and *In the Country of Last Things*, however, are governed by the eradication of the material. Homelessness in these novels signifies a last holding on to the material world before it vanishes. It is the work of the poet to testify to its disappearance before s/he him/herself disappears from the text.

Walking in the City 3: Walking/Connecting/Place-Making

Homelessness in Society and in Art

Even though Paul Auster's fiction flirts with the author persona and creates a conscious confusion between the author of the novel and its characters, his narrator (or rather: implied author), obviously, cannot be confused with Auster himself. In his non-fictional writing, Auster expresses concern over social inequality and homelessness, elaborating not only on the differences between himself, a home-owner, and a man living in a cardboard box, but also on the politics that help maintain this difference (Auster, "Reflections on a Cardboard Box"). Yet it is a fact that his fictional writing focuses on the author's seclusion from the social and thus enables the writer's identification with the outcast and with homeless people.¹⁰

If Auster invited the homeless person into the realm of "artistic sovereignty," later authors struggle in different ways with the relationship of homelessness and artistic creativity. Clearly, from the 1990s on, in the face of New York City Mayor Giuliani's mission to remove the homeless from sight, the desire to "simply disappear" into homelessness sounds dangerously naive. Don DeLillo, for instance, repudiates the easy identification of the homeless person with the poet. Early on in his 1991 novel *Mao II*, a homeless man – "great-maned and filthy, rimed saliva in his beard, old bruises across the forehead gone soft and crumbly" – disturbs the sophisticated, hushed atmosphere of a New York bookstore, loudly claiming his right to be at this place: "I'm here to sign my books" (20). The transgression here, besides the dirty man's entering a place symbolizing culture as well as capital, lies in his claim to the place not as a customer, but as an author. In this scene, DeLillo relegates the identification of writing and homelessness to the confused mind of a New York street person. If author and homeless man share some kind of space on some metaphorical level, the guard's removal of the man from the bookstore makes it clear that this space is not the space of the marketplace. DeLillo concentrates on the power of social dif-

¹⁰ This even pertains to his 2010 novel *Sunset Park*, although, with its focus on the 2008 housing market crisis, it clearly addresses the social world.

ference, thus setting the tone for a novel that negotiates the role of the author vis-à-vis the social and political world. Both in this scene and in the descriptions of the homeless encampment in Tompkins Square Park (145-53, *passim*), DeLillo stresses the point that the homeless are spatially contained.

Although there is a disruptive element to homelessness in *Mao II*, it bears neither subversive nor enlightening potential. One of the main characters, Scott, explicitly comments on this in a discussion about the novel's central theme, the relationship between artist and terrorist.¹¹ The terrorist, according to Scott, is the only person

who we take serious. [...] The artist is absorbed, the madman in the street is absorbed and processed and incorporated. Give him a dollar, put him in a TV commercial. Only the terrorist stands outside. The culture hasn't figured out how to assimilate him. (DeLillo 157)

According to Scott, the culture has long figured out how to assimilate the homeless figure. And although homeless people do not cede to suffer in DeLillo's novels, they have lost the power to truly disturb the social and cultural realm.

This statement should be kept in mind in the analysis of homelessness in contemporary fiction, even if the fictionalizations of homelessness yield to a contestatory intervention of literature in the social rather than to artistic sovereignty. In doing so, some recent works address the functions and possibilities of sites and modes of artistic representation. Peter Rock's novel *The Ambidextrist* (2002), for instance, places its two homeless main characters in two opposing artistic realms: the Philadelphia Museum of Art, into which one character forays and to which he repeatedly refers, and the self-made hidden garden of the other character, built of artfully arranged found objects. Museum spaces and waste art play an important role in *Mao II*, as well. Yet while DeLillo argues that even waste art has lost its power to disturb (172-73), Rock juxtaposes, without taking sides, the public display of Culture with a lived, private practice of artistic creation.

This negotiation of the function of art as representation as well as practice is also an important theme in George Dawes Green's novel *The*

¹¹ On the author/terrorist motif, see Brooker.

Caveman's Valentine. Like Auster's homeless characters, Green's homeless protagonist creates the city through his act of walking. But where Auster's characters are artists only in a figurative sense (Quinn, the novelist, being the exception), Green's personnel consists of actual musicians, actors, and visual artists. In contrast to Auster's poetical conceptualization of homelessness, Green's homelessness is most of all a social fact, linked not to a metaphorical level of narration, but predominantly to the level of plot.

The Homeless Detective

The Caveman's Valentine draws heavily on de Certeau's juxtaposition of the spectator and the practitioner. The novel's hero, Romulus Ledbetter, suffers from clinical paranoia that has interrupted his career as a classical pianist/composer, estranged him from his wife and daughter, and driven him to the streets – or rather, into a cave in New York's Inwood Park (“I am *not* homeless,” he will repeatedly protest, an important intervention in labeling practices).¹² When a dead body is dumped in front of his cave, he takes this as a personal affront (an invasion of his space) and starts to investigate the murder. His detective work takes him to a variety of places around Manhattan and to an artist's estate out of town. It forces him to mingle with the cultural and economic elite, on the one hand, and the police, on the other, as well as

¹² The motif of the homeless musician is a pet motif of representations of the homeless. Just recently, director Joe Wright adapted Steve Lopez' best-selling 2008 memoir/biography about a homeless violinist *The Soloist* for a motion picture starring Jamie Foxx (2009). Many myths have evolved around homeless musicians, one of the most impressive probably being that of composer Moondog (Louis Thomas Hardin), who in the 1950s was a New York street musician who formed professional friendships with musicians from the New York Philharmonic as well as with Charlie Parker (“Moondog”). The parallels to Nathaniel Ayers, who is portrayed in *The Soloist*, are striking. But Ayers' life also seems to eerily mirror Romulus' character (a film adaptation of *The Caveman's Valentine*, by Kasi Lemmons, was released in 2001). The above-mentioned freeway director from Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* is another such homeless musician. (I thank Kristina Graaff for making me aware of Moondog.)

with the squatters, junkies, and homeless people who, along with his family, form his social network. This outburst of activity that involves an extensive amount of movement and Walking in the City is described as a not-always-welcome exception to his withdrawal from the urban community. It thus involves the transgression not only of many social and material boundaries, but also of the character's preferred immobility, his chosen existence out-of-place (yet not out-of-this-world). The linking of the figure of the homeless person with that of the detective suggests the proximity of these two urban outsiders that connect disparate spatial and social areas of the city. Romulus' inquisitive walking stitches together a city that indeed seems to be falling apart. But while in *City of Glass* this unifying quality is read into the homeless man (by Quinn) and takes place on the level of symbolism, in *The Caveman's Valentine*, the protagonist's attempt to solve a mystery, to fix something, makes him an agent of unification on the level of plot. In moving between squats, middle-class apartments, and an artist's estate, he bridges and makes visible social difference. Like the detective of the noir genre – an important intertext for Green as well as for Auster – the protagonist only partially succeeds in his quest. In so far, the function of his character is the same as that of many other contemporary fictional homeless characters, namely to bring into focus the city as a “whole,” but exactly under the aspect of incoherence, lack, exclusion, and placelessness (Löbbermann, “Exploring Post/Modern Urban Space” 205). In not being able to completely piece together the puzzle, Romulus makes visible the city's inherent disparateness. Whereas Auster is concerned with the disparateness between objects and language for which the city becomes a metaphor, Green is concerned with the discrepancies within the urban community.

Tactics of Walking

Romulus' paranoia is a sign not so much of deviance, but rather of resistance; it does not pathologize him so much as it empowers him to cope with the world. Green spatializes his protagonist's madness in a way reminiscent of Foucault's panopticon. At its center stands the Chrysler Building which functions as the watchtower of Romulus' imaginary foe, Cornelius Gould Stuyvesant. Combining in his name three representatives of New York's political and economic power elite

(Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, Peter Stuyvesant), Stuyvesant is the embodiment of New York's aggressive capitalism. Watching from his "tower," from where he emits painful "Y-Rays," he disciplines and punishes like Foucault's jailor. Romulus cannot always see the Chrysler Building, but he knows that Stuyvesant "sees me at all times" (Green 18). It is exactly through his placelessness that Romulus tries to protect himself from the Y-Rays. In de Certeau's terms, his homelessness is a "tactic" to undermine the "strategies" of the system.

Romulus' madness keeps him from interiorizing the disciplining gaze: even though he is aware of its power, the gaze is explicitly localized outside of Romulus. Against the controlling and disciplining powers of the surveillance tower, he uses the pedestrian's tactics in order to remain what he cherishes to be, which is in his own words: "a free man" (Green 18). This declaration of freedom bears the more weight as Romulus is a black man in a predominantly white system of economic and cultural capital. A free man, "down below" (de Certeau 93), he is outside of the city's system that is controlled from high up in the tower, yet he can *appropriate* the system in order to write his story into it through walks that, eventually, solve the murder mystery. Romulus is a personification of de Certeau's pedestrian in that his itineraries are often random: in contrast to Stuyvesant, he is unable to make plans successfully (cf. Green 263), he gets sidetracked, and he follows intuitions that oftentimes prove wrong. In fact he errs fundamentally in his assumed identification of the murderer, until, very late in the game, events force him to realize his mistake. His *subversive tactics*, which, among other things, induce him to put on the mask of the successful Juilliard alumnus he failed to be,¹³ as much as simple coincidence, lead him to solve the puzzle. Although Romulus' tactics are finally successful, they do not free him from Stuyvesant's powerful strategy. Even if his success has opened up the possibility that he return to his family and reintegrate into society, in the end he decides to remain a cave dweller – in other words, in a place "out of place" that will guarantee his "freedom."

¹³ Antje Dallmann rightly draws a connection between Green's protagonist and Miles Davis' experience at Juilliard in 1944/45, which is characterized both by individual racism and a white, Eurocentric curriculum (306 fn207).

Romulus' subversive energy owes much to the figure of the trickster and that of other outsiders who subvert social order and make the reader aware of the inappropriateness of those structures which claim that their actions are improper. This is a figure that we find in the cultural tradition of the tramp, like Charlie Chaplin's famous character,¹⁴ as well as in more recent fictionalizations of homelessness, like William Kennedy's bum protagonist in *Ironweed* (1983). Romulus' vibrancy and trickster power confirm a belief in the subversive potential of the homeless: for Green, the homeless are clearly not absorbed.

The Heterotopia of Caves

Romulus' quest for the murderer leads him from his cave in Inwood Park into another cave located on successful photographer David Leppenraub's estate, and thus from the social into the realm of art. Leppenraub, whom Romulus wrongly suspects of having committed the murder, turns pain into art: in photographing beautiful young white men tied to trees, he gives a transcendent meaning to experience. Romulus' grotesque body is a clear subversion of the ideal bodies in Leppenraub's pictures.¹⁵ Those ideal bodies are frozen, not only in art, but also literally: the body that is dumped in front of Romulus' cave is that of another beautiful white male who literally froze to death. On the one hand, the images of the dead man and of the suffering boys in Leppenraub's photographs contrast with and reconfirm Romulus' aliveness and freedom, but on the other, they highlight the problematic power of representation by which the objects of representation are subjected to an act of fixation and definition over which they have no control. And, indeed, in the beginning of the novel, Romulus warns not only the social worker who tries to talk him into moving into a shelter but also the

¹⁴ See e.g. Cresswell, *The Tramp* 164.

¹⁵ The frozen body augments the contrast between Romulus' and the white models' bodies. While Romulus – always described through the eyes of others – is spectacularly compared to a grizzly bear, wearing a “saucepan lined with the furs of squirrels killed on the Henry Hudson Parkway” whose “stink was enormous” (Green 4), the murdered boy – indeed a former model of Leppenraub's – is (in Romulus' view) “a thing of sculptural beauty,” “alabaster” rather than white, “flawless in form” (Green 9).

reader that he will not allow himself to be read by others, “like I was some cheap-jack midnight entertainment to make you forget the mess *you’re* in” (Green 3). In refusing to be turned into text, he prioritizes practice over representation. But whereas on the level of plot Romulus is somewhat successful at escaping the representational order of both the social worker and (at times) Stuyvesant, I argue that the novel as such displays a certain awareness that as a fictional character, he cannot escape the representational order of fiction.

The ending of the novel includes Green’s explicit acknowledgment that his homeless man is a thing of fiction. It refrains from the ultimate, clichéd happy ending in that Romulus does not return to his wife, daughter and to his musical career; nor does he resolve to medicate his paranoia and become “sane.” But neither does he return to his cave in Inwood Park – a site that has been identified as “out of place” by the social worker in the beginning of the novel. Instead, Romulus gets to have his cake and eat it, too, by a move that takes place not only in geographical space, but also in the space of the social and in that of representation. At Leppenraub’s upstate farm he has not only met the successful photographer but also his sister Moira, an artist who creates caves, womb-like structures that, according to an art review that Romulus finds in the library, embrace “the spirit of prepatriarchal realms of Lascaux and Altamira” and the notion of the “natural, pagan world” of male and female physicality and sexuality (Green 48). In a somewhat stale repetition of gender stereotypes, Moira’s soft, “feminist” aesthetics makes visible the cruelty of her brother’s “masculinist” art. Moreover, Moira’s art is explicitly non-representational: instead of pinning down, “freezing” bodies, it creates spaces of interaction between artist and viewer. It is quite consistent, then, that she and Romulus become lovers; and he is invited to move in with the artist community on the farm, where Moira and her brother build a cave exclusively for him. The last scene of the novel shows Romulus sitting in this new cave, tending his paranoia as before, but obviously at peace with himself and his environment.

While Romulus represents a problem for the social worker, he fits right in with the artists: here his transgressiveness is not out of place, but “in place.” It is in the work of art, the novel thus suggests, that a homeless person can symbolize “freedom,” not in the real world. This echoes Cresswell’s observation that a homeless person’s “transgressive” “out-

of-place-ness” should not be conflated with resistance or subversiveness, although it can be turned into subversion in art (*In Place* 166-69). Although *The Caveman’s Valentine* does not have the political potential of the art Cresswell discusses (in particular, Kristof Wodicko’s powerful interference in urban space), its negotiation of homeless representation nevertheless is a contestatory intervention: Green’s artist characters are *of this world* and bear social responsibility.

Romulus’ caves are heterotopias – those “other places” sketched out by Foucault that are both inside and outside of the social order, having the potential to “transgress, undermine and question” the “alleged coherence or totality of self-contained orders and systems” (Genocchio 37). This heterotopic quality of the caves becomes particularly clear in a scene that shows Romulus “watching television” in his electricity-lacking cave: in replaying his own biography as a movie starring Steve McQueen, he comments bitingly on the exclusion of blackness from classical composition as well as the movies (“decolorized for popular appeal,” says a notice flashed on the bottom of the TV screen, Green 43).

Heterotopias, in this sense, are a sedentary version of de Certeau’s subversive practice of Walking. However, the subversive potential of Romulus’ caves is clearly more powerful in the public space of Inwood Park than it is in the private space of the artist colony. In removing the homeless subject from public space, *The Caveman’s Valentine* allows that it is not a radical intervention in the social fabric of New York. Rather, by quite self-consciously moving into an artistic environment, it acknowledges the limits and possibilities of fiction.

Conclusion

As I have argued above, for Paul Auster, homelessness is the quintessential, existentialist place of absence: it embodies the artist’s/poet’s writerly exile as well as the creative process of turning material waste into literary profit. If for Auster, homelessness is about disappearance, for Green, it is about place (place-making, place-finding). Both place-making and disappearance are described as fundamentally artistic acts. While Auster emphasizes an individualistic, even solipsistic concept of the artist, Green focuses on the artist’s position within an urban

community. Yet although their conceptualizations of homelessness are very different from each other, both Green and Auster address a concept of the city that is defined by walking. As I have shown, walking acquires various significations, all of which can be understood with de Certeau's idea of Walking in the City: as an act of writing the city, of stitching together urban space, as well as as an act of disappearance and a practice that resists the immobilizing work of representation. It is this ambiguity of the idea of Walking in de Certeau's text that made it so successful and that reverberates in representations of homelessness.

In their mobility as well as in their immobility, the homeless are characterized as out-of-place. Whether fictional texts have followed the often romanticizing trend in theories of mobility (as the texts under discussion here) or resisted it (as the texts I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter), the place of the homeless in the city is characterized by the absence that the act of Walking produces. Walking and mobility, then, must be recognized as metaphors for a particular absence that presents itself ambiguously, located between the homeless people's implied individual and political desire to be present and represented, and the projected desire of the homeless to disengage, to disappear, to be free of the control of representation. Fictional representations of homelessness explore a terrain that not only reconceptualizes urban space but also takes into view the ambivalent power of representation. In this sense, the homeless, indeed, are guides to the "mysteries of the city." The mystification they thus receive cannot be reduced to a romanticization of the economically poor and socially excluded, even if this is an undeniable aspect of many works of fiction, but intrinsically ties back to the ambiguity of representation itself.

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Illustrations

- Figure 1: "Dee's Mobility Routine in Venice/Santa Monica." Jennifer Wolch and Stacy Rowe. "On the Streets: Mobility Paths of the Urban Homeless." *City & Society* 6.2 (1992): 129.
- Figure 2: "Quinn's Maps of Stillman's Walks." Paul Auster. *City of Glass. The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber, 1992. 66-69.

FUGITIVES

HEIKE PAUL AND CHRISTINA JUDITH HEIN

The Fugitive as Anti-Foundational Figure: ‘Going Native’ in Early America¹

In the second half of the 18th century, Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur in his *Letters from an American Farmer* comments on the many European immigrants and settlers ‘going Native,’ i.e. those who

prefer that life [with the natives], of which we entertain such dreadful opinions. It cannot be, therefore, so bad as we generally conceive it to be; there must be in their social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans! (215)

Crèvecoeur’s observation points to a phenomenon in early colonial America that many 17th- and 18th-century sources hesitate to mention, let alone describe in detail. Europeans, many of them indentured servants, escaped from the dire circumstances of their lives under colonial rule by ‘eloping’ to the ‘wilderness’ in order to live with native communities in North America (cf. Hulme 143). In retrospect, we may contend that for the early period of colonial settlement we could talk about the figure of the ‘vanishing Englishman/European’ as someone who becomes a fugitive from his or her culture and seeks refuge among the native population.

In this essay, we will address ‘going Native’ as a movement between cultures in early American history (17th and 18th century) and its literary representations in selected 20th-century texts. ‘Going Native’ connotes a process of indigenization to North American indigenous cultures on the part of a white member of the colonial population, usually from England – at a time when dominant discourse did not consider native cultures as

¹ We are indebted to Klaus Lösch for his in-depth criticism of this article.

'cultures' at all but part of nature or, simply, barbarism.² It appears to be a flight from a 'civilization' that claimed (religious and moral) superiority over those indigenous groups on the North American continent whose survival was threatened and who were drastically decimated by the incursions of colonization on their land.³ Yet the white fugitive rarely figures in hegemonic discourses in early America for obvious reasons, since 'going Native' subverts the rigidly controlled system of inclusion and exclusion: his/her escape clearly constitutes the breach of a taboo and undermines the stability and continuity of the colony, both in terms of depriving the colony of his or her labor as well as by undermining its hegemonic ideological constructions of identity and alterity. Therefore, 'going Native' was a taboo in colonial society:

[t]he [so-called] 'white Indian' was a figure outside the usual racial categories. In preferring the red man to his own kind – that is, in opting for savagery over civilization – he offered a troubling commentary on the supposed superiority of European culture. (Dippie 259)

Thus, one might consider the fugitive, who chooses to 'go Native,' as an anti-foundational figure in the history of colonization and nation-building and as a haunting absence within the ideology of English colonialism. Camouflaged in historical documents and much of early American historiography, s/he 'returns' in more recent scholarship and in fictional versions of early American history – for instance, in post-modern women's writing and in recent Native American literature.

² We follow the conventional usage of the term 'white' to refer to people of (mostly) European ancestry who are not identified, or self-identify, as indigenous or black. It has to be noted, however, that whiteness as a racial category did not solidify until the 18th century.

³ 'Going Native' is often used to imply a certain nostalgia or longing for the other and its partial incorporation (cf. Huhndorf). In this usage it borders on the concept of 'playing Indian' as Philip Deloria has discussed it in his book of the same title. When we use the term, we understand it in opposition to the eclectic and often romanticized cultural appropriations that 'playing Indian' implies. Rather, 'going Native' describes a more solid and often durable acculturation process, an indigenization that involves identification with the indigenous host culture and often a lasting alienation from the culture of one's birth.

I. "[T]o live idle among the savages:" Fugitives from 17th Century Jamestown

Sr Tho: DALE haveinge all moste finished the foarte and settled A plantacyin in that Pte dyvrs of his men being Idile and not willeinge to take paynes did Runne Away unto the Indyans many of them beinge taken ageine Sr Thomas in A moste severe mannor cawsed to be execu- ted. Some he appointed to be hanged Some burned Some to be broken upon wheles, others to be staked and some to be shott to deathe all theis extreme and crewel tortures he used and influcted upon them To terrify the reste for Attempteing the Lyke and some wch Robbed the store he cawsed them to be bownd faste unto Trees and so sterved them to deathe. (Percy, "Trewe Relacyon" 280)

In these words, George Percy records an occurrence in the early history of Jamestown, Virginia, in his account "Trewe Relacyon of the Proceedeings and Occurrentes of Momente which had hapned in Virginia" (1612). In 1612, five years after the first ship of Englishmen in the company of John Smith had landed on the American coast to build what would later be known as the first permanent English settlement in North America, Governor Thomas Dale has English fugitives, who had deserted to the Algonquians, (re)captured and killed in most elaborate ways. Dale, who was sent to Virginia in 1611 to enforce law and order, soon became notorious for a "draconian system of martial law, known as the *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall*" (Canny 19) or as the so-called "Dale Codes." These codes were the first set of laws implemented in Virginia between 1611 and 1618 and sanctioned minor criminal deeds (such as theft) with major punishments (such as the death penalty).⁴ Disbanding from the colony was considered the most offensive crime; nevertheless, it occurred quite frequently as "some of the English at Jamestown deserted to the enemy, and these eventually integrated themselves into Indian society" (Canny 30). Dale, who rigorously pursued those who did not comply with his laws, is still considered the person

⁴ The discussion of the historical role of the "Dale Codes" has been controversial. Whereas many scholars see them as a paradigm shift toward a brutal colonial regime, others defend them as being entirely in accordance with the law in England at the time (cf. König).

whose “strict application of law disciplining the colony probably saved Jamestown from extinction” (“Sir Thomas Dale”). To be sure, “extinction” does not refer to the possible perishing of all the English settlers who lived in the small settlement of Jamestown; it refers to the success of the colonial project and thus to the survival of the settlement with its distinct cultural identity as a site where the *English* lived together. Indigenization, i.e. going Native, presented the starkest cultural threat to a successful continuation of the English colony that suffered from harsh material living conditions and a high mortality rate. Thus, immigrants who preferred living with the natives in the ‘wilderness’ to building a colony and furthering the ‘cause of civilization’ had to be strictly disciplined.

The inventor of the “Dale Codes” is the same Dale to whom a couple of years later, in 1614, John Rolfe turned, asking permission to marry Pocahontas, the daughter of the Algonquian chief Powhatan – a proposal to which Dale consented (cf. Hulme 143-44). Pocahontas was baptized and married to the white tobacco planter in the same year. Their marital union was considered as an exemplum at the time, since it meant the opposite of the indigenization Dale abhorred, and figured as a model for the (desired) Europeanization of native women into the white culture. Yet, Pocahontas would remain a singular figure in the discourse on nation-building in the early history of Virginia:⁵ in 1616, the three of them, Thomas Dale, John Rolfe, and Pocahontas, now baptized Rebecca, sailed for England in order to promote further settlement in Virginia.

Going Native, i.e. the inversion of that process of assimilation undergone by Pocahontas, was coded as a crime by Dale and others and increasingly also became a cultural taboo. In Percy’s report, the motives for such a harsh punishment are explained by ascribing a specific laziness and refusal to work to the deserters – opting for a life of ease

⁵ For various reasons, scholars have addressed what they see as a “Pocahontas Exceptionalism” in the context of US racial politics, past and present: Pocahontas is the only female and non-white figure who became part of the foundational mythology depicted in the Rotunda of the US Capitol; her descendants, many of them among the Virginia elite, were exempted from Virginia’s harsh anti-miscegenation laws as late as 1924 (cf. Maillard; see also Abrams); and somewhat ironically, two million people to this day trace their ancestry back to Pocahontas (cf. Young 394).

among the native Algonquians. Yet the fugitives' choice also throws light on the working conditions for some of the settlers in the Jamestown colony. The analysis of colonization and the treatment of those colonizers who needed to be kept in line clearly reveals a class bias; race and class overlap in white elite constructions of alterity in that historical moment:

[t]he principal reason given for such curtailment of Englishmen's rights was that most of those who ventured overseas came from the poorest elements of society, and were considered by their superiors to be incapable of self-discipline, to be barely civilized, and certainly not suitable instruments for transmitting civilization to others. (Canny 19)

Immigrants without economic means and education might have been opposed to colonization. Canny finds such suspicions in the writings of William Strachey for instance. Strachey refers to "the mere ignorant" immigrants as of little help in building a colony – he fears their insurrection and rebellion (qtd. in Canny 19-20). And in fact, the early history of Jamestown is characterized by protest, rebellion, social unrest, and 'desertion,' of which we find evidence in the writings of John Smith, among others.

Smith, one of our main sources for first-hand accounts of early English colonization in North America, explicitly describes what scholars see as "a regular haemorrhage to the Indians from the moment of settlement in 1607 until the all but total breakdown in relations between English and natives following the 1622 massacre" (Canny 30). Given the thorough demonization of Native Americans in colonial discourse, going Native would not have been attractive for English immigrants *per se*, but mainly for those who did not belong to the elite class, who were laborers, field hands, or indentured servants. Edmund Morgan corroborates the fact that the Native American way of life may have seemed attractive particularly to male immigrants who saw in the life-style of the male natives a life of relative ease and leisure. He also identifies the rhetoric purportedly legitimizing the violence against the native inhabitants as well as toward those who would join them:

[i]f you were a colonist, you knew that your technology was superior to the Indians.' You knew that you were civilized, and they were savages. It was evident in your firearms, your clothing, your housing, your

government, your religion. The Indians were supposed to be overcome with admiration and to join you in extracting riches from the country. But your superior technology had proved insufficient to extract anything. The Indians, keeping to themselves, laughed at your superior methods and lived from the land more abundantly and with less labor than you did. They even furnished you with the food that you somehow did not get around to growing enough of yourselves. To be thus condescended to by heathen savages was intolerable. And when your own people started deserting in order to live with them, it was too much. If it came to that, the whole enterprise of Virginia would be over. So you killed the Indians, tortured them, burned their villages, burned their cornfields. It proved your superiority in spite of your failures. And you gave similar treatment to any of your own people who succumbed to the savage way of life. (90)

Whereas it “needs to be recognized [...] that in colonial America a long history of insubordination and undeferential behavior ran parallel to a long history of imperfect hegemonic control by the elite” (Sweet and Nash 7), for those settlers in privileged positions, assimilation to the native culture was unimaginable as a voluntary experience, so it had to be represented as a result of native violence – in the form of kidnapping and forceful captivity. The formula of the captivity narrative encodes assimilation following a kidnapping as coercion and spells out colonialism’s terms of engagement with the North American native cultures. The pattern of the captivity narrative thus constructs the opposite of the kind of cultural contact that massively occurred; it camouflages and displaces it (cf. Faery 24), thus affirming the colonial ideology of cultural supremacy.

Yet, Dale’s insistence on discipline in 1612 not only anticipates future developments and the making of laws and taboos (such as Virginia’s anti-miscegenation law of 1691), it is at the same time an attempt to prevent something from happening (again) that had deeply disturbed the English and had presented a setback to the colonial project: an earlier attempt to found a permanent settlement in Virginia had failed miserably, the English settlement at Roanoke, the so-called lost colony. The Roanoke settlement started in 1585 and dissolved in the intermission between two visits from England in 1587 and 1590. By then, most traces of the settlement and its inhabitants, young and old, had disappeared. Most likely, the settlers abandoned the settlement and joined

the local Native community of the Croatans, Carolina Algonquians, when their provisions ran out. The possibility of an indigenization of the English (rather than the destruction of the colony by the natives, the dominant explanation at the time) is corroborated by George Percy's account of the Virginia settlement in 1607 when he observes a "Savage Boy about the age of ten yeeres, which had a head of haire of a perfect yellow and a reasonable white skinne, which is a Miracle amongst all Savages" ("Observations" 17). Rather than a miracle, historian Lyon Gardiner Tyler suggests, this boy may have been "a descendant of one of the lost colony of Roanoke" following "the theory, not generally agreed to, that the colony was not wholly destroyed, and that descendants of some of its members are still to be found in North America" (qtd. in Percy, "Observations" 17). Be it as it may, the 'lost' colony remained a traumatic experience within colonial history and proliferated the fear of being absorbed into the American 'wilderness.' Dale's drastic measures may be seen as a forceful attempt to police the boundary that was revealed to be a thin line and not a huge gap as colonial ideology would have it. Jamestown, in Dale's vision, was certainly not to become another Roanoke.

II. Straying from the Puritans

Following the settlement at Jamestown, the Pilgrims under the guidance of William Bradford settled north of the Virginia Company and founded Plymouth in 1620. Bradford's chronicle *Of Plymouth Plantation* is a key text for New World beginnings, a self-representation of the early Pilgrim experience, and its author was considered the single most important individual in the context of the Pilgrim settlement at Plymouth. Yet, upon examining Bradford's opus, one finds not only a firm belief in God's grace and an affirmation of the Pilgrims' project, one also encounters ambiguity, doubt, skepticism, and disappointment concerning the progress of the Pilgrims in realizing their "Promised Land" in North America. In recollecting the history of Plymouth, Bradford frequently refers to problems in the colony that have to do with the probing and transgressing of religious and cultural boundaries and territorial borders on the part of its inhabitants. Thus, his notes on the first year in Plymouth mention two members of the community who were lost in the

woods on Friday, January 12, 1621: “John Goodman and Peter Brown, having cut thatch all the forenoon, went to a further place” from where they failed to return.

Whereupon [four or five men] went to seek them, but could hear nothing of them, so they returning, sent more, but that night they could hear nothing at all of them. The next day they armed ten or twelve men out, verily thinking the Indians had surprised them. They went seeking seven or eight miles, but could neither see nor hear any thing at all, so they returned, with much discomfort to us all. (Bradford and Winslow 16)

As it turned out, Goodman and Brown had simply got lost. In July of the same year, “one John Billington,” a boy, “lost him selfe in the woods, and wandered up and downe some 5. days [...]. At length he light on an Indean [sic] plantation, 20. mils south of this place, called Manamet [...] the Gove^r caused him to be enquired for among the Indeans, and at length Massassoyt sent word” that he was at Nawsett (Bradford 118). Bradford eventually sends out a party of ten men, accompanied by Squanto, to retrieve young Billington. There is no indication whether the boy actually ‘got lost’ on purpose, hoping to be taken in by the settlement’s indigenous neighbors, or whether he spent time with them of his own choice. Yet young Billington’s stroll in the woods serves to illustrate the accidental quality of cultural contact and exchange and the randomness with which decisions to live with one community or another might have occurred. Unintentionally, or half-intentionally, wandering away from the settlements, losing one’s bearings on the way to a neighboring town or village must have been common forms of cultural contact in 17th-century New England that may have led, in individual cases, to long term relocation, even to indigenization and assimilation to a native way of life. Whereas Bradford did not report any actual flights of Puritans or other settlers from Plymouth, the neighboring English settlement of Wessagusset witnessed the emigration of at least one desperate man during its first harsh winter in 1623. Starving,

[s]ome of the English resorted to trading their clothes for food [with inhabitants of the nearby Massachusetts village]; others contracted themselves out as servants to the Indians; one man, according to [Edward] Winslow [in *Good News from New England*], ‘turned savage’ and willingly joined the Indians. (Philbrick 141)

What is more, the crew of the *Swan*, the thirty-ton ship that had carried the men settling at Wessagusset, told Miles Standish, military officer at Plymouth, that "many of them were living with the Massachusetts in their wigwams" (150). Though this arrangement was most likely temporary for most of them, it is not inconceivable that individual sailors might have stayed on.

The Connecticut Code of Laws of May 1650, exemplary of jurisdiction at the time, forbids idleness: "no person, howseholder or other, shall spend his time idly or unprofitably, under paine of such punishment as the Courte shall thinke meet to inflict." Evidently, this law is directed not only at Puritan community members but particularly at non-Puritans whose approach to life and work might be different: "it is ordered, that the Constable of euery place shall vse special care and diligence to take knowledge of offenders in this kinde, especially of common Coasters, vnprofitable fowlers, and Tobacko takers [...]." The inherent cultural anxiety finds itself mirrored in the section that regulates cultural contact with the "indians." Whereas the prohibition to equip indigenous people with guns, powder, ammunition, or dogs, or to repair their weapons, might be a reasonable caution after the experiences of the Pequot War (1634-38), the attempts to forbid any closer contact with the neighboring cultures reflect a general fear of the other, but specifically the fear that the hierarchical difference established in discourse would turn out to be a sham difference. Yet, what is most noteworthy for the argument of this essay is the strict prohibition to elope and live with an indigenous community.

Whereas diuerse persons departe from amongst vs, and take vp their abode with the Indians, in a prophane course of life; for the preventing whereof, It is ordered that whatsoeuer person or persons that now inhabiteth, or shall inhabitt within this Jurisdiction, and shall departe from vs and settle or joine with the Indians, that they shall suffer three yeares imprisonment at least, in the Howse of Correction, and vndergoe such further censure, by fyne or corporall punishment, the perticular Courte shall judge meet to inflict in such cases [...].

This ordinance must most certainly be considered as a reaction to a noticeable number of such relocations and flights from strict Puritan rules and social expectations. As John Demos suggests in *The Unredeemed Captive*, one of the greatest challenges to the Puritan settlers of the first

half of the 17th century was “that some [English] captives will come to *prefer* Indian ways – and will refuse subsequent chances for repatriation. Here will be seen a direct fulfillment of the nightmare prospect: civilized people willingly turned ‘savage,’ their vaunted ‘Old World’ culture overwhelmed by the wilderness” (4).

For all the differences between the colonies in Jamestown, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay, the phenomenon of going Native was a threat to the stability of all three colonies in the 17th century, and each of them dealt with this problem in no uncertain terms. The Puritans’ increasing strength and sense of autonomy in the years preceding King Philip’s War (1675-76) apparently went along with a growing intolerance towards cultural mobility and choices of allegiance and a stricter policing and enforcement of cultural boundaries. In January 1676, “some soldiers captured a man who they at first thought was an Indian but who proved to be an Englishman” (Philbrick 280). Joshua Tefft, or Tift, claimed to have been taken captive and kept as a slave by Canonchet, the renowned Narragansett sachem, before the Great Swamp Fight in November 1675. Puritan historian William Hubbard, however, relates that Tift was “a renegade Englishman, of Providence, that upon some discontent among his neighbors, had turned Indian, married one of the Indian squaws, renounced his religion, nation, and natural parents, all at once fighting against them” (qtd. in Philbrick 143). Though it could apparently not be established with certainty whether or not he had fought on the Narragansett’s side in the battle, Tift was hanged, drawn, and quartered. Hubbard leaves no doubt as to the righteousness of this sentence:

he had in his habit conformed himself to them among whom he lived [...]. As to his religion he was found as ignorant as an heathen, which no doubt caused the fewer tears to be shed at his funeral, by being unwilling to lavish pity upon him that had divested himself of nature itself, as well as religion [...]. (143).

Philbrick assesses that “Tefft was a troubling example of what happened to a man when the Puritan’s god and culture were stripped away and Native savagery was allowed to take over” (280). Hubbard’s records, at any rate, imply that moving between cultures and going Native for whatever reason was not an option – much less so in the time of a war that many New Englanders rightly came to see as a test to the survival of the

entire colony, a fight of the English versus a coalition of indigenous towns and villages led by King Philip.

This perception of an English 'us' vs. an indigenous 'them' is reinforced once more in the aftermath of King Philip's War through the publication of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682). Having been captured together with her three children during a raid on Lancaster in February 1676, Rowlandson spent eleven weeks with her indigenous captors, mainly serving the female sachem Weetamo. She met King Philip/Metacomet, the sachem of the Pokanoket, and was present at a number of cultural events that had hardly ever been witnessed by any cultural outsider, such as the warriors' dance in preparation of battle. In the first part of her narrative of captivity, Rowlandson clearly states the well-known denigrating views of the "savages" and "evil heathens," and thus her text can be seen as Puritan propaganda. In the second part of her narrative, however, Rowlandson's rhetoric is toned down and much more ambivalent. Her narrative becomes an account of her own acculturation process among the natives which has led critics to refer to her text as double-voiced (cf. Lösch and Paul 131-40). As her own account was published 'sandwiched' between a preface by Increase Mather and an afterword by her husband, a minister, its ambiguities seem to be contained by orthodox male-authored paratexts. In any case, the widely received 'bestseller' of the captivity genre, which has been continually republished through the centuries, glosses over the stories of voluntary migration of white settlers, their flight from misery in a hierarchical colonial society, and their choice to remain with their native family and community of (initially perhaps involuntary) adoption and thus serves as the affirmation of colonial ideology. In fact, dichotomous thinking is so fundamental on this issue that not even an exception to the rule is tolerated. Rebecca Blevins Faery argues that the story of Rowlandson's captivity appears in a chiasmic relation to that of Pocahontas, as the 'captivity' of the latter by the English is little recognized as a form of involuntary bondage, and yet, Pocahontas was captured by Captain Argall in 1612 and placed under English tutelage (118-19). As a captive of the English she becomes a convert to the Christian faith and the bride of an English Christian.

III. The Case of Eunice Williams

Faery rightly points to Rowlandson and Pocahontas as two narratives of captivity; both can also be related to the narrative of another ‘famous captive:’ Eunice Williams, aka A’ongote, who has received renewed interest in recent decades (cf. Demos). In 1704, Eunice, the daughter of the Puritan reverend John Williams of Deerfield, Massachusetts, and close kin to Cotton Mather, was captured at the age of seven by an Iroquois (and likely French Canadian funded) war party. Like Mary Rowlandson, Eunice Williams was a member of the Puritan New England elite. Yet unlike Rowlandson, Williams, only a girl at the age of her abduction, ended up spending her life among the indigenous family that adopted her. And again unlike Rowlandson, yet like Pocahontas, Williams never authored a captivity narrative. Indeed, when she realizes that she might be forced to leave her adopted family and husband at Kahnakawe nine years after the raid, Eunice/A’ongote reverts to silence and withdraws from Puritan discourses. Even though she is initially a captive, her story suggests that in her later life she can be seen as a fugitive who shrinks away from any contact with her Puritan background and who is unwilling to return to the New England community.

In *The Unredeemed Captive*, John Demos explores her story, taking care to fill the “dark areas” of history (McHale 90) with careful reconstructions. Demos shifts the perspective from Eunice’s father John Williams, the respected Puritan minister, to that of the cultural outsider. The decisions taken by Eunice/A’ongote and her Mohawk Iroquois family become plausible in this perspectivization. The unfaltering determination on the side of the white Protestant Williamses to ‘redeem her from the savages,’ on the other hand, appears dogmatic and intolerant when we look beyond the emotional distress of the initial separation. This is relevant since Eunice’s/A’ongote’s story became known to contemporaries and subsequent generations mainly through the narratives of her father (whose account of his own brief captivity, *The Redeemed Captive* of 1707, was widely received) and other Puritan dignitaries like Cotton Mather. The initial attempts to retrieve Eunice, which repeatedly involved international diplomacy between New England, New France, and several indigenous leaders, was driven by her father’s wish to save the child from hardship, in particular the Iroquois and the French Canadian ways of life and the ‘harmful’ influences of Catholicism. Yet,

already a couple of months after Eunice had reached her new abode at Kahnawake at Sault St. Louis, her captors imparted that they ““would as soon part with their hearts as [Williams’s] child”” (Demos 84). In February 1707, the former captive has turned into a Mohawk Iroquois family member and ““seemes unwilling to Returne”” (Schuyler qtd. in Demos 85). In 1713, she marries a young Mohawk, apparently of her own volition;⁶ by then, she seems unable, or unwilling, to understand English and outright refuses to return to her English family, even if only for a brief visit (Demos 99-108). The nuptial vows are given in front of a French Jesuit priest, and it becomes obvious that Eunice has crossed into new cultural territory in multiple ways: as a Catholic convert (having taken on the name Margaret at her rechristening), she chooses to live with the Mohawks on French Canadian territory (99, 101). The degree to which these personal choices alarm her New England family members are revealing of the discourses that formulate Puritan identity insofar as they demonize otherness in the shapes of indigeneity and Catholicism. The fact that the natives are Christianized and practice Catholicism does not mitigate Eunice’s/Margaret’s desertion; in fact, it makes matters worse as religious alterity is added to cultural difference. Thus, her cousin Elisha professes that he cannot write of the news of her marriage ““without Tears”” (qtd. in Demos 99). The issue at stake is not that of a young woman having chosen to live and marry ‘abroad,’ but that of a soul lost to the right faith, of a pious member of the Puritan project gone astray among ‘popish savages.’

Whereas the members of the Williams family along with other commissioners from New England insisted on the status of Eunice as a victim, the poor and pitiable, young and vulnerable Christian girl ““in her Indian Captivity”” (Cotton Mather qtd. in Demos 98), Eunice/A’ongote does not seem to affirm this version of her life’s story and instead resorts to silence. When Peter Schuyler attempts to redeem her in 1713, in two hours of the dearest entreating, she does not speak but to say “Jaghte oghte” (“maybe not” in Mohawk) once. Against the steadfast narratives of her victimization that are fashioned for Eunice outside

⁶ According to historical sources, Eunice and her husband had to threaten the French Jesuit that they would live together ‘in sin’ if he kept refusing their wish to be married before God. Only then did he consent to marry them (cf. Demos 105).

the Sault St. Louis Mohawk communities, she apparently pits silence and the refusal to even begin to explain and justify herself. Neither Eunice, nor the French Jesuits at Kahnawake, nor the New England and New France officials are facing a completely new situation. Captivity was an experience that was quite commonplace and that might have been one of the major forces of cultural mobility at the time. All members of the Williams family who survived the raid and the ensuing march north had already had their own experiences with captivity. Father John had been a captive among first the Mohawk and later the Canadian French for two and a half years, and Eunice's brother Stephen was fully engaged with Mohawk seasonal work and cultural practices during the 14 months period of his captivity (cf. Demos 35-36). In view of this, it seems as if the ostentatious expressions of sadness and concern in private and official correspondence veil the more complex and possibly positive feelings concerning cultural contact that individual family members may have had. Certainly, family members, colonial governors, negotiators and go-betweens, mission priests,⁷ and the receiving indigenous communities would not view Eunice's case as the singular, dramatic event that it is made out to be.

Continued attempts to redeem Eunice or to persuade her to come back to New England failed. Only years after her father's death in 1729, Eunice eventually did visit the Williamses four times between 1740 and 1760, with her husband and an interpreter who would allow her to converse with her New England relatives. By this time, Eunice had taken on the Mohawk name of Kanenstehawi and had given birth to three children. When she came to Deerfield to visit, she came as a fully established member of the Mohawk community who could not reasonably be expected to re-integrate into Puritan Deerfield and live as a white woman again.

The case of Eunice Williams might be unique as it became part of cultural memory and survives in historical documents because of the privileged status of the captive in the Puritan community as the daughter of a minister. Eventually, however, we have to view Eunice's story as

⁷ Demos notes that Pierre Cholonc, the French Jesuit who eventually married Eunice, had been the "personal confidant of the famed Iroquois convert Kateri Tekakwitha" (103) – so he, too, surely knew about the intricacies of making life-altering choices that involved crossing cultural boundaries.

only one among many, often less spectacular stories of capture, flight, and indigenization, most of which were not written down by those who went Native.

IV. "The White Indians" in the 18th Century

In his discussion of 18th-century white-indigenous cultural contact and its colonialist troping, ethnohistorian James Axtell formulates a strong thesis that may be used to explain instances of indigenization we find in the earlier periods: "the Indian defenders of the continent," he writes,

were more successful, psychologically if not numerically than either their [French or English] rivals [...] in converting enemies to their way of life. [D]espite all odds, they [the Indians] succeeded in seducing French and English colonists in numbers so alarming to European sensibilities that the natives were conceded to be, in effect, the best cultural missionaries and educators on the continent. (*Invasion* 302)

While this view is articulated in historical scholarship of the colonial and revolutionary eras focusing on indigenous-white relations (cf. particularly Axtell; Calloway, *American Revolution and Crown and Calumet*; Demos; Hulme; Kupperman), it has not yet made its way into the canonized and more popular historical narratives. Even as the fact is acknowledged that going Native was a common practice in the colonies, the prominent figure in representations throughout the 18th century remains that of the adopted captive who eventually stayed with his or her adoptive family. Hardly ever, it seems, is there any broader consideration of the circumstances under which European settlers (as well as enslaved or indentured Africans and African Americans) might have chosen to run away to their indigenous neighbors and that they were fugitives rather than captives.

Around the mid-1700s, several historical witnesses document the appeal that indigenous ways of life and community structures had for white Europeans. In 1747, Cadwallar Colden, first colonial representative to the Iroquois Confederacy, reported on several instances of flight as an alternative form of cultural mobility: 'captives' who "were by the Caressings of their [European] Relations persuaded to come Home, in a little Time grew tired of our Manner of living, and run away again to the

Indians, and ended their days with them” (Axtell, *Invasion* 303). Though initially captured, these and other redeemed adoptees chose to leave their ‘white’ lives behind and integrate fully into their indigenous host communities. Six years later, Benjamin Franklin muses on the same phenomenon:

when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners young by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho’ ransomed by their Friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a Short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first good Opportunity of escaping again into the Woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them. (“To Peter Collinson”)

Whites escaping into the wilderness are not seen merely as culturally *changed* – on a much more stronger note, they are considered to have become ‘un-cultured’ and ‘de-civilized’ when living with the natives in the ‘woods.’ At the end of the French and Indian War (1754-63), vivid illustrations of Franklin’s statement can be found. The following episode shows contemporaneous attempts to establish and protect racial boundaries in formation. Representing the colonial victors, Colonel Henry Bouquet saw it fit to force the defeated “Ohio Indians” to return all white captives and children born from white-indigenous alliances. Yet his logics did not fit that of the adoptees that he attempted to rescue. Their social ties to the indigenous families and communities had become so close and well-established that most were highly reluctant to return. Many apparently wanted to flee redemption and return to their *indigenous* way of life, and Bouquet ordered them “to be closely watched and well Secured” (qtd. in Axtell, *Invasion* 307). While, in the 17th century, the rigid social rules and the unrelenting penitentiary system of the Puritan settler communities may have been major motivations for the choice to ‘emigrate’ to indigenous nations, the reasons are not as easily ascertained in the case of these later examples. What recurrently appears in witnesses’ statements, though, is a great dedication on the side of the receiving indigenous communities to tenderness and non-compulsiveness in child rearing and family life. At the same time, historical accounts suggest that indigenous societies tended to disregard racial and ethnic differences once a person had been admitted into the community. Markers like skin color, facial features or even prior socialization were

outweighed by a new family member's social and communal roles. Evidently, these factors were of advantage to white captives turned fugitives, who became full members of their indigenous host cultures. Some of these points are clearly illustrated, for instance, in John Tanner's narrative of his life with several tribal communities in the Great Lakes region from about 1790 to 1820 (James). In his recollections, he remembers being treated harshly by his biological white family. At the age of nine, he reports, his father "'flogged me [with a parcel of small canes] much more severely than I could suppose [my] offense merited. [...] From that time, my father's house was less like home to me and I often thought and said, 'I wish I could go and live among the Indians'" (Tanner qtd. in Drimmer 24). Whether or not this wish was prompted by other adoptees' stories that Tanner may have heard is uncertain.⁸ At any rate, numerous reports state that most adopted boys had "'nothing to do, but cut a little wood for the fire,' draw water for cooking and drinking, and 'shoot Blackbirds that came to eat up the corn,'" enjoying "'some leisure' for 'hunting and other innocent diversions in the woods'" (*Invasion* 324).⁹

Tanner's story is included in Frederick Drimmer's edited collection, *Scalps and Tomahawks: Narratives of Indian Captivity* (1961, later republished under the less lurid title *Captured by Indians*). Drimmer's introduction offers another example of how the anti-foundational figure of the white fugitive has been removed from the hegemonic historical narrative. Drimmer draws a simplified and homogenized image of 'the Indian' that makes it very easy, for an ill-informed, sensation-seeking reader to identify with the horrors of captivity so often formulated in the canonized texts. His publication, he assesses, contains "the most interesting and dramatic" narratives, and "[n]ecessarily the greater number [of white captives] hated their captors" (20). Yet, despite his problematic and culturally biased presentation, Drimmer notes the appeal that life in an indigenous community evidently held for unidentified numbers of

⁸ It is also uncertain if he articulated this wish only in hindsight, or if it was added by the author of Tanner's as-told-to-narrative so as to achieve logical and motivational coherence.

⁹ The quotations from Axtell interspersed in this passage are taken from various captivity narratives. He does not specify the concrete source of each quote.

adopted Europeans and Euro-Americans and acknowledges processes of indigenization that occurred in situations of native-white cultural contact. "White captives," he notes,

particularly if they were very young when they were taken prisoner, became greatly attached to the families into which they were adopted, and to the Indian way of life. [...] The white woman captive who married an Indian and reared a half-breed [sic] family might become more an Indian than a white in her habits and outlook as the years went by. Often [indigenized whites] did not remember any other life before their capture, and they were reluctant to leave the Indians. (13-14)

By way of example, Drimmer relates that "[w]hen John Tanner returned to his own people [i.e. non-indigenous Americans] he had forgotten his native language and his name" (14). This theme of 'cultural amnesia' often figures prominently in the discussions of captivity-turned-indigenization (cf. also the story of Eunice Williams). Given the frequency of cultural contact and exchange between non-indigenous and indigenous people especially in the Great Lakes region and particularly in the 18th century, however, one wonders if the degree of cultural exclusivity and the notion of cultural purity inherent in this either-or paradigm had any basis in the lived reality of European and indigenous peoples in North America. Rather, assessments such as Drimmer's seem to imply a kind of 'brainwashing' that would occur upon extended periods of cultural contact with indigenous communities. A reading interested in the anti-foundational consequences of acknowledging the existence of white fugitives may reveal the fugitive's unwillingness to identify with a name and culture from a personal past that might be remembered as burdensome and undesirable. Consider again the case of the former captives forcefully returned to Colonel Bouquet in the spring of 1765: re-integrating the returnees in their English families became a difficult task since they were ostentatiously "'ignorant of their own Names, or former places of abode'" and did not "'speak a word of any language but Indian'" (Sullivan 812). If one bears in mind Eunice Williams'/A'ongote's strategies of resistance, professed ignorance of elements of one's first culture might also be read as a form of resistance.

The figure of the captive/adoptee/fugitive recurs throughout the first two centuries of English colonialism in North America, and is anything but ambivalent. The unusual example of David Owens shows both the

potential for cultural mobility and the rigidity of categorical borderlines forming at the time. A "Soldier belonging to the Regulars" (Franklin, "To [Peter Collinson?]", Owens deserted during the Seven Year's War to "liv[e] among the Indians" (Calloway, 1763 81). Owens was apparently well-integrated into the indigenous community and married a Delaware woman named Maria. Yet Owens did not 'vanish' as an Englishman into the indigenous society. After having lived with the indigenous group for a few years, Owens ended up murdering several members of his adopted community, including his wife and several children. While the motivation for his violent action remains unclear, there is reason to believe that he meant to sell his victims' scalps, which he took before leaving the site of the massacre, to the British. The fugitive turns into an Indian fighter in this historical scene, and his brutality (taking the scalps of his former companions) may have had to serve as a proof of a renewed loyalty that allowed him to return to white culture and society. Owens negotiates his position of plural affiliations by exorcising his "inner demons of identity," as Jane Merrit puts it (qtd. in Calloway, 1763 81). Even while he is engaged in blurring categories as a man who travels across cultural lines and racial borders in formation, Owens ultimately embraces the opposition of white and native. By 'bringing home' the bloody trophy of his time, he becomes instrumental in the re-affirmation of boundaries that would regulate indigenous-white relations at the turn of the 19th century. His display of resolved loyalty conflict apparently worked well with the British and did not disqualify him from acting as a middleman in dealing with indigenous communities: Calloway reports that "Henry Bouquet promptly employed Owens as an interpreter in dealing with the Delawares and Shawnees" (1763 81).¹⁰

V. Fugitives and Lovers

With the solidification of whiteness as a racial concept in the 19th century, the boundary between indigenous and immigrant cultures becomes even less permeable. Federal and state politics are tightly intertwined in

¹⁰ Cf. also Wharton.

this development. Thus Andrew Jackson's brutal and relentless removal policy abrogated the position of indigenous communities as independent nations all the while it made cultural mobility between white villages and towns and the designated Indian Territories far more difficult. As the discourses relating to indigeneity and whiteness change, so do the modes of flight from the expectations of white society. The various strands of social and cultural developments in the 19th and 20th centuries warrant book-length discussions (cf. for instance Deloria), and we refrain from highlighting some of these developments in this essay. Rather, we turn towards postmodern narratives that re-center the figure of the white fugitive in fictional form, often entailing a historical rewriting. Texts such as Bharati Mukherjee's novel *The Holder of the World* (1993), Angela Carter's short story "Our Lady of the Massacre" (1979), Louise Erdrich's poem "Captivity" (1984), and Gerald Vizenor's novel *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991), to name only a few, represent the white fugitive of colonial America and in this sense also qualify as postcolonial texts about early American history.

Mukherjee's postmodern retelling of indigenous-white relations during King Philip's War in Puritan America in *The Holder of the World* envisions the tabooed crossing of cultural boundaries by a white woman going Native. The protagonist, Rebecca Easton, elopes with her Nipmuc lover, who covers her tracks with false evidence of a make-believe kidnapping while a Nipmuc woman takes care of Rebecca's small child, Hannah. The child is left behind in the village with a white family and never sees her mother again. Remembering (and keeping) the secret of her mother's disappearance, Hannah grows up as the orphan and "offspring of an upright widow" (30) rather than the daughter of a despised cultural traitor. Mukherjee's first person narrator, Beigh Masters, who in the late 20th century researches Hannah's childhood, comments:

I feel for Hannah as the Nipmuc woman carries her off and drops her noiselessly on a pioneer family's doorstep, deflecting forever the natural course and location of her girlhood. And I envy Rebecca as she, impulsively, carelessly, leaps behind her lover, who is already on his horse, and vanishes into the wilderness. She has escaped her prison, against prevailing odds that would have branded her. (30-31)

Going Native in Mukherjee's novel implies liberation for the mother who opts to join her native lover and to leave behind life as a Puritan woman and mother. Contrary to Mary Rowlandson's account of captivity and her forced stay with the Nipmucs, Mukherjee's protagonist schemes her own removal from the white community and invents a version of events that her Puritan contemporaries could believe and accept. This kind of representation rewrites the canonical versions of captivity into a tale of female empowerment and agency. It may even cast doubt on many historical 'captivity' narratives so that the reader may ask: what if such ploys had worked in other instances of early American history? How many captives were, in fact, fugitives pretending to be captives? And how does that re-orient the perspective on early cultural contact in North America?

In a similar way, Angela Carter describes the indigenization of an English immigrant woman among a native North American community, again echoing the Rowlandson-narrative. In her short story "Our Lady of the Massacre," Carter's female first-person-narrator makes her way across the Atlantic in a "convict transport" to work off her Old World sentence on a Virginia plantation. After she has severely injured her overseer in self-defense, the black gardener advises her: "you must be off into the wilderness, and cast your fate to the tender mercies of the savage Indian. For this is a hanging matter" (250). Thus, she runs away, unafraid of the perils and inhabitants of the 'wilderness:' "[a]s for the Indians, I thought, well! If I can keep off the overseer with my knife, I'd be more than a match for them" (251). She runs away from her master and lives with an indigenous community:

[b]y the time the weather turned, I was rattling away in the Indian language as if I'd been born to it [...] as to converting them to the true religion, I was so busy with one thing and another that it never entered my head. As for my pale face, by the end of the harvest it was brown as any of theirs [...]. But for all the bonds of affection between us, I might still have thought of journeying on to Florida as the weather grew colder [...] had I not cast my eye on a brave of that tribe who had no woman for himself and he cast his on me. (254-55)

The narrator becomes indigenized, gets married, and has a child. However, the story ends with war and the killing of the narrator's native family. She and her child are captured by English soldiers, and,

recognized as a white bondwoman, she is termed a “runaway” for whose return the soldiers think they will be rewarded. A minister and his wife pay for her and her son to be left with them, and she works in the minister’s household as a servant of sorts. Her indigenization is only partially reversed, and the story concludes with humorous mock-theological discussions between the minister and the maid from Lancashire about the difference between Christian religion and Iroquois rites. Carter’s narrative, like Mukherjee’s, redefines the terms of captivity by creating stories of adventure, not victimization. Women are ‘turned loose’ from Puritanical English law and colonial politics. Clearly, these texts reveal a feminist impetus in focusing on the emancipatory potential of going Native – and in both instances, the women get away with it. The publication of these stories of feminist elopement coincides with the publication of a whole range of revisionist readings of Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative since the 1990s that focus on moments of ambivalence in the text which destabilize the overall coherence of the captivity plot (cf. Faery; Howe; Haselstein; Strong).

Historical documents about the flight and ensuing indigenization of white persons clearly privilege a white settler perspective (written testaments by indigenous people are hardly existent by comparison), but postmodern texts by Native American authors address the lacunae of early American historiography. The poem “Captivity” by the Anishinaabe writer Louise Erdrich, included in her first collection of poetry, *Jacklight* (1984), also refers to Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, yet the title of the poem contradicts its actual rendering of a captivity experience: Erdrich rewrites captivity as captivation. She prefaces her poem with an epigraph that links it to Rowlandson’s narrative. The quotation, however, is neither part of the original text, nor does its logic of magic match the Puritan belief system.¹¹

¹¹ Erdrich’s preface to the poem reads: “[h]e (my captor) gave me a bisquit, which I put in my pocket, and not daring to eat it, buried it under a log, fearing he had put something in it to make me love him.” This quotation is credited as from “the narrative of captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, who was taken prisoner by the Wampanoag when Lancaster, Massachusetts, was destroyed, in the year 1676.” Erdrich takes poetic license to write herself into the discourse of early American cultural contact and to develop a different script of the historical contact experience.

The first image of the poem is that of a split of the speaker's body ("I thought I would be sliced in two"), which we can read as a metaphorical comment on her position at the beginning of her captivity: being torn between two cultures, two epistemologies, two ways of seeing and comprehending the world. Yet, this emotion is followed by the recognition of her captor's individuality ("I had grown to recognize his face. I could distinguish it from the others") and the invocation of religion as a shield against understanding his "foreignness;" the same function we may attribute to the religious voice in Rowlandson's own account. Throughout the poem the interaction between the speaker and "him," her captor, is foregrounded. Few other characters appear, and only briefly: her child, his wife, her husband. As they are thus severed from their social and cultural contexts, the speaker and her captor find themselves in an intimate situation removed from dominant discourses of alterity and antagonism. He "drags her from the flood" and "cuts the cord that binds her to the tree." Thus, the poem's scenes of rescue do not refer to a danger represented by native people, rather, they appear as metaphors for setting the protagonist free from the constraints and the limitations of her own culture. Erotic and sexual metaphors appear in images of nature and of nurturing; she is fed tender meat by her captor, maybe in an imitation of the love charm that she expected initially, as this scene encodes a successful seduction; afterwards she follows where he takes her. The speaker reads spectacles of nature as God's rage and presence. When returned to her white family at the end of the poem (the circumstances of this return are not explicated), she contends: "[r]escued, I see no truth in things," and feels a captive among her own people. The poem ends, as does Mary Rowlandson's text, with an image of wakefulness that reverberates with memories of her stay among the natives with "him" ("I lay to sleep. And in the dark I see myself as I was outside their circle"). The speaker remembers and begs for admittance to the other culture. Captivity, in the end, is redefined as a release – the captive becomes the fugitive who is asking permission to stay. Erdrich's poem is a representation of an intercultural encounter that, similarly to Mukherjee's novel and Carter's short story, focuses on the attraction between white women and native men.

Finally, *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991), Gerald Vizenor's multifaceted re-imagining of the *grands récits* of the discovery of America, is based on a different foundational notion than traditional early American

historiography: that tribal civilizations have always held an appeal to Europeans and whites who suffer from the Western “culture of death” (9). Thus, in Vizenor’s novel, Christopher Columbus is not the celebrated European discoverer of America but the aching descendant of Mayas, who are portrayed as the actual discoverers of Europe in pre-Christian times. Columbus secretly longs to ‘return home’ to the New World and to be relieved from his deep-seated longing and the very real pains of a crooked penis. 500 years after his exodus, his mixed-blood heirs, a group of Anishinaabe at the end of the 20th century, found a new cross-blood nation that soon becomes a refuge for all kinds of people who feel hurt and abused by white mainstream culture. The new tribal nation at

Point Assinika announced that the lonesome and wounded would be healed with dreams, blue memories, and the signature of survivance; those who heard the stories [...] sailed, drove, and hitchhiked by the hundreds to be humoured in the blood [...]. The wounded who waited to be healed and regenerated were given free meals, bingo cards, and hand care [...]. (143)

The majority of refugees are mixed-blood children, yet there is also a sizeable amount of whites who turn up at Point Assinika as fugitives. Among them are a priest who seeks refuge from the strict rules and resulting lonesomeness that he experiences as a member of the Catholic church; a Jewish talk radio host who is fascinated by the heirs’ worldview and by their charismatic leader; a gender-bending literature professor, and a scientist who may or may not have been involved in crimes against humanity during the German Nazi regime. While these fugitives constitute a very heterogeneous group, it is obvious that they all look for some sort of liberation, even salvation. Most of them, it seems, feel oppressed by the social expectations, and even more so by the rigid and oppressive categories of ‘white culture.’ Padrino de Torres, the fugitive priest, for instance, “had not been lonesome in the world since he had renounced the racialism of the church, the disconsolate nights as a priest [...]” (144). The white fugitives are received with kindness in the tribal nation, decide on new tasks they want to accomplish, new ways of life, and even on new identities. As long as they show solidarity with the cross-blood community and its aims, they are welcome as appreciated new members (cf. Hein 147-56).

The notion that informs Vizenor's narrative bears resemblance to the motivation that we suggest for the early fugitives from the Puritan and Pilgrim colonies: even if the indigenous life-style is anything but romanticized, it is attractive to those who feel limited by the social rules and expectations of their white birth culture. Rather than just offering an alternative, it promises greater freedom of choice in personal matters. The texts by Mukherjee, Carter, Erdrich, and Vizenor suggest the ways in which going Native-plots in contemporary American literature create white subject positions that cross cultural boundaries in a direction that implies an assimilation to the 'other' and thus (re)present the opposite of those processes of radical othering that are inscribed in the colonial ideology about North American indigenous people.

VI. Conclusion

The fictional tales of going Native revise the formula of the early American captivity narrative, a formula that has for a long time been celebrated as *the* first genuinely US-American literary genre, and re-direct critical attention to those life stories of white immigrants and settlers who left hardly any textual traces behind. These were fugitives, runaways, captives, male and female, who often did not return – at least not voluntarily. Usually, as June Namias and others have documented, they were adopted into Native American families and given new names. They changed their ways of life, their dress, and eating habits; at times they even forgot most of their English. The 'loss' of these people has haunted the North American cultural imaginary ever since. In their 20th-century revisionist texts, Mukherjee, Carter, Erdrich, and Vizenor present different instances of indigenization and thus enter a fictional dialogue with the historians of the pre-national US-American period.

In many ways, the fugitives of this article may be called 'vanishing Europeans,' individuals who for whatever reason have no investment in colonial doctrines. And they do not only disappear into the 'wilderness' but are also excluded (and thus vanishing) from the colonial discourse as a haunting absence. To look for the fugitive (or the runaway) as an anti-foundational figure in the context of colonialism, colonial settlement, and, ultimately, US-American nation- and empire-building is a fruitful perspective in the critical engagement with discourses of American

exceptionalism. If it took martial law to maintain the settlement of Jamestown as the first permanent English settlement in North America and to prevent the voluntary indigenization of some of the settlers, this site is the first “imperial location,” in Amy Kaplan’s usage of the term, upon which many were to follow.

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HEIKE PAUL

Remembering the Fugitive as a Foundational Figure? The (Black) Canadian Narrative Revisited¹

I. Introducing the Fugitive as a Foundational Figure: The Story of Josiah Henson

On September 16, 1983, the Canadian Post Corporation issued the first Canadian stamp that featured the portrait of a black man: Josiah Henson (1785-1883), perhaps the best-known 19th-century African Canadian, who had escaped slavery in the US and settled in Dresden, then Dawn,

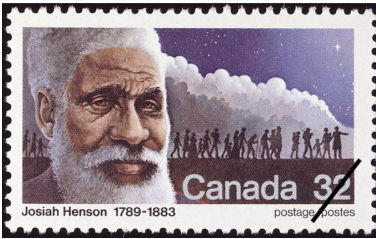


Figure 1 Josiah Henson stamp
© Canada Post Corporation 1983.
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Canada. The 1983 stamp commemorated the 100th anniversary of his death. Henson, born into late 18th-century slavery in Maryland, was one among many slaves who managed to escape the ‘peculiar institution’ and to live a life apart from slavery in Canada. He became famous because of his connection to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s sentimental reform novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1850-52). Stowe, at

one point, claimed him as the model for Tom, and Henson had his first autobiography (*The Life of Josiah Henson*, 1849) prefaced by Stowe and reissued as *Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Father Henson’s Story of His Own Life* in 1858. In the documentation of her sources, *A Key to Uncle*

¹ This article continues a discussion of issues that are also addressed in my essay “Out of Chatham: Abolitionism on the Canadian Frontier.” *Abolitionist Places*. Ed. Martha Schoolman and Jared Hickman. Spec. issue of *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 8.2 (2011): 165-88. Research for this project was made possible by a faculty research grant from the Canadian government.

Tom's Cabin that she compiled in 1853 in response to the harsh criticism she received particularly from Southerners, Stowe is at great pains to downplay the fictionality of her novel and notes: "[t]he character of Uncle Tom has been objected to as improbable; and yet the writer has received more confirmations of that character, and from a greater variety of sources, than of any other in the book" (23). As one of these "sources," Stowe lists "the published memoirs of the venerable Josiah Henson, now, as we have said, a clergyman in Canada" (26). She introduces Henson as someone whose "Christian principle was invulnerable" (26) and even quotes from his 1849 slave narrative at some length. She ends by referring to his Canadian experience:

[w]ith a degree of prudence, courage and address, which can scarcely find a parallel in any history, he managed, with his wife and two children, to escape into Canada. Here he learned to read, and, by his superior talent and capacity for management, laid the foundation for the fugitive settlement of Dawn, which is understood to be one of the most flourishing in Canada. (27)

That the Dawn settlement ultimately turned out to be a failure and a financial disaster does not concern us here. More importantly, Stowe casts Henson as a heroic figure, and it is this description that helped, in turn, to enhance Henson's popularity as he became increasingly identified as the model for the literary character of Tom – even though "nothing said publicly by the author of *Uncle Tom* gave real substance to any contention that Josiah Henson and Uncle Tom were one and the same" (Winks 188). As Jane and William Pease have argued, "Josiah Henson was the prototype for Uncle Tom. He had the looks; he had the proper slavery background, but there the similarity ends" (69). In his comprehensive discussion of the Stowe-Henson connection, Robin Winks reconstructs the lore of the time about a personal meeting between Stowe and Henson that most likely never took place, and he traces how the narratives by Stowe and Henson "did reinforce each other" (189) over time and added to each other's success. "In the end Henson too embraced the legend," Winks notes. And even though Henson had earlier also voiced criticism of racism in Canada and in Canadian institutions (194), he uses his prominence and popularity both nationally and internationally to encourage and promote black settlement in Canada and thus assists, once more, in the creation of his own myth.

For Josiah Henson's commemoration, the Canadian Postal Office commissioned a painting by South African-born Toronto painter Tony Kew, who produced an original artwork as the basis for the design of the stamp. In this composition, Henson's face is prominently displayed; he is presented as a dignified elder minister (reminding us that his slave narrative is as much a narrative of conversion). In the background we see individuals, young and old, moving from left to right, whom we take to be fugitive slaves on their way from the United States to Canada in the 19th century. They move secretly and cautiously albeit determinedly. In this stamp, Henson is remembered as an individual but is also placed in the wider historical context of slavery and the Underground Railroad and thus figures as a representative of those 30,000 to 50,000 fugitive slaves who made their way to Canada in the mid-19th century.² It is thus the figure of the black fugitive arriving from the US in Canada that is envisioned as part of the Canadian national narrative. In addition, Henson is not merely a representative of that group; his depiction also has connotations of personal charisma and fatherly leadership that allude to a biblical figure: Moses leading his people to Canaan/Canada. The historical notice that accompanied the issuing of the stamp reads as follows:

Josiah Henson was born a slave near Port Tobacco, Maryland. He barely knew his father, who was taken from his family and sold. As a child, Henson himself was seized from his mother and also sold, but the two were subsequently reunited. In his youth, Henson became a fervent Christian, and in 1828 the Methodist Episcopal Church ordained him as a preacher. By this time Henson had his own family and supervised operations on his master's plantation. Mounting evidence that he was to be sold away from his wife and children convinced him to escape. Following the North Star and carrying his two youngest children on his back, Henson arrived in Canada on 28 October 1830, where he resumed preaching and acted as a leader of other escaped slaves. He co-founded a settlement and school for blacks near present-day Dresden, Ontario. Henson later became identified with the hero of the novel, "Uncle Tom's

² Different aspects of this history have been recorded in: Bordewich (2005); Collison (1997); Drew (1856); Farrell (1955); Hill (1981); Larson (2004); Pease and Pease (1963); Rhodes (1998); Simpson (2005); Smardz Frost (*I've Got a Home* 2007); Ullman (1969); Winks (1971).

Cabin.” Tony Kew, a Toronto artist, has based this stamp design on an authentic portrait of Josiah Henson, combined with a symbolic rendering of the “underground railroad,” which transported him and his companions to freedom.” (Canada Post Corporation. [Postage Stamp Press Release], 1983)³

Josiah Henson is claimed as a foundational figure both for a black Canadian narrative and for the history of Canadian abolitionism. He is certainly the most prominent black fugitive in Canadian history. Furthermore, he has achieved an iconic status in the national cultural imaginary of Canada:

as the myths of the North Star, the Underground Railroad, and the fugitives’ haven ‘under the lion’s paw’ grew in the post-Civil War years, when these myths no longer could be tested, Canadians came increasingly to congratulate themselves upon their lack of prejudice and to contrast themselves favourably with the immoral and once slave-ridden United States. The true contrast was favourable enough, indeed; but that the greatest, the best-known, the most pious black fugitive of all time should have sought out Canadian soil for his resurrection bred a growing Canadian self-satisfaction with racial conditions above the forty-ninth parallel. If Uncle Tom came to Canada, could conditions need improving? (Winks 193)

In the context of this volume, the fugitive as a figure of mobility is explored mostly as a figure of unsanctioned movement: most essays offer critical accounts that investigate the perspective of the dominant society from which he or she escapes and which represents the fugitive as a criminal, a deserter, or a terrorist. Engaging with the fugitive as a foundational figure in public discourses radically reconfigures the fugitive’s mobility. The Canadian narrative of Josiah Henson’s mobility as an American slave dwells on the plight of his American bondage and on the hardships of the escape only to ultimately focus on the ‘happy ending’ of the fugitive’s arrival in freedom, and this closure takes place on Canadian soil. Henson thus is instrumentalized in a discourse of Canadian nation-building much of which is founded, then and now, on a strange

³ See *Canadian Postal Archives*: <http://data4.collectionscanada.ca/netacgil/nph-brs?s1=0954&l=20&d=POST&p=1&u=/&r=1&f=G>.

blend of humanitarianism and anti-American sentiment. References to Henson's life appear throughout Canadian history as evidence of Canadian anti-slavery politics and as testimony to the fact that Canadians successfully resisted US-American political pressure before and in the wake of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and that they did *not* return fugitive slaves to their American masters.⁴ As a representative fugitive to Canada, i.e. as *the* archetypal fugitive (at a time when Canada did not yet exist as a confederation, let alone as a modern nation), Henson is time and again used in a somewhat self-congratulatory fashion by Canadian writers and in the Canadian press "as sufficient and sole evidence to prove that Canadians shared none of the American racial virus" (Winks 194-95).

Today, the site of Josiah Henson's historical settlement in Dresden is the most popular stop along the so-called African Canadian Heritage Trail that chronicles the history of black fugitive slaves from the US who found a new home in those small communities and towns in Western Ontario in the 19th century, communities such as Windsor, Sandwich, Amherstburg, Chatham, and Dresden. The site bears the name "Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site" with striking, yet apparently unintended sarcasm. Obviously, Tom's cabin, which provided the title for Stowe's novel and which is depicted in its opening chapters, is located in Kentucky, not in Canada, and it is a *slave* cabin. Presently, the historic site offers many activities that range from candlelight dinners to gift shopping; it houses a small museum and an exhibition; and it caters to individual tourists and organizes package tours. It is also possible to book a Christmas Dinner at the site; under the slogan "Christmas at the cabin," this event includes the preparation of Christmas pudding as well as a sermon delivered by a local minister. The internet presentation of the historic site points to the commodification of Canada's most

⁴ See, for instance, Winifred Kincade's *The Torch: Ontario Monuments to Great Names* (1962), which includes a eulogy of Josiah Henson (153-57). In terms of the legal status of the fugitive in Canada which is mythologized in the figure of Henson, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 (a treaty between the US and Britain regarding the Canada-US border) laid down the grounds on which extradition could and could not be sought by both sides. It also contains measures to be taken by both contracting partners to enforce the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

prominent black minister and his Canadian home,⁵ and it reminds us of Charles Johnson's contention (regarding the US-American black narrative) that "the problem with any story or idea or interpretation is that it can soon fall to fit the facts and becomes an ideology, even kitsch" (38). The commemoration of Henson, the fugitive slaves, and the Underground Railroad plays its part in the "creation of public memory" (Smardz Frost, "Underground Railroad" 178) which focuses on Canada as a safe haven, as Canaan.⁶ Yet, in terms of championing the Underground Railroad as a narrative of black mobility, "black Canadian geographies are inflected with both absence and presence" (McKittrick, "Their Blood" 27):

[t]he history of benevolence, highlighted by ongoing celebrations of the Underground Railroad in Canada and the United States, conceals and/or skews colonial practices, aboriginal genocides and struggles, and Canada's implication in transatlantic slavery, racism, and racial intolerance. That is, the Underground Railroad continually historicizes a national self-image that obscures racism and colonialism through its ceaseless promotion of Canadian helpfulness, generosity, and adorable impartiality. (McKittrick, "Freedom" 98-99)

Thus, the foundational figure of the black fugitive along with the narrative of the Underground Railroad, both popular scripts about the history of Canadian blacks, have implications that are two-fold and consequently call for scholarship on two levels: first, we need to acknowledge the importance of the role of abolitionism 'out of Canada' in the historical context and the black agency it involves, and second, we need to scrutinize the dominant foundational narrative that has been fabricated to symbolize and to represent that history as one of national unity and cohesion based on Canadian anti-slavery politics. In a wider context, the latter might be seen as an attempt at creating a *Canadian*

⁵ See the internet presentation at <http://www.uncletomscabin.org/>, <http://www.uncletomscabin.org/giftshop.htm> and http://www.uncletomscabin.org/christmas_at_the_cabin.htm, accessed on June 1, 2011. It also features in African American travel guides, such as Wayne C. Robinson's (288).

⁶ Publications such as *Bound for Canaan* by Bordewich and *Bound for the Promised Land* by Larson have repeatedly emphasized this topos.

exceptionalism in contradistinction to the United States and its history of slavery and the slave trade. The Underground Railroad is turned into a Canadian foundational myth and appropriated as a ‘usable past’ with the black fugitive at its center.⁷ Historian Karolyn Smardz Frost has pointed to the silencing of a black agency in official versions of this myth:

[s]lavery and the Underground Railroad have come in for their own share of disturbing results when attempts have been made to either revise some of the mythology surrounding the fabled escape system, or to popularize it in new ways. We all know, of course, that there really was an Underground Railroad, but that the majority of fugitive slaves escaped alone, sometimes with the help of free black communities who risked everything to assist them. [...] One thing that must be changed in this country is the Canadian Heritage Minute showing kindly *white* Quakers comforting terrified *black* fugitive slaves, who are entirely passive in seeking to shape their own destiny. Oh please. (“Underground Railroad” 181)⁸

In a comparative perspective, Josiah Henson has probably been as foundational a figure for the Canadian context as Frederick Douglass has been for the US-American: both wrote several autobiographies (or had them written for them);⁹ both received enormous publicity in their

⁷ The phrase of the “usable past” is taken from Commager, who uses it in the US-American context to discuss the formation of a national mythology. The notion of a specific ‘Canadianness’ has often been addressed in contradistinction to the US and Britain. It is my intention in this paper to negotiate the cultural relevance of the Underground Railroad narrative as such a foundational Canadian narrative.

⁸ Afua Cooper also acknowledges “Canada’s reputation as refuge” as “a part of the Canadian mythology concerning black people” while also stressing the fluidity on the Canada-US (Michigan/Ontario) border in the lives of black fugitives such as Henry Bibb and Harriet Tubman, who repeatedly crossed this “ultimate symbol between slavery and freedom” (142).

⁹ Frederick Douglass wrote three autobiographies published in 1845, 1855, and 1893. Josiah Henson dictated his first text to an amanuensis who has remained unidentified; the second, enlarged version was claimed to have been written by himself, but today it is assumed that Henson was never more than semi-literate.

lifetime, traveled widely, and achieved the status of celebrities; both were integrationists rather than separatists in their respective contexts (Henson arrived in Canada and stayed; he is buried on the historic site); and both have become national icons (both had stamps created with their portrait, Douglass even two, in 1967 and 1995). This national iconicity is precarious, however, as it appropriates minority discourses and sub-national perspectives that once posed a challenge to dominant national narratives of 19th-century US and Canadian culture, while at the same time obscuring narratives that do not lend themselves to the creation of a foundational myth and may be called anti-foundational or counter-narrative. With reference to Benedict Anderson, Homi Bhabha contends: “[c]ounter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries – both actual and conceptual – disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which ‘imagined communities’ are given essentialist identities” (300).

In what follows, I will develop and pursue two different perspectives on the black Canadian narrative that Henson has come to embody. In my argument, I will focus on black subnational discourses that connect to discourses of transnationalism and diaspora and in which the national does not figure prominently. To make this point, two historical figures (in addition to and in contrast with Josiah Henson) will be addressed: Martin Delany and Osborne Perry Anderson. Both were black abolitionist activists; both, contrary to Henson, received a formal education of sorts; both were born free and were *not* fugitives from slavery – unlike Henson and Douglass – and both were highly mobile. Both, I argue, have been underrepresented in the black history of Canada and in the history of Canadian abolitionism.

II. Transnational Abolitionism and Migration: Martin Delany’s Vision of Africa and South America

In his study of the African American writer and intellectual Frederick Douglass, Robert Levine suggests one rather important framing: he posits Douglass against his African American contemporary Martin Delany (1812-85). Delany, abolitionist, editor, doctor, novelist, political and racial theorist, explorer, and orator may well be called the ‘founding father’ of African American hemispherism – he was, in fact, called the

“Father of Black Nationalism” in his lifetime (Levine 2). Levine investigates the way both black intellectuals tried to be representative ‘race men’ and how Delany was (and is) cast as the counterfigure of Douglass and also fashioned himself accordingly: whereas Douglass was a light-skinned mulatto, Delany emphasized that he was black; while Douglass was seen as a fugitive slave, Delany was a free man and had been all along; whereas Douglass was racially mixed and fathered by his white owner; Delany claimed aristocratic lineage and that his grandfather had been an African prince. Whereas Douglass “has emerged as the representative black male writer of the period” in the US context, Martin Delany,

because of the prominence critics have given his separatist position, has suffered the typical fate in traditional fields of the black separatist: he has been marginalized and largely ignored. [...] Astonishingly, the major anthologies of American literature, including the Heath, fail to reprint any of Delany’s multifarious and complex writings. (Levine 3)

Although the scholarly neglect of Delany in African American Studies has recently received redress – he is discussed prominently by Paul Gilroy in his study on the Black Atlantic¹⁰ – his Canadian experience is still marginalized; I would like to look at Delany and his writings from a Canadian perspective, and contrast his absence with Josiah Henson’s presence in the Canadian cultural imaginary.

Martin Delany is the author of *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, published in 1852. In 1856, he moved to Chatham, Canada, where he practiced as a “physician and surgeon” (Rhodes 122), and in Canada he began to plan black settlements in West Africa; three years later, after briefly flirting with John Brown’s insurrectionism, he toured the Niger Valley and signed a treaty with which he procured the land he needed for his pro-

¹⁰ In addition to Paul Gilroy (1994), Eric Sundquist (1993), Robert Reid-Pharr (1996), Alasdair Pettinger (1998), and Gesa Mackenthun (2004) have published extensive readings of his novel *Blake*. The African Canadian author and critic George Elliot Clarke has claimed Delany (misspelled Delaney) as the first African Canadian novelist (“A Primer” 7), and Rinaldo Walcott also applauds Delany’s representation of Canada in *Blake* (35).

ject. A few years later, still in Canada, he serialized his novel *Blake: Or the Huts of America; a Tale of the Mississippi Valley, the Southern United States, and Cuba* (1859-62), and published the *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (1861). When his Africa plan collapsed in 1862, Delany commenced recruiting black troops for the Union army, and in 1865 he went back to the US and received a commission as a major.

Delany's vision of a black future in the Americas is reflected in his major writings, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* and his novel *Blake: Or the Huts of America*, which both received little attention in the white and black press when they first appeared. In his non-fiction piece Delany refers to Canada as "one of the most beautiful portions of North America" shortly before he makes Ontario his new home. Yet, he also cautions that

the Canadians are descended from the same common parentage as the Americans on this side of the Lakes – and there is a manifest tendency on the part of the Canadians generally, to Americanism. That the Americans are determined to, and will have the Canadas, to a close observer, there is not a shadow of doubt; and our brethren should know this in time. (*The Condition* 174)

In his emigration guide, Delany warns against any naïve trust in the solidity of Canadian politics and the stability of the territorial Canada-US border and therefore cautions against Canada as a long-term site for black settlement. Rather, in the face of the urgency of escape/flight, Delany suggests that Mexico may be closer at hand than Canada:

[l]et the bondman but be assured that he can find the same freedom South that there is in the North; the same liberty in Mexico, as in Canada, and he will prefer going South to going North. [...] His risk is no greater in getting there. (*The Condition* 177)

Writing about slavery in the 1850s, Delany already contests and intervenes into the prominent narrative of the Underground Railroad as he draws attention to the irony that the Northbound path, in many cases, was much more tedious and dangerous than to go further South or East. In the context of transnational Americanist scholarship, Rachel Adams has recently made exactly this point: there were probably as many slaves

escaping to Mexico as to Canada, but the former are largely undocumented whereas the latter have fed into a national American and a Canadian narrative (61-62). Thus, we may think of the ‘success story’ of the Underground Railroad as a US-Canadian co-production as it affirmed the anti-slavery attitudes of Northern whites as well as those of Canadians.

As the final destination for African American emigrants and their place for freedom on American soil, Delany in 1852 envisions Central and South America as the “future home of the colored race on this continent” (*The Condition* 178). Yet, by the second half of the 1850s, Delany seems to have abandoned some of his earlier notions regarding black settlement in Central and South America – he is now looking from Canada across the Atlantic to Africa and the Niger region. His first and only novel, *Blake*, makes references to both contexts. In this (unfinished) text, a black man of both Cuban and Southern US-American origins becomes a fugitive and a rebel when his wife is sold away from him. Henry Blake organizes a “secret organization among the slaves” and prepares for a large-scale rebellion in the US-American South, in Cuba, and on an illegal slaver heading toward Africa. In what could be called an African American fantasy of superman, Blake is a black revolutionary whose mobility knows no bounds and whose ability to empower blacks (“the new African people”) and to deceive whites is sheer limitless. He is clearly a counterfigure to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Tom, and Delany obviously wanted to ‘write back’ to Stowe (as well as to Henson and Douglass) while also envisioning to make some profit from his novel, which he did not. The last sentence of the novel, uttered on the eve of Blake’s rebellion, leaves us with a curse instead of Uncle Tom’s benign benediction: “[w]oe be unto those devils of whites, I say!” (313).

Blake can be claimed as the first African Canadian novel, as George Elliott Clarke and Rinaldo Walcott do, since it was written during Delany’s years in Chatham. At the same time, it is claimed as a text of the black Atlantic and of hemispherism. As one critic has it:

[n]o other US African American novel since *Blake* has posited such a materially, ideologically, and geographically ambitious international vision, particularly one of the interconnectedness of US African Americans and people of Latin American descent. (Nwankwo 589)

To conclude: on the eve of the Civil War, Martin Delany, while resident of Chatham, writes a novel about a slave rebellion in the US-American South and Cuba with which he seeks to make profit as he needs money to finance his expedition to and settlement in West Africa. Even as his Africa plans will not be realized, Delany remains a skeptic as to the black future in North America. Delany's global vision defies national canonization of his life and work; in particular, it defies the image of the black as fugitive finding a comfortable home in Canada or, more broadly, the notion of black mobility being coupled with any kind of national loyalty. Not surprisingly, there is no stamp in either the US or Canada featuring Martin Delany.

III. Transnational Abolitionism and Black Violence: Osborne Perry Anderson's *Voice from Harper's Ferry*

Whereas Martin Delany, as a black nationalist and separatist, does not figure prominently in any national imaginary, Osborne Anderson's name may be better known in the Canadian context; and while Delany invents Henry Blake as his rebel hero in fiction, it is Osborne Perry Anderson (1830-72) who acts out his militant commitment to end slavery. Anderson is born free in 1830, receives a formal education as a printer and at age twenty moves to Canada; eventually he prints the *Provincial Freeman*, an abolitionist paper edited by Mary Ann Shadd first in Toronto, then in Chatham. In 1858, he meets John Brown, joins his Chatham Convention, and becomes the secretary of Brown's new secret government for the envisioned new black state on US soil. Osborne Perry Anderson is the only African Canadian recruited by white US-American abolitionist John Brown in Chatham, Ontario, to participate in the raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859,¹¹ and he is also the only one who escapes after it fails. As its "sole veteran" (Smardz Frost, *I've Got a Home* 313) he returns to Chatham and with the editor and journalist Shadd writes and publishes *A Voice from Harper's Ferry* (1861) to document what happened before, during, and after the attack as a "plain,

¹¹ On John Brown and the raid on Harper's Ferry, see McGlone; Oates; Reynolds.

unadorned, truthful story” (3). This text offers a singularly valuable eyewitness account. Anderson defends John Brown against much criticism and he also attacks the cover-up of the support of local blacks/slaves in the course of the rebellion. In fact, Anderson writes like a modern-day investigative journalist when he points to the ideological maneuvering in the public discourse that tried to play down the effects and repercussions of the raid:

[m]uch has been given as true that never happened; much has been omitted that should have been made known; many things have been left unsaid, because, up to within a short time, but two could say them; one of them has been offered up, a sacrifice to the Moloch, Slavery; being that other one, I propose to perform the duty, trusting to that portion of the public who love the right for an appreciation of my endeavour. (4)¹²

Osborne Anderson describes the brutality of the white response that turned the raid into a bloodshed; according to him, John Brown’s men were “hacked and wounded with indecent rage” (45):

[l]ooking at the Harper’s Ferry combat in the light of civilized usage [...] the brutal treatment of Captain Brown and his men in the charge by the marines on the engine house is deserving of severest condemnation, and is one of those blood-thirsty occurrences, dark enough in depravity to disgrace a century. (44)

The raid planned and organized ‘out of Chatham, Canada’ enhanced a development that would lead to the outbreak of the American Civil War. Anderson died in 1872 at the age of 42 in Washington, D.C. He is commemorated in the basement of the First Baptist Church in Chatham, where John Brown’s convention took place, and his name appears on the Underground Railroad Memorial in Windsor, Ontario. Anderson is remembered as a black Canadian abolitionist; however, his militant stance is toned down altogether in official discourse. It seems as if the appropriation of black voices and historical figures for the purpose of a

¹² Anderson refers here to his status as sole survivor of John Brown’s party. The other person who escaped, Albert Hazlett, was subsequently caught and killed shortly thereafter.

national foundational narrative is highly selective: by choosing to celebrate Josiah Henson who is portrayed as a pacifist and semi-literate fugitive from American slavery and as a black minister *over* a figure such as Osborne Anderson, an educated militant activist against slavery, the racial hierarchies of colonial discourse and the power relations remain largely untouched. How does black agency register in the figure of the fugitive vis-à-vis that of a free black? How does the help lent to blacks by blacks become appropriately remembered? As Smardz Frost insists, “[t]he Underground Railroad will not be part of the national memory on any meaningful level [...] until the contributions made to this country by the people who travelled its routes, are fully recognized” (“The Underground Railroad” 184) – and this inclusion also has to pertain to transnational and diasporic connections.¹³

IV. Conclusion

Josiah Henson’s autobiographies, Martin Delany’s tracts, novel, and travel account, Osborne Perry Anderson’s political journalism – all of these texts are valuable sources for reconstructing historical processes of black mobility that have created black transnational diasporic subjects. Other narratives could be added: that of the free black Mary Ann Shadd, who went back and forth between the US and Canada; or that of the fugitive Samuel Ringgold Ward (who moved from the US to Canada to England and to Jamaica). Not for all of them Canada, more specifically Ontario, was their ultimate destination (as it was for Henson); for many it seems to have been a safe place for pondering all available future possibilities and for engaging in political activism, but it was a place of transit rather than a place of belonging. Connecting the black Canadian narrative to that of the Exodus narrative in the Old Testament implies a focus on those fugitives from Egypt/the US who came to stay for good

¹³ Smardz Frost’s agenda (somewhat contrary to my own argument here) is to make Canadians realize the connection of their national heritage to the history of the Underground Railroad: “[h]ow many of us,” she asks, “realize that Canada’s decision to receive fugitive slaves was the first phase in the development of our national public policy regarding refugee reception?” (“Underground Railroad” 192).

(such as Josiah Henson) and not on those who moved on: to Africa, to Haiti, to Jamaica, to England, or back to the United States (such as Martin Delany and Osborne Perry Anderson). It means: envisioning Canada as Canaan and as the predestined home for fugitives from the US.

One of the settlements founded by the fugitive slaves in the 1840s in Western Ontario was, in fact, called “New Canaan;” the name is commemorated on the Underground Railroad memorial erected in Windsor. Yet, contrary to many of the other towns and villages where black communities formed that still exist today, the New Canaan settlement has disappeared from most maps, and thus, one has a hard time finding it. In the first half of the 19th century it was a black settlement near Amherstburg in what today belongs to the municipality of Essex and the Colchester North Township. On a more anecdotal note: when conducting research for this project, I tried to locate the place of this settlement and in particular looked for the remains of a graveyard that was mentioned in one source at the Amherstburg Historical Museum. For two days I searched the area, looking for clues, asking around; (white) locals who had spent their whole lives in the area around Essex did not know about the place and assured me that there certainly was no graveyard anywhere nearby where fugitive black slaves had been buried. Finally, my last attempt at the local municipality was successful because Glenda Beneteau from the Essex Municipal Office remembered that as a little child her grandfather had taken her to the old abandoned graveyard, telling her about the fugitive slaves from the US, and she happened to remember exactly where it was. Decades ago, the gravestones had been cemented into one block for preservation. Passing by on the main road there would have been no way to detect this discrete spot, but this is what I found eventually: gravestones from the 1850s through the 1870s and even 1890s, attesting to the lives of black fugitives to Canada in a place that is remembered on a national memorial in Windsor but that is almost forgotten in terms of local knowledge.¹⁴ This contrast invites us

¹⁴ This is not to display any disregard for the enormous amount of community work done for the commemoration of Canada’s black history. In fact, much of this work was done at the local level before the national monument was erected. In particular, I want to mention the resilience and dedication of the Chatham Black Historical Society (Gwendolyn Robinson, Blair Newby, and others) who have repeatedly and generously assisted me in my research.



Figure 2 Two large gravestones



Figure 3 Headstones cemented into one block

to think about black Canadian history as local as well as diasporic and transnational history and knowledge and to understand the national as a framework that hides as much as it reveals. Thus, the study of black Canadian history and the figure of the fugitive calls for an approach that Katherine McKittrick has dubbed “diaspora geographies.”

Diaspora geographies open up “an understanding of space and place that does not replicate hegemonic colonial practices” and “allow the realms, regions and subjectivities that ‘no one knows’ to be spatially present ‘with and through, not despite, difference’” (“Freedom” 110). The national Canadian narrative of black fugitivity that heavily draws on and perpetuates the story of Josiah Henson and the story of the Underground Railroad ending in Canada effaces the diasporic as a critical angle; it (re)creates the black fugitive within the bounds of a national discourse as a figure of authority and legitimation. Somewhat paradoxically, it also reinforces the image of the black *as* fugitive and leaves little room for stories (such as those represented by Delany and

Still, there often is little awareness of this particular local history on the part of white Canadians.

Anderson) that articulate black agency and black resistance in ways that exceed the capacity of the national discourse to safely contain and appropriate them.

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Illustrations

Figure 1: Josiah Henson stamp. Canada Post Corporation, 1983.

Figure 2: Two large gravestones. Klaus Lösch, 2010.

Figure 3: Headstones cemented into one block. Klaus Lösch, 2010.

KATHARINA GERUND

Angela Davis: The (Un)Making of a Political Fugitive in the Black Power Era

The Fugitive as Criminal?

The Black Power era¹ not only saw a radicalization of the black freedom struggle but also a criminalization of its most outspoken and radical advocates. The Black Panthers were regarded by J. Edgar Hoover as the “number one threat to the internal security of the nation” (Van Deburg 159), and major protagonists and iconic figures of black liberation like Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, Assata Shakur, and Angela Davis were arrested, charged, imprisoned, and/or had to go underground, live in exile, or seek asylum outside the US. In general, exponents of Black Power were persecuted by the authorities not so much for actual criminal acts but rather for their revolutionary political orientation and activities. Angela Davis’ run from the law, subsequent imprisonment, and trial provided one of the most prominent cases of this period: not only was Davis a political fugitive who generated worldwide media interest and solidarity movements, but as a female fugitive figure, she also unsettled common conceptions of fugitives/activists/criminals/intellectuals, figures that in the collective imaginary were frequently constructed as male. In popular discourses, her persona became a projection screen for all kinds of desires and fears, and Davis sparked public debates in and beyond the United States which reveal a strong

¹ I use the term “Black Power era” to describe the heyday of Black Power activism as it is well enshrined in popular memory and most emblematically captured in the images of the Black Panthers. However, I do not intend to limit the Black Power movement to this period; rather, following Peniel E. Joseph and current research on Black Power, I adopt the idea of a “long Black Power Movement” and of the “civil rights and Black Power era as a complex mosaic rather than mutually exclusive and antagonistic movements” (Joseph 7-8).

tension between either condemning or romanticizing the causes and realities of political fugitives. Davis was sought in connection with a violent attempt to free the so-called “Soledad Brothers”² in a courtroom in Marin County, California, in August 1970. The connection to Davis was established through her activism for the Soledad Brothers and, most importantly, through the guns used in this criminal act, several of which were legally registered in Davis’ name. She was charged as an accomplice to homicide, kidnapping, and conspiracy. On August 18, 1970, Davis was put on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list, and was caught about two months later. In 1972, she was exonerated of all charges after she had been imprisoned for 16 months. During that time, Davis became an iconic figure which continues to be associated with the era, and even though she was on the run from the police for two months only, her time as a fugitive continues to play a significant role in retrospective accounts and ‘emplotments’ of the events. In this essay, I will analyze the contested constructions of Davis’ image as a fugitive in the (mass) media, official sources, and her own writings. I will particularly examine how discourses of gender, race, nation/citizenship, and mobility are entangled in these representations. Davis’ own account of her experience as a fugitive and my reading of her autobiography as drawing significantly on the tradition of the African American slave narrative counter the predominant image of Davis as fugitive-criminal which is still virulent in contemporary representations of her life in general and of her history as an ex-fugitive in particular.

In two recent non-scholarly publications, which can be ideologically and politically located in an antagonistic relationship to Davis’ positionality, entries on Angela Davis rely heavily on the image of the fugitive as criminal. David Horowitz’s³ *The Professors: The 101 Most*

² George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clutchette, three African American inmates at Soledad Prison, became known as the “Soledad Brothers” when they were charged with murdering a prison guard in January 1970. Their case made headlines and instigated many solidarity activities. Angela Davis became active on their behalf and particularly developed a strong friendship with George Jackson.

³ David Horowitz is a well-known conservative author who has published numerous books including his memoir *Radical Son* (1996). He still describes himself as a “civil rights activist” (blurb, *The Professors*) and was a

Dangerous Academics in America (2006) utilizes the ideas of the fugitive as criminal and of the fugitive from justice in order to present Davis as one of the most dangerous academics in America – the “terrorists, racists, and communists” we “know [...] as *The Professors*” (blurb). In his view, the professors on his list “believe that an institution of higher learning is an extension of the political arena, and that scholarly standards can be sacrificed for political ends” (xlvii). He strongly opposes any kind of what he calls (radical) ideology in the classroom since, in his opinion, it ‘contaminates’ academia. His entry on Davis foregrounds not only her supposed lack of scholarly achievements but also her political alliance with communism and the Black Power movement. Horowitz points out how, as a fugitive, Davis became a heroine in and for the Soviet Republic, and disparages her radical activism to discredit her as an intellectual and an academic.⁴ The fact that Davis was embraced by communist regimes (and many others who Horowitz does not mention in his account) demonstrates that the association between fugitive and criminal is ideologically loaded in familiar ways: the very same person can simultaneously be hunted as an alleged criminal by one regime and can be revered as a hero fighting a just cause by another. Horowitz’s account also shows that from his conservative perspective, the images of the fugitive, radical, and/or activist cannot be combined with those of the intellectual or professor but are rather viewed as necessarily incompatible.

founding member of the New Left even though he now has to be located on the opposite side of the political spectrum. His book *The Professors* has to be seen as a part of his larger concern about academic freedom and of his interest in what he views as a radicalization of the American university. His books *Uncivil Wars* (2003), *Indoctrination U* (2008), *One-Party Classroom* (2009), and, most recently, *Reforming Our Universities: The Campaign for an Academic Bill of Rights* (2010) also deal with these issues, and accompany and document his campaign for academic freedom launched in 2003.

⁴ It seems easy to criticize and even dismiss this self-proclaimed semi-“prosopographic” account (xlvi); however, the fact that this book is bought, read, reviewed, commented on, and re-issued in paperback, justifies a close look at its ideological effects and its function in popular discourses.

Duane Swierczynski's⁵ 2004 *The Encyclopedia of The FBI's Ten Most Wanted List: 1950 to Present* claims to offer profiles of each "criminal's vital statistics, details of the crimes committed, the date(s) he or she was placed on the list and caught (if applicable), the events surrounding the fugitive's capture, and an interesting fugitive fact" (blurb). A distinction between convicted criminals and innocent fugitives, who were later cleared of all charges, is only made in individual entries. The publication shows that the image of the fugitive in contemporary discourses is strongly intertwined with that of the criminal – the fugitive figure is created as a dangerous presence that, ultimately, needs to be (re)submitted to state surveillance and control. Davis has a one-page entry which includes the following lines:

309. ANGELA YVONNE DAVIS, revolutionary

LISTED: August 18, 1970

CAUGHT: October 13, 1970

DESCRIPTION: Born January 26, 1944, in Birmingham, Alabama. Five feet eight inches tall, 145 pounds, with brown eyes and black hair. Scars and marks: a small scar on both knees. She occasionally wears "granny-type" glasses and styles her hair in a natural "Afro" fashion and has been known by the nick name Tamu. (174)

In Swierczynski's book, Davis is lumped together with criminals of all kinds; her portrait as a "revolutionary" appears alongside those of terrorists, bombers, or murderers; she is clearly framed as a dangerous (ex-) fugitive/criminal. In the vital statistics section, she is reduced to her body features and outward appearance. The image of the fugitive created by the FBI is influenced and accompanied by a strong desire to end this unsanctioned, illegal mobility and to turn the mobile subject into an immobile and controllable prisoner; that Davis was also turned into an object of desire with explicit sexual connotations is suggested by the "interesting fugitive fact" of her entry: it points out that she was "noted at the time for being the most attractive Top Tenner in the program's history" and quotes one agent as having said that

⁵ Duane Swierczynski works as an editor and writer for several magazines, has published numerous fictional and non-fictional books, and has also taught journalism at LaSalle University.

I wager [...] that half of the tall, good-looking girls with Afros from Maine to California will be under some kind of surveillance by law officers in the next few weeks. (175)

This statement suggests that Davis' presence on the FBI's Most Wanted list may have served as an additional excuse to subject African American women to the (white male) gaze within the established hierarchies of power.

The original Most Wanted poster issued by the FBI exposed Davis to public scrutiny and made the threat posed by her as a fugitive revolutionary even more explicit. She was sought for "interstate flight[,] [...] murder and kidnapping" and was considered "potentially armed and dangerous." The photographs of Davis used in the poster attest once again to the authorities' desire to visually control the fugitive. As a fugitive, Davis had to be not only 'on the move' and to adapt to new surroundings but also had to change her appearance constantly. Her pursuers needed to fix the changing figure of the fugitive in order to surrender Davis to their gaze and power, and, ultimately, to control her (im)mobility by taking her into custody. While Davis as a fugitive belonged to the group of "people without place" (Cresswell 11), authorities were interested in literally putting her into place (i.e. prison). For that purpose, they had to be highly mobile themselves. The interdependence of two kinds of mobility is obvious: the fugitive's being on the run from the police and the authorities' hunt for the fugitive need to be viewed and analyzed in relation to each other – and, in this case, as shaped by highly racialized and gendered discourses. As Tim Cresswell has pointed out, "it is not just a case of fixity against flow, or place against mobility, but of ordering and taming mobilities by placing one against another – by producing some mobilities that are ideologically sound and others that are suspect" (58).

The Cultural Relevance of the Fugitive Figure

Negotiations of mobility and images of (political) fugitives are ideologically charged, and they are utilized in political contexts by different groups for different ends. Therefore, questions such as who are the agents exercising the epistemic power to define someone as a fugitive,

who is in the position to ascribe meaning to the figure of the fugitive, and what issues are at stake in these discourses have to be answered with regard to their respective contexts and manifestations. The literal movement of the fugitive corresponds to more abstract and metaphorical notions of mobility, for example, in reference to revolutionary thinking and/or socio-cultural and political change. In Davis' case, it is striking that a crucial part of her public identity is still shaped by her short time as a fugitive: her flight and capture are of greater importance in accounts such as those by Horowitz and Swierczynski than her time as an unconvicted political prisoner. Therefore, the period of only two months in which Davis was a fugitive, and the comparatively long time of her pre-trial confinement (which lasted more than a year) are disproportionately represented. This is even more surprising in the light of Davis' current activism, which connects to her prison experience as it is centrally concerned with the "prison industrial complex."⁶ A possible explanation for this disproportionate representation can be found in the cultural relevance and imaginary potential of the fugitive figure. While the prisoner is located in a highly controlled place and is (at least potentially) constantly watched, the fugitive is not visible to the eye of the authorities, and her story can only be partially reconstructed as it is never fully documented. Ultimately, therefore, the fugitive story leaves considerable room for the imagination. In addition, the fugitive figure represents a form of mobility that is not sanctioned and to a large degree uncontrollable. The fugitive draws attention to the "holes in the fabric of America's map" when she enters the "fugitive wilderness" (Beverly 141) by utilizing paths and routes that defy governmental surveillance and control. As a result, the figure of the fugitive provides an image that can easily be invested with anxieties and fears (to be located outside or on the margins of society). While the fugitive might venture outside the trodden paths of sanctioned mobility, she herself charts new territory and "enduring geographies of the American self's hinterlands and hiding places" (Beverly xvii).

⁶ In recent years, Davis has continued to focus her activism on these issues; see, for example, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture* (2005); *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003).

Davis' case certainly provides a striking example of this process of charting new territory – at least metaphorically. As the third woman ever to be featured on the Ten Most Wanted list,⁷ she did not follow in the footsteps of many white and African American male fugitives but rather left her own mark by challenging the gendered mobility of criminalized fugitives. In addition, her case needs to be viewed in the context of the Cold War; as a female intellectual, Davis not only challenged established notions of the (criminal) fugitive, but as a communist and political activist she also became an example of the supposed internal threats shaking the fabric of the US. She came to be at the center of discourses on citizenship, the nation, legality, mobility, gender, race/ethnicity, and politics. Davis' case was not only culturally relevant at the historic moment of the Black Power era, but also included a fugitive story which has been told and retold ever since.

In his study *On the Lam: Narratives of Flight in J. Edgar Hoover's America*, William Beverly describes what he calls the "lam story" as one of "America's great minor genres" and stresses its popularity as well as its potential to provide a "good story" (xi). Yet, he correctly claims that the figure of the fugitive in literature and culture remains understudied to date, even though considerable attention is "paid to gangster and road stories, two narratives that flank the fugitive tale" (xi). From slave narratives to contemporary crime novels, from Hollywood prison break films to news coverage on wanted criminal suspects, the fugitive is a central figure in American and, particularly, African American cultural texts, but this significance is not adequately reflected in scholarly work. Beverly suggests several reasons for this lack of scholarship: (1) the "disparateness" of the relevant texts ("ranging from news copy and police bulletins to pulp and literary fiction"), (2) a "tendency to depict, mythologize, and group white and black fugitives separately," (3) the diversity of stories – namely, that "[f]ugitives flee from different [...] crimes, figure in different political dramas, and threaten or occupy different geographies" and (4) the genre's additional complication by

⁷ The first woman to appear on the list was Ruth Eisemann Schier (added December 28, 1968), sought for a kidnapping that she later confessed. The second one was Marie Dean Arrington (added May 29, 1969), who was put on the list when she escaped from prison after having been sentenced to death for the murder of her husband (Swierczynski 163, 166).

“innocent fugitives” (xi). The latter two reasons, in my view, ultimately call for specific case studies rather than general assessments of the fugitive figure to counter this lack of scholarship and to do justice to the multiplicity of fugitive narratives. Davis’ story offers a case study which is indicative of the discourses shaping fugitive narratives of the Black Power era.

Lawrence Rodgers regards flight as an essential trope in African American culture. He states that

[t]he dominant tropes of African-American experience encompass the African removal, escape from bondage, the journey to a promised land, and the challenge of recovering Southern memory amid its constant erosion. (3)

According to Rodgers, an analogy can be drawn between the fugitive migrant and the fugitive slave, since both are “driven by the search for a nonmarginal place in which to reside and prosper” (99). Their mobility is, therefore, envisioned as being only a transitory state which, ultimately, leads to the ‘discovery’ of a new and more stable home and to the establishment of new roots. This idea is also applicable to the political fugitive of the Black Power era for whom going underground and being on the run might be a necessary step in the revolutionary process but who still envisions the return from exile or, at least, a new rooted existence (cf., for example, Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Kathleen and Eldridge Cleaver). The pursuers of these fugitives also view their status as a transitory one that ultimately ends with their arrest. As Beverly insists, the “lam story,” for which the African American slave narrative serves as a precursor, enables the authorities to exercise discursive control over the supposed criminal, who is “particularly subject to representational mediation” (xvi) and commonly does not become “master of his own narrative” (4). On the one hand, Davis was clearly subjected to the discursive control of the authorities, and the pursuit and capture of Davis was documented by the FBI and mainstream media; on the other hand, she *did* and still *does* counter and complicate the public imagery generated by media accounts and official reports by telling her own story of flight.

Angela Davis' Narrative of Flight

In her 1974 autobiography, Davis presents her version of her flight, imprisonment, and acquittal, and provides a counter-narrative to mainstream public discourse decisively shaped by mass media and 'official' sources which depicted her as a fugitive-criminal. She emphatically asserts that her book is a "*political* autobiography"⁸ and not a recounting of a "personal 'adventure'" (xvi). She "vigorous[ly] attempts [...] to downplay her uniqueness" (Perkins 8), and her effort at reconstructing a communal narrative within the personal and individual(istic) genre of the autobiography⁹ links her endeavor to the African American slave narrative. The authors of these narratives equally strove to relate stories as "witnessing not only of their own circumstances, but of a reality shared by many others as well" (Perkins 26). As Janice Chernehoff argues, Davis "implicitly argues that her political work and writing are an extension of the actions and words of slave narrative authors" (40). Consequently, there are many references to the African American

⁸ Margo V. Perkins takes up Davis' term and defines the genre of the political autobiography as being shaped by a set of expectations including: "(1) that the autobiographer will emphasize the story of the struggle over her own personal ordeals; (2) that she will use her own story both to document a history of the struggle and to further its political agenda; (3) that she will provide a voice for the voiceless; (4) that she will honor strategic silences in order to protect the integrity of the struggle as well as the welfare of other activists; (5) that she will expose oppressive conditions and the repressive tactics of the state; and (6) that she will use the autobiography as a form of political intervention, to educate as broad an audience as possible to the situation and issues at stake" (7).

⁹ According to Robert Stepto, who also provides a useful differentiation of distinct phases of the slave narrative (what he calls the "eclectic narrative," the "integrated narrative," the "generic narrative" and the "authenticating narrative"), "a slave narrative is *not* necessarily an autobiography" (6). He also distinguishes between autobiography and memoir when stating that "a memoir refers specifically to an author's recollections of his public life, far more than to his rendering of personal history as literary form or metaphor" (28). Even though Davis' story may also be regarded as a memoir in Stepto's sense, I will retain the term (political) autobiography in accordance with Davis' own terminology.

literary tradition in her autobiography, and these references are utilized to add weight to Davis' personal story and to create a genealogy of African American fugitives in which Davis locates herself. Davis begins her autobiography by relating how she was turned into a fugitive and tried to escape the FBI; thus, her flight is positioned very prominently in the narration with which she "attempt[s] to free herself from the criminal-fugitive image" (Barnwell 314).

The first chapter of Davis' autobiography, which recounts her tale of flight, is ambiguously entitled "Nets," referring to the 'nets' used to capture someone or something, but also alluding to the networks of friends and helpers which the fugitive might rely on as well as the (media) networks employed by her pursuers for her capture. In the very first scene, Davis has just learned that she is sought by the police in connection with a failed attempt to free the Soledad Brothers at Marin County Courthouse. She prepares for leaving Los Angeles and has to disguise herself. She describes putting on a wig with hands fluttering "like broken wings" (3), thus highlighting her vulnerability, fear, and loss of freedom. When she looks into the mirror, she sees "a face so filled with anguish, tension and uncertainty [she] did not recognize it as [her] own" (4). While the situation forces her to change her appearance, this passage implies that being made a fugitive has already changed her. When Davis and her companion finally leave in the dark, she feels "grief," "anger," and "fear" (4) and even the well-known route to a black neighborhood does not seem to be the same any more. In Davis' words:

[b]ut tonight the way seemed strange, full of the perils of being a fugitive. And there was no getting around it – my life was now that of a fugitive, and fugitives are caressed every hour by paranoia. (5)

In her fugitive tale, there is no romanticization of the fugitive figure as the hero of an adventure story. Davis also counters the notion that she is a menace to society by portraying herself as being threatened and scared. In Cherron A. Barnwell's words, she "shows how [the] fugitive status was at least as threatening to her identity as it was to her life" (316).

In line with her argument that her autobiography is a political rather than an individual story, Davis explicitly writes herself into the African

American literary tradition, which begins with the fugitive slave narratives¹⁰ and which can be “thematically situated along the currents of survival, protest and resistance, and radicalism” (Perkins 22). She positions her flight within the historical dimension of the black liberation struggle and ties it to the days of slavery, for example in an allusion to the Underground Railroad:

[t]housands of my ancestors had waited, as I had done, for nightfall to cover their steps, had leaned on one true friend to help them, had felt, as I did, the very teeth of the dogs at their heels. It was simple. I had to be worthy of them. (5-6)

Davis thus reconfigures “the criminal-fugitive image [...], removes its criminal implications, makes it so she can embrace the image, and fits it to her perception of herself” (Barnwell 317). Determined to elude the FBI and the police, Davis finds a first hiding place in Los Angeles in the house of a couple “sympathetic to the movement” (7). The couple is referred to by their first names only, and Davis’ autobiography entails numerous “strategic silences” (Perkins 19) which prioritize the interests of the political movement and its supporters over a detailed and accurate account of all events. These silences were also crucial to slave narratives and abolitionist discourses. Frederick Douglass’ critique of those “public declarations” which turned the Underground Railroad into an “*upper-ground railroad*” (416) and his advice to be careful about what to reveal publicly in order not to prevent other slaves from using the same routes and means of escape is a prominent plea for strategic silences in the interest of the larger movement (416-17). Just as the Underground Railroad can be understood, as Katherine McKittrick suggests, as a “geography that both white and non-white communities desire to map and therefore know” (99), the FBI, the media, and its audiences desired to map Davis’ routes and know her whereabouts. McKittrick claims that

¹⁰ As Karin Schmidli has argued convincingly, slave narratives written by men differ decisively from those authored by women (cf. 174). For Davis’ narration, however, this differentiation seems to be of minor importance as she utilizes individual elements of female and male slave narratives without adopting formulaic, rigid structures or adhering to one particular strand of the genre.

the “underground” in general is “a black geography that reframes spatial knowledge” which is not carried by geographic ignorance but rather by a “radically different sense of place” (102). The “geographies of slavery” basically rendered “a black sense of place virtually impossible under Eurocentric geographic arrangements” (103), and, similarly, Davis describes her perception of place as being altered by becoming a fugitive. Like the slave narrative authors whom she claims as her ancestry, Davis is equally careful about which information she shares with her readers. She addresses and justifies these silences explicitly when she writes, for example, with regard to her time in prison: “[u]nfortunately, I cannot describe the sympathetic officers by name. My words might mean the loss of their jobs” (43).

Earlier in the narration, when the search for her is intensified, she decides to leave California and travels to Chicago to stay with her friend David Pointdexter. They then move on to New York City via Detroit and, finally, travel south to Miami to hide out in a rented apartment. Davis stays inside most of the time, already feeling like a “prisoner” and “waiting for the times to change” (11). The times did not change to her advantage; in October, she and Pointdexter were arrested in a motel in New York. Davis notes that at the moment of arrest she “felt calmer and more composed than [she] had in a long time” (14).¹¹ Her time as a political fugitive is portrayed as a trying experience that has nothing to do with freedom of mobility, and she defies tendencies to romanticize the fugitive’s escape and elusive tactics. Moreover, since she claims to have decided not to leave the country of her oppression, there is no ‘promised land’ for her to be reached. This aspect constitutes one of the striking differences between her tale of flight and those by many fugitive slaves who at least initially envisioned a safe haven either in the Northern States or in Canada, even though their illusions were often destroyed by the realities they encountered in the North.¹² It also differs

¹¹ It is an interesting detail showcasing the media’s pervasive role in her case that Davis perceives her arrest in terms of media images of herself as a wanted fugitive and the FBI (as it was celebrated on TV).

¹² Another major difference can be detected in the audience(s) addressed by slave narratives and Black Power autobiographies like Davis’, which, “[a]nticipating an appreciable Black as well as White readership, [did not fashion]

from the life stories of many other Black Power activists like Eldridge Cleaver or Assata Shakur, who finally took refuge in countries like Cuba or Algeria.¹³

Davis' story is characterized by many obvious parallels to the formulaic 19th-century fugitive slave narratives, not the least of which are its political impetus and polemic style which utilizes self-fashioning as a strategic rhetorical device, and its emphasis on the struggle for freedom and equality. Like the slave narratives, her text is "meant to bear witness to a reality beyond [her] own personal circumstances" (Perkins 22). Furthermore, she emphasizes the isolation she experienced because she was cut off from her friends and family and describes in detail the predicaments of being on the run: depending on a network of sympathizers, disguising herself and traveling mainly at night, she constantly tried to be(come) invisible so as not to attract attention. The declaration of her autobiographical writing as dealing not with an individual but a communal struggle fit into this tradition because, as Maria Diedrich has pointed out, the authors of slave narratives endowed their respective narrative voice with a representative function pluralizing their autobiographical "I" into a "we" (cf. 26). Most importantly, however, Davis uses the genre to counter the FBI's media-supported portrayal of her as not only a fugitive but also a criminal. Life-writing is utilized by activists as a "tool for advancing political struggle," but in addition also as a means to gain "control over their own public images" (Perkins xii, xiii). For Davis, positioning herself within the tradition of heroic African American fugitive slaves and the black freedom struggle is an important way to counter the media image of the dangerous fugitive-criminal. The figure of the fugitive slave is not at all related to that of the criminal and, therefore, underlines her innocence. As Paul Finkelman states, fugitive

their works [...] primarily as an appeal to the moral conscience of Whites" (Perkins 29).

¹³ In her 2001 foreword to Assata Shakur's autobiography (first published in 1987), Angela Davis mentions that Shakur "has been unable to visit this country [the US] since her escape from prison and her decision to settle in Cuba many years ago" (x). Eldridge Cleaver relates that he "stayed in Algeria for four years, which at that time was the haven for people involved in revolutionary movements from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, as well as Canada and the United States" (220).

slaves can be and often have been conceived of as “brave human beings seeking freedom” (xi), and Diedrich lists individual heroism and the exceptional character of the central characters of slave narratives as one of the main reasons for the genre’s popularity in the 19th century (cf. 44–45).¹⁴ Particularly, African American women authors of slave narratives “tried to create and invent heroines who would refute the black woman’s negative and stereotyped image” (Schmidli 180). Nonetheless, the analogies between the discourses on fugitive slaves and political fugitives are limited and should not veil crucial differences; for example, issues regarding property and ownership were central to public debates on fugitive slaves in the 19th century but not to the later discourse on political fugitives.

While I agree with William Beverly that we should be cautious not to conceive of 20th-century fugitive figures exclusively in terms of their 19th-century forerunners like the “escaped slave” and the “Wild West outlaw” (xi), those forerunners, nonetheless, need to be taken into account – particularly if they are as explicitly invoked as is the case in Davis’ autobiography. Margo Perkins points out the decisive effect of this strategy:

[i]n self-consciously invoking parallels between [her] own experience and those of the emancipation narrators, Davis [...] [takes] the historical experience of slavery and [translates] it metaphorically into the contemporary context in order to interrogate ways in which some conditions have remained for African Americans fundamentally the same. (40)

Davis uses this metaphorical ‘translation’ to present a critique of structural racism (particularly in the judicial system of the United States) and to draw attention to its persistence in contemporary US society. The analysis of Davis’ self-representation demonstrates that even though 20th-century African American fugitives cannot be grasped exclusively through images established in the 19th century, the latter certainly can be

¹⁴ Of course, perceptions and conceptions of the fugitive slave figure differed strongly between the Northerners and the Southerners during and beyond the time of slavery. However, in slave narratives, the notion of the brave freedom-seeking human being dominates over e.g. the notion of escaped human ‘property.’

employed as powerful tools in re-shaping the perception of fugitives. Parallels which can be discovered through this historical genealogy draw a picture of African American political fugitives quite different from the popular images of the ‘criminal.’ In the specific case of Davis’ “oppositional” narrative (Cherneckoff 42), her tale of flight and imprisonment can be understood as “a radical intervention into the prevailing discourses on crime and criminality [...] and [...] invites readers to reevaluate their understanding of crime and punishment” (Barnwell 331).

The Fugitive Figure and the Nation

One relevant analogy between 19th-century discourses on fugitive slaves and 20th-century discourses on political fugitives is that in both cases – though in a somewhat different manner – the issues of nation, citizenship, and Americanness are at stake. As Cresswell points out, the figure of the modern citizen “depend[s] on excluded others for [its identity]. Citizens, allowed to move freely, depend on the noncitizens, the aliens who are not free to move in the same way” (15). He emphasizes the crucial relevance of categories like ‘citizen’ and ‘fugitive’ to produce mobility (e.g. by courts of law and legislation, cf. 150). Cresswell connects these observations to the US as a case in which “mobility as a right [...] has been most forcefully intertwined with the very notion of what it means to be a national *citizen* – to be American” (151). In this sense, it can be argued that the political fugitive is also one of the citizen’s “others” or belongs to the “shadow citizen[s]” (Cresswell 161) necessary for and thus included in the very construction of American citizenship. Similarly, Beverly argues that the “demarcations of illegality figure in highly visible opposition to the categories that define citizenship” (36) and states the importance of this opposition (enacted in geopolitical and geographic terms) as a strategic element in the process of nation-building: “to site crime on our borders makes law-abiding citizens stand together as a nation” (36). Beverly claims that the “fugitive [...] is a figure [...] whose story has served at various moments to rearticulate the multiple relationships between individual and nation” (214) – it is a “figure whose irruption provides a dramatic stage on which the nation is continually reimagined and consensus around the meaning of law is recruited” (xi). The figure of the fugitive is thus essential to the

imagination of the nation. The fugitive as criminal serves the continuing re-affirmation of its legal basis, and the fugitive as a figure of mobility (hunted down and, potentially, captured and immobilized in prison) contributes to assure other Americans of their right to move freely and without constraints, even if this right is a mythical notion rather than a lived reality. In addition, in cases with high publicity and extensive media coverage, audiences are interpellated as an ‘imagined community’ following the pursuit as a media event; they can be drawn together by the threatening notion of the dangerous fugitive, and campaigns like the Most Wanted posters and the FBI’s appeal for public support in the search even suggest the active participation of the citizen in the adventurous pursuit.

The fact that the Angela Davis case was highly publicized and frequently made the headlines in the United States and abroad was certainly fostered by the fact that Davis was already known to a broader public: she had received media attention already in 1969 when she was to be removed from her teaching position at UCLA due to her communist ties and social activism. While the fugitive figure can be seen as enabling as well as challenging the nation and national identity, these issues were equally relevant to Davis herself. As early as during her time as a student in Frankfurt am Main (then West Germany) she felt the need to participate in the freedom struggle at home:

[...] the image of the leather-jacketed, black bereted warriors standing with guns at the entrance to the California legislature. (I saw that image in a German newspaper [...].) That image [...] called me home. (“Black Nationalism” 290)

As she describes it, she wanted to be an activist early on, and participating in the struggle from abroad seemed insufficient to Davis. Similarly, when she was sought by the FBI, she prioritizes her being close to the movement:

[b]ut each time I considered going abroad, the thought of being indefinitely exiled in some other country was even more horrible than the idea of being locked up in jail. At least in jail I would be closer to my people, closer to the movement. (16)

In her autobiography, Davis claims to have consciously decided to stay in the US rather than to leave the country and, thus, to risk capture. Even though there might have been other or at least additional reasons for her to stay in the US beside her attachment to the black freedom struggle, in her account of the events, Davis claims her place as a member of the imagined community and rejects the position of an exile abroad. She refused to cross what after the rise of the FBI can be imagined as the “only border that retains meaning to the fugitive” – namely, “the national border” (Beverly 151). However, in her flight state borders are also relevant – she leaves California in order to escape state legislature. Later, Davis is quoted by Reverend William Howard Melish¹⁵ as having said: “[y]ou know, when they put a price on your head, it’s better to be picked up in New York” and the Reverend affirms: “[a]nd she’s right. If she had been picked up in Arkansas, she’d have been killed” (qtd. in Olden 83). Regional differences regarding racism and police brutality are of relevance to the political fugitive in the Black Power era even though the national border assumes primary importance as the line demarcating the difference between being a fugitive or an exile.

Through the narrative of her flight, Davis claims her place within the imagined community as well as the geographical space of the nation. Her claim to be part of the nation and her insistence on being “American” can be viewed as another parallel to the abolitionist struggle of ex-fugitives during the times of slavery. Douglass’ autobiography can serve as a prominent example, the title of which already makes this claim explicit: “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an *American Slave*” (emphasis mine). Davis attempts to counter the marginalization of her case and emphasizes the communal struggle in which she engages. She tries to turn the relationship between herself as an individual and the nation into one between the African American community and the nation. Thereby, she places the racial and political conflicts involved in her case at the doorstep of the American nation, battling the national effort to frame revolutionary forces, Black Power activists, and communists as enemies within. The figure of the political

¹⁵ Angela Davis had lived with Episcopalian minister W. H. Melish and his family when she attended Elizabeth Irwin High School in Greenwich Village.

fugitive can, thus, not only serve as a starting point for a critique of the American myth of freedom of mobility, but also reminds us of the fact that mobility has always been a privilege given to some at the expense of the mobility of others: “the rights to movement are intrinsically exclusionary” (Urry 203). The obviously limited mobility of some assures the majority that they are really free to exercise (a mythically limitless) mobility even though this mobility is, in fact, highly controlled or at least controllable. Legal, social, and other boundaries are always at work, limiting the mobility of the individual even though American myth-making propagates a kind of “national-identity-as-unlimited-mobility” (Verstraete 180).

Angela Davis and the Media: The Making of a Fugitive

Davis received broad media coverage on an international scale during her fugitive days and even further heightened attention when her case turned into a cause. National media closely followed her flight, capture, and trial, and negotiated her case from different angles and viewpoints. Marc Olden, for example, retrospectively describes the events following the shootout at San Rafael:

[b]y the third week in August, 1970, wanted posters charging Angela Yvonne Davis with murder and kidnapping were thumbtacked on bulletin boards in post offices and police stations throughout America. For a woman who had totally disappeared, Angela Davis could be seen everywhere. Everywhere, meaning on the wall of federal and municipal buildings as well as in the media all over the country. Opinions were being formed, lines of battle being drawn as the matter of Angela Davis began to turn into a cause. Those who feared for her life began turning that fear into a drive to keep her alive. Those who felt her to be a danger to the republic and their institutions had their say as well. (19)

Olden’s account delineates how the fugitive is subjected to the discursive power of the media and authorities alike. It describes a nationwide visibility and ubiquity of pictures and accounts which stand in stark contrast to the fact that Davis had disappeared from public view and was hiding from her persecutors. Different voices proclaiming her guilty in

advance were countered by those speaking up in her favor. Speculations on Davis' whereabouts circulated widely, and many media reports actually suggested that she had left the country. Equally broadly covered were second-hand accounts of her life, career, and the circumstances leading to her 'transformation' from promising scholar and activist to fugitive and supposed criminal. Thereby, the media coverage and news reports themselves played a part in creating and affirming this narrative, and many portrayals actually joined what Olden calls the "'why-and-where-did-she-go-wrong'-chant" (79). Barnwell captures the media's portrayal in similar terms when she detects that they "circumscribed Davis in a spectrum of 'good girl gone bad' images, presenting her as having fallen prey to the dark side" (309).

On September 11, 1970, the cover of *Life* featured the headline "The Making of a Fugitive," a subheading "Wanted by the FBI: Angela Davis," and a large portrait of Angela Davis with her head bowed, looking up from under her large Afro, which dominates the image.¹⁶ The headline can be read as a reminder of the constructedness of the label 'fugitive' – fugitives are made, i.e. performatively and discursively produced in socio-political contexts. While the fugitive herself may actively appropriate this status as part of her identity, the figure of the fugitive is created only through legal prosecution and an 'official' designation, for example by addition to the Ten Most Wanted list. However, such a reading is not suggested by the feature article on Davis in *Life*, which does not question the fact that Davis is pursued by the FBI and accused of murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy. Rather, the text focuses on Davis' development as "a radical's journey from a promising childhood to a place on the FBI's most-wanted list" leading to her "desperate flight" ("Path" 21). The text attempts to detect possible reasons for her turning into a radical and criminal in her personal, scholarly, and activist history; other possible factors like the legal and judicial system, racial inequality, or anti-communism are hardly mentioned.

The focus on her personal development is already visually established on the first two pages, where a one-page portrait of Davis as a 12-year old "happy, average, loving child" is contrasted with the FBI's

¹⁶ Davis quickly turned into an international fashion icon and, as she herself notes, this might be the role she is best remembered for (cf. "Afro Images").

wanted poster (20-21). The narrative focuses on her family and academic background and relates the “sad and terrible story” of how a “woman of her intellectual qualifications, high talent and extraordinary accomplishment achieved the dreadful prominence of appearing on a poster as one of the FBI’s 10 Most Wanted” (21). The article features quotes by family, friends, and companions, and carefully establishes continuities in Davis’ personality and development leading to her current status as fugitive, radical, and presumed criminal. While not proclaiming her outright guilty, the connection between Davis and the San Rafael shootout led by Jonathan Jackson is clearly pointed out, and the article ends with excerpted quotes by Davis evoking an effect of objectively documenting her “revolutionary voice” as well as pictures of Davis with Jackson, and Jackson holding up two guns registered in Davis’ name (26-27).¹⁷ This article, in Chernekov’s reading, “encourages readers to feel endangered by her [Davis]” (46). Media reports and newspaper and magazine articles like this one contributed decisively to the creation of Davis’ public image, which Barnwell describes as changing from “black militant Communist to criminal-fugitive” once she fled prosecution (310). Davis herself felt that at the time, she was depicted as “the big bad Black Communist enemy” (*Angela Davis* 16). Moreover, such media images served to disguise and obscure the structural and systemic factors involved in the Davis case.

In sum, the way Davis was portrayed in the mass media relates to discourses on mobility on two levels: on the one hand it attests to the appeal of the fugitive story, its cultural relevance, the sensationalist potential of this non-sanctioned mobility as well as the desire to stop the fugitive from being ‘on the move’ and to control her mobility; on the other hand it also reveals the tendency to assign to Davis a stable identity and to reconstruct her as a ‘coherent’ personality by reconciling

¹⁷ In the quotes selected for this article, Davis suggests that “maybe the real criminals in this society are not all of the people who populate the prisons across the state, but those people who have stolen the wealth of the world from the people. Those are the criminals” (27). This statement is not only revealing with regard to the (intended) sensationalist effect of the article but also because Davis here actually exposes that who is considered a ‘real’ criminal deserving to be punished and imprisoned is not only a matter of law and justice but of the power to define, criminalize, and prosecute.

the different aspects of her public persona. Fluid identities, the evasion of established categories, revolutionary thinking beyond accepted paths are seemingly almost as threatening as criminal acts and unsanctioned, uncontrolled mobility. The sensationalist portrayals of the Davis case demonstrate the imaginative appeal of the fugitive story but also display the attempts to reconcile the images of an attractive African American woman with the male-coded images of the fugitive, potential criminal, and intellectual.

Ultimately, in this case, the notions of the attractive professor and the fugitive criminal could not be smoothly brought together and created a tension reflected in most public discourses on Davis. It is most prominently captured in a picture of Davis in handcuffs and escorted by FBI agents, which traveled around the world after her arrest. In the picture, Davis is wearing a short skirt, a blouse, and glasses; her hair is neatly tied back. She appears petite and frail in comparison to the two men in dark suits guarding her. Obviously, this image does not fit the stereotypical notion of a ruthless criminal mastermind. During the Black Power era, the radicalization and criminalization of the political and social struggle for black liberation generated many African American political fugitives and casualties; but as the Black Power movement was re- and perceived as male-dominated and chauvinistic, Davis had to appear as even more exceptional. In addition, her middle-class background and intellectual and academic achievements contributed to this perception. Her case suggests that the fugitive figure has to be differentiated along the lines of race, class, and gender and has to be viewed in its concrete manifestations rather than in generalized and generalizing accounts. This approach would enable a fuller understanding of the fugitive figure in its many forms and guises as a central figure of (American) mobility which is embedded in and created by discourses on mobility, civil rights, and citizenship.

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CHRISTOPH ERNST

The Medium Sends Its Messenger: Mobility beyond the Normative Order in the Television Series *The Fugitive*

I. Prologue: Reflections on the Seriality of *The Fugitive*

The figure of the fugitive as an outcast and underdog who is running from the law is deployed in US-American popular culture to reflect on validity claims of the normative order. This is the case, for example, in the television series *The Fugitive* (1963-67): prior to the social upheavals of 1968, the series negotiated issues of the individual's inclusion in the normative order of US-American society of the time.¹

It is a truism that the fugitive as a pop cultural type can perform this function only because normative orders² are dependent on discourses through which they legitimize themselves. These discourses of legitimization are not tied to specific discourse types and can be realized, for example, philosophically, essayistically, or aesthetically (cf. Forst and Günther 8-9). If we understand a pop cultural narrative as a structural construct (in the sense of a set of signs which can be divided into plot and story) whose function is to provide models for individual and collective acts of the imagination (cf. Bauer; Lotman 22-30; Thompson), the nature of pop cultural discourses of legitimization becomes clear: even if they are non-argumentative and visual, they make a paraphrasable statement about the justification of the normative order by acting out defining differences of the normative order within specific scenarios.

Thus, given the historical context of the series, it would seem natural to analyze *The Fugitive* with regard to contemporaneous issues such as Liberalism, as Stanley Fish has recently done in *The Fugitive in Flight*.

¹ Cf. the systems-theoretical perspective on popular culture in Huck and Zorn.

² Defined as "a complex of norms and values used to legitimize the fundamental structure of a society, i.e., the exercise of political authority and the distribution of the basic goods of life" (Forst and Günther 7, our translation).

My approach is rather different. I argue that *The Fugitive* contributes to a reflection on the normative order by developing an awareness of its own media form, its own 'mediality.' The primary means employed to do this in *The Fugitive* is the representation of movement, i.e., the fugitive's mobility. On the basis of the narrative's structural layout, I will discuss what kind of mobility is available to the figure of the fugitive and how his movements are interconnected with the narrative's mediality and seriality.

My analysis is based on the media-theoretical premise that a narrative's media form can be part of the narrative's message in the context of a legitimizing discourse. The media-specific form has a determining influence on the validity of the message, which is why reflection is always also reflection on the media (cf. Ernst; Kirchmann and Ruchatz). This 'media reflection,' simply put, can take two forms: it is implicit if it is part of the narrative's performance but is not addressed by the narrative itself (e.g. in the structural design of typological characters, or in the citation of other principles of filmic representation); it is explicit if it is – on the level of form or content – part of the diegesis (e.g. in metafictional narrative patterns and their self-referential stylistic devices).

I thus argue that in *The Fugitive* the reflection on the normative order not only takes place in regard to content but that the fugitive's mobility is an example of how this reflection uses techniques of the motion picture media to integrate the series' media form into its message.³ The figure of the fugitive becomes a tool to reflect on the individual's inclusion in the normative order of 1960s US-America because the narrative of *The Fugitive* shows a high degree of reflective awareness of its media-specific form. The reflection on a type of movement conditioned by seriality is part of the message in the context of the reflection on the normative order.⁴

³ On seriality as a property of television's mediality cf. Cavell; Giesenfeld; Hicketier; Fahle and Engell. For recent research in German cf. Blätter; Mielke; Meteling, Otto, and Schabacher. On US-American series cf. Schneider; Seiler.

⁴ My focus on the connection of mobility and seriality further develops the approach presented in Cresswell and places even greater emphasis on media-specific aspects.

II. The Difference between Character and Type: Richard Kimble as Fugitive

The layout of the 1960s television series *The Fugitive* differs from that of the 1993 remake as a thriller in one important aspect: in the remake, the protagonist (Richard Kimble, who, wrongly accused of having murdered his wife, is sentenced to death) represents both the type and the character of the fugitive.⁵ By contrast, the original series uses a narrator (William Conrad) who during the transition points of the series (opening credits, opening scenes, cliffhangers) differentiates between the general type of the fugitive and its specific realization as a character (i.e., Richard Kimble).⁶

The series thus explicitly introduces the difference between the fugitive as a conventional type on the one hand and as the character Richard Kimble on the other. Comprised of self-contained episodes embedded within a larger frame story, the series' negotiation of the difference between the fugitive's social and aesthetic function is a constitutive principle of the series' narrative.⁷ In this regard, the narrative follows the basic structure of the classical tragedy. The narrator represents the intervening commentary of the chorus. His purpose is to comment upon the difference between what is expected of the social role of the fugitive and the drama's (i.e., the series') realization of that role. In each episode (consisting of five acts with prologue and epilogue), the narrator intervenes in the events and evaluates them, thereby functioning as a legitimizing authority.

This legitimization is necessary because the series' story, i.e., Kimble's flight, has already begun when the series starts. The plot starts during the opening credits with Kimble being on his way to death row.

⁵ The term 'layout' here denotes the configuration of textual-narrative and visual-descriptive aspects of an image (cf. Bauer and Ernst). For reasons of space, the following analysis will be limited to the series' first season.

⁶ Cf. on the narratology of television series e.g. Brandt; Allrath, Gymnich, and Surkamp; Kozloff; Newman; Schabacher.

⁷ In contrast to a serial, a series consists of self-contained episodes. Series reproduce a narrative pattern in which variation in single episodes occurs without major changes in the pattern, leading to a high degree of predictability (cf. Kließ; Oltean; Weber and Junklewitz 19-20).

Due to the ‘fateful’ circumstances of a train accident, Kimble is able to escape. In the opening credits, the narrator proclaims: “

[t]he name: Dr. Richard Kimble. The destination: death row, state prison. The irony: Richard Kimble is innocent. Proved guilty, what Richard Kimble could not prove was that moments before discovering his murdered wife’s body, he saw a one-armed man running from the vicinity of his home.

Here begins the blending of the character Richard Kimble with his embodiment of the fugitive as a type: Kimble-as-fugitive.

The crux of the story is that Kimble is on the run having been sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit. Kimble is hunted by his antagonist, police officer Philip Gerard (Barry Morse), but the story involves more than the duel between the two adversaries; it is driven by Kimble’s efforts to solve his wife’s murder. His only clue is that a one-armed man was involved in it. His hunter, however, also knows this.

The flight narrative is based on a sort of ‘reverse’ dramaturgy: Kimble’s actions are predictable for Gerard because he knows that the fugitive is not only on the run, but also on a quest: Kimble is trying to clear his name by finding the one-armed man and proving his implication in the murder, which of course is not an easy endeavor. This is why the principle of tragic irony (explicitly addressed in the opening credits) pertains to *The Fugitive* (cf. Menke, *Tragic Play*). It is only after finding the one-armed man and proving his own innocence that Kimble will be able to restore the normative order of the law.

Quite in the spirit of classical Hollywood film (cf. Krützen), a quest trajectory is inscribed into the fugitive’s flight. This is important because it allows discussing two aspects of the series’ narrative that directly build on each other. On the one hand, the tragic moment of *The Fugitive* is not only shown to be a possible result of the protagonist’s actions, but also a possible failure of the law itself. *The Fugitive* is an allegory of a tragic irony intrinsic to the law: the possibility that the law can fail in its performative practice in spite of its sincere, ‘just’ formulation. This reveals the main concern of the narrative of *The Fugitive*: the series is a negotiation of the normativity of the law as a law that is ‘just’ to everybody (cf. Fish). On the other hand, the quest trajectory inscribed into the flight trajectory defines the fugitive’s mobility. The flight of the fugitive, as Stanley Fish suggests, is not a flight from the normative order of

the law. Quite the opposite: his flight as quest does not lead him into a space beyond the law but right into the purview of the law. This also holds true in a topographical sense as laws apply within the boundaries of a particular geographic territory. The fugitive's mobility is a movement within the 'map of the law.'

III. The Difference between Episode and Series: Kimble as Messenger of the Law

While the law as an abstract institution errs in *The Fugitive*, fate allows Richard Kimble to restore justice through his quest for the one-armed man. What makes *The Fugitive* insightful for an analysis of the fugitive as a type is the fact that the series reiterates the frame narrative's diegetic setup (i.e., the injustice of the law) within the story patterns of each episode.

The plot is nearly identical in each episode. From his subaltern position as a fugitive with an assumed identity, Kimble encounters people that are in conflict with a basically just but misguided legal authority (fathers, husbands, policemen, the church, etc.). Kimble then becomes suspect through an unfortunate coincidence. However his own sincerity earns him the trust of the people concerned whom he then manages to deliver from their respective plight by restoring their agency (cf. Fish). Ultimately, he has to continue his flight because his pursuer Gerard is getting on to his tracks. Each episode ends with the characters being reconciled with the normative order through Kimble's help. The law is restored, but Kimble never benefits from restoring it.

He continues his flight/quest but is still always an ideal embodiment of moral integrity and autonomy; despite most unfavorable circumstances he never despairs. His faith in his liberal values and just convictions is represented as the difference between character and type, and in fact is rendered possible only through this difference: we get to know Richard Kimble as a character performing the role of the fugitive. But he performs this role only on the surface; it does not affect the deep structure of his morally flawless character (cf. Fish).

Each time a new episode requires him to adapt to a new situation, Kimble assumes a new identity. In the opening configuration of an episode's layout, Kimble is frequently already integrated into his social

environment. Thus the 'non-identical' part of his identity in relation to his milieu, the fragility of his social identity as fugitive, is compensated for at the beginning of each episode. When Kimble comes under suspicion during the course of an episode, it is this suspicion that becomes the dramaturgical means to uncover and redress the injustice of the respective situation.

The frame story of the quest for the one-armed man and the stories of the individual episodes create an asymmetry: on the one hand, each episode sees the normative order being restored by Kimble's deeds. On the other hand, the very act of restoring order is the moment in which Kimble as fugitive is excluded from that order. Kimble can never succeed in clearing his own name by restoring order within the layout of an episode. The fact that Kimble never loses his sense of justice despite the injustice done to him makes him, his status as a fugitive notwithstanding, an ideal figure. Kimble is a figuration of the utopian promise of the very norm that wronged him, a norm that invalidated itself by failing in Kimble's particular case: the utopia of the 'justness' of the law.⁸

The narrative is characterized by a dialectical relationship between episode and series, albeit with a utopian orientation: in the character of Richard Kimble, the fugitive as a type is (as the narrator states at the beginning of each episode) a split character, but in this split embodies a moment of dialectical ideality. The exposure of the non-identical in the character Kimble leads to the correction of the unjust state of affairs in each episode's respective normative situation. The act of fleeing removes Kimble in his role as fugitive from the just order that has been restored by his own deeds, and submits him to the logic of the series – in other words, sets Kimble-as-fugitive in motion again.

The character Richard Kimble thus transgresses the real-life bonds defined by the layout of the individual episode only in order to re-appear in the next episode – in line with the frame narrative's iterative logic – as the fugitive-as-type confronted with exactly the same situation. The formal difference between character and type parallels the difference between episode and series. More precisely: in its layout of the individual episodes, the series is reflective of the frame narrative by acting out the

⁸ This aspect is negotiated explicitly in the episode "Come and Watch Me Die."

superordinate constellation in the episodes again and again. As a result, there are two levels which take into account different systems of validity of a 'just' law: on the one hand, there is 'episodic justice,' i.e. justice within the episode, which is restored by Kimble's deeds; Kimble is then offered the opportunity to gain a foothold within the restored order.⁹ Yet he is denied this opportunity by the absence of justice on the level of his quest as fugitive. On the other hand, there is the justice of the series. This kind of justice cannot be negotiated within the terms of an episode. It results from the reiteration of an unchanging scenario. The fugitive as a type follows a higher order in which the law of the series itself is reproduced. In this split between individual case (the character Richard Kimble within the logic of an episode) and general type (the type of the fugitive within the logic of the series) Kimble becomes the messenger of a higher state of the order, of a seriality of the fugitive.¹⁰

Legitimized through the narrator, the dialectics of the law resides in the fact that the character Richard Kimble in his role as fugitive is excluded from the just order of the law so as to allow for the restoration of that very law. Kimble as fugitive is not the just order's Other, but its functional complement. As a fugitive, he is an antagonist of the law; he is excluded from the law while at the same time actualizing the law and reconciling himself with it over and over again. In this dialectics nothing gets lost. Kimble, the fugitive excluded from the law in the episodes, is de facto bound to the law he tries to escape.

The justice of the part runs contrary to the justice of the whole, but through the figure of the messenger, justice is promised – a classically metaphysical scenario. It is thus fitting that during the opening credits the narrator unfolds Kimble's story as a quasi-religious fate: "Richard Kimble ponders his fate as he looks at the world for the last time, and sees only darkness. But in that darkness, fate moves its huge hand." At the moment of greatest darkness, when Kimble is on his way to death row, fate intervenes and assigns Kimble-as-fugitive the mission of restoring justice.

⁹ In the episode "Come and Watch Me Die" Kimble is even offered to work as a law enforcement officer.

¹⁰ For the messenger as a figure for mediality cf. Krämer; Zons.

Kimble is thus a messenger who, upon accomplishing his mission (in an episode), submits to a higher order (of the series). Through his acts, Kimble occasionally even appears as an angelic figure on a mission with a transcendental goal: a state of 'higher' justice.¹¹ As a victim of the law, Kimble is the messenger of the law; as a fugitive, he is a traveler between two worlds, spanning the boundaries between a (worldly) inside (on the level of an episode) and a (transcendental) outside (on the level of the series).

IV. The Difference between Person and Individual: Movement into the Interval

The nexus of character/episode and type/series in the structural layout of the narrative illustrates the latter's specific reflective accomplishment: the critique of the normative order contained in *The Fugitive* does not only relate to the obvious reflection on the tragic difference between justice and injustice. The wrongful death sentence is merely the narrative framework of a more subtle issue. The differentiation of character and type leads to the question as to what the differentiation of justice and injustice, in its tragic aspects, implies from a legal perspective for the difference between person (as represented by the character Richard Kimble) and individual (projected onto the fugitive as a type).

The difference between person and individual is a fundamental distinction within modern law. Modern legal systems establish subjective rights that allow for the participation in social practices by offering the possibility *not* to participate in society and still to remain 'human' in a universal sense: the law guarantees that the individual can, but does not have to, become a social being. Inclusion is (at least to a certain degree) an option that can be consciously embraced or not. From a legal view, the individual is free to decide whether to participate in society, and thus become a social being, or not.¹²

¹¹ In regard to the interpretation of Kimble as angel see also Fish 95-106.

¹² On this distinction cf. Menke, "Form der Differenz," "Paradoxie der Form." The fact that a pop-cultural narrative negotiates the issue of the individual's inclusion into society using the example of the law confirms the thesis that

If the narrative's media-specific form were disregarded, the reflection on the normative order in *The Fugitive* would read like this: Kimble is an ideal figure to the extent that as an individual he unfailingly desires to participate in society. However, as a person he is denied this option because the law has sinned against its own metaphysical guarantee of universal rights. The norm of a just order is reflected in its deviation – and thus generates the utopian idea that the failure of the law can be rectified by an individual's self-determined acts. The individual as a messenger of the law carries all rights within him/herself. S/he is the authority who rectifies the law in order to assert her/his guaranteed rights. The utopian message of *The Fugitive* then is that law and justice can in fact be restored by the individual – and moreover, that the individual as a functional complement of the law is its ultimate realization. The law is dependent on the individual – a paradigmatically American interpretation of civil rights and liberties.

But it is exactly at this critical point that a look at the series' mediality, its media-specific form, reveals yet another 'message' contained in *The Fugitive* – because the individual, as messenger of the law, is subjected to the logic of the series. Kimble is expelled from the order of the law the very moment he has restored it – and then returns elsewhere within that order.¹³ His individual identity as messenger is not identical with itself but split between the order he has restored (on the level of the episode) and the order from which he derives his mission (on the level of the series).

This is evidenced especially in the theme of farewell. The moments of farewell in *The Fugitive* constitute the dynamizing difference between episode and series. From the perspective of the series' mediality, the farewell in *The Fugitive* is at the same time the interval between the series' episodes. To the same degree that Richard Kimble's true identity, i.e., his non-identity with the law in his role as fugitive, is uncovered, the law is stabilized by Kimble's actions within each episode. But this

popular culture deals with exactly this problem in modern society (cf. Huck and Zorn).

¹³ A comparison of *The Fugitive* with another successful series of the 1980s, *Highway to Heaven* (1984-1989), would be interesting. *Highway to Heaven* seems to be the explicit interpretation of the latent metaphysical structure of *The Fugitive*.

episodic restoration of the order of the law comes at a price: Kimble must be returned to the story of his flight.

Again, the pattern is the same: whenever the law is on the verge of capturing Kimble, it is set on the wrong track by those people Kimble has helped during the respective episode after they undergo a process of catharsis: not only do they recognize and accept Kimble's true identity, they also recognize his function as a mediator of the 'just law.' Individuals or even entire communities protect the fugitive, allowing Kimble to continue his flight/quest. He is provided immunity by those for whom he has accomplished a mission as messenger of the law.

On the diegetic level, the prerequisite for this is that Kimble is recognized and accepted as an angel-like messenger. In *The Fugitive*, this dynamics is usually triggered by the women Kimble encounters. He becomes the object of proto-erotic advances (sometimes including marriage proposals) in almost every episode. While men react aggressively toward Kimble, women see through Kimble's *façade* and recognize his inner values (cf. Fish 97). This trust in the individual beyond the social persona is rarely motivated by the narrative, but rather presupposed by the plot's point of departure.

At the moment of recognition, Kimble must leave so as not to fall into the hands of the law, whose messenger he is.¹⁴ Kimble's personal relations therefore offer the possibility of his reintegration into the restored normative order, which he cannot embrace given his function as messenger. Only by escaping can he fulfill his mission. The messenger gets away while conveying his message, he gets going again – and thus reiterates the 'reverse' motion of the overarching dramaturgy of *The Fugitive* under a law that follows the logic of the series.

The parting scenes are thus moments of difference (cf. Lenger) which trigger two types of dynamics: the normative order is reconstituted by the messenger Richard Kimble in each episode, restores itself within the episode, and yet is unsettled by the act of restoration through the messenger's removal: each act of repetition is an act of altering motion.¹⁵ In the parting scenes the law of the series inscribes itself on

¹⁴ This can be observed quite well in the episodes "See Hollywood and Die" and "Never Wave Goodbye."

¹⁵ On the difference of repetition and variability/change cf. Eco; Engell, "Historizität."

the character Richard Kimble as the type of the fugitive and is thus linked with the difference of episode and series that pervades the narrative. At the same time, the effects of the dynamics of difference become tangible: seriality as an attribute of television's mediality. In other words, the relation of character and type as conceived by the narrative is related to the 'outside' of the medium. What are the effects of this implicit media reflection?

V. Media Reflection: Dialectics vs. Difference

The utopian moment of *The Fugitive* consists in that the restitution of the law in the episodes imagines – by reinterpreting the type of the fugitive as a messenger of the law – a just state of affairs on the super-ordinate level of the series: in the utopian state of the just order in *The Fugitive*, injustice does not exist because the misguided authority of the law is rectified by Kimble-as-fugitive. Through the individual act of finding the one-armed man and of delivering him to justice at the end of the series, justice will be restored. The utopian promise is formulated: in the end, after the trials and tribulations of the quest, justice will reign. The dialectical reinterpretation of the fugitive assigns the law of the series a teleological orientation, which is guaranteed by the narrator.

Here, the level of media reflection offers an alternative because it relates the dialectical justification of justice to the paradox of endless regression inscribed into every form of seriality. The media-reflective dimension suggests a possibility which in the narrative of *The Fugitive* is actually explicitly ruled out: the condition of a serial perpetuation of the paradoxes Richard Kimble is subjected to. To the extent that Kimble's eternal return restores justice in the episodes, another condition becomes conceivable: the eternal return of the injustice of the law in the sense of an exclusion of the fugitive without a teleological dialectics; put differently: the exposure of the normativity of all-encompassing justice not as an operation of the individual's inclusion but as an operation of serial exclusion. What on the 'inside' of the narrative's form is thus framed as Kimble's mission and quest along a teleological dialectics of restoring justice is put in quotation marks by the 'outside' of the medium's seriality.

Using Gilles Deleuze's concept of seriality, this other side of the narrative can be understood as the split into two interlocking 'series.' Seen from the perspective Richard Kimble' split into character and type, then, every parting scene in the series triggers a paradox of endless regression (cf. Deleuze 57-63). Again, we encounter the important theme of the lack of origin: we get to know Kimble when he is already on the run, when he is already a fugitive. The problems he is involved in are presupposed problems. The first step has already taken place; the background story is only included in flashbacks. The shift between the character Kimble (episode) and the fugitive as a type (series) triggers a movement that is without presupposition and is only geared towards the ending – an ending that the narrative anticipates dialectically. The presupposed beginning is thus an always presupposed meaning.

From the perspective of semiotics, this is the origin of seriality. In order to generate meaning and to denote something, meaning must already exist. Every name that generates meaning can do so only in relation to a presupposed meaning which the name fails to cover. There is a gap, an interval, between the antecedent meaning before meaning and its retroactive naming. Meaning is regressive (cf. Deleuze 48-51). This regression operates in two directions: backwards, into the past, as meaning is always presupposed, and forward, into the future, as meaning can only be part of a subsequent meaning.

Deleuze interprets this as two "series" (cf. 57). A name states something about an object and in so doing refers to a preceding meaning. But at the same time, the name as utterance is likewise the presupposed meaning of a future name. There is thus the series of the names of objects and the series of the names of names. The space of the name itself, the gap or interval between the series, is empty; in a spatial sense, the name exists only as the space of a differential split: "[t]he law governing two simultaneous series is that they are never equal" (Deleuze 58, our translation).

If this is understood as the narrative's 'medial' outside, then this paradox can be applied to *The Fugitive* all the way down to the micro-logical structure: there is the 'series' of the *character* Richard Kimble as an object in the episodes, and there is the 'series' of the *type* of the fugitive in the series (the 'series' of the series); this constitutes a logic of seriality that repeats itself on all higher levels of the reproduction of this difference.

This trajectory is also necessarily intrinsic to the dialectics of the restored justice of the law in the separate parts (episode/Richard Kimble) and the continued injustice of the law as a whole (series/fugitive). This is the critical potential of media reflection in *The Fugitive*. It focuses on the ‘outside’ of seriality as a functional element of the endlessly operating mediality of television (cf. Engell, “Ende”). Media reflection questions the possibility of the utopia of just normativity within the terms of seriality. The narrative’s attempt at dialectical suspension and establishment of a just order is critiqued by the television series within the terms of its own mediality – and precisely this critique is explicitly addressed by the television series. This critical space is the ‘schizo-logic’ (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Ödipus*) of the character of the messenger as an interconnection of the ‘series’ (in Deleuze’s sense) ‘Richard Kimble’ and the ‘series’ ‘fugitive.’

The critical message contained in the media-reflective design of *The Fugitive*, then, is that there is a tension between the law of the series and the metaphysical reinterpretation of the fugitive as an individual who takes the law into his own hands and fights to win back his identity as a person. *The Fugitive* depicts the messenger of the law, the cipher for the individual, not only as dependent on the law but also as dependent on the logics of seriality, i.e. on the medium. And it is Kimble’s mobility that serves to illustrate this.

VI. Mobility: Movement beyond the Map of the Law

In *The Fugitive* the medium of reference for mobility is the map, which is the strategic medium of the law.¹⁶ The first shot of the series’ pilot episode (“Fear in a Desert City”) shows ‘hunter’ Philip Gerard in front of a map; painted on a sheet of glass, it represents the territory of the USA. A circle drawn on the map marks Kimble’s presumed radius of movement. The shot positions Gerard’s head exactly at the center of that

¹⁶ The map is part of the “diagrammatic component” (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Tausend Plateaus* 155-203; here 201) of the schizo-logic and as such is an element of the analysis of mechanisms of power that manifest themselves socio-culturally, e.g. the legal system, through the law (cf. Bauer and Ernst 311-19). On the connection of the map, film, and mobility cf. Cresswell.

circle. The following dialogue excludes a potential narrative development which the series will not put to use: Kimble is not, as Gerard's superior erroneously suspects, in Mexico, and thus has not left the United States. This would not be in line with Kimble's character, Gerard correctly assumes, but for reasons different from those he suspects: this particular fugitive is not fleeing the United States, he is not fleeing the law – because his mission is to restore the normative order of the law.

Accordingly, Kimble's movements in *The Fugitive* are reflected within a cartographic apparatus as movements within the normative order of the United States. Nonetheless, there are two types of mobility in *The Fugitive*: there are the movements that can be captured by the map, and there are those that cannot be captured by the map. The map can capture the character's movement within an episode; it cannot capture the fugitive's movement occurring under the aegis of the series itself, i.e. the messenger's movements that are displaced into the interval. Movements resulting from the repetition of the series itself, such as the movements of the farewell scenes, elude the map.

The episode "Never Wave Goodbye" illustrates this: after the parting scene, the narrator first paraphrases the thoughts of the character Richard Kimble as thoughts aligned with the strategic apparatus, but then the narrator shifts to the fugitive as a type: "[t]he road north, or the road east? For the moment for Richard Kimble it makes no difference. The road ends nowhere." There is no homogenous mobility between the movements within an episode and the movements of the series. Whenever after a parting scene Kimble resumes his flight and has thus accomplished his mission, it does not matter where he is going. In "Where the Action Is," Kimble takes off on a plane, but it is of no consequence where exactly he is headed. "Richard Kimble, fugitive," as the narrator comments, differentiating between character and type, "is flying for his life." This is declaimed with the pathos of tragic irony but also illustrates the hallmark of Kimble's mobility: as a fugitive on a quest, as a messenger, he will return, clinging to the territory under Gerard's surveillance. Kimble will not go away because he really cannot go away, because he must repeat himself. Kimble-as-messenger is bound to the territory covered by the law. The fugitive not only flees, he also 'flies,' albeit in a figurative sense: his mode of movement is, as a messenger, the mode of emergence of an individual that restores justice within the normative order wherever necessary.

This theme is introduced in *The Fugitive* as one in which the messenger is dependent not only on the law but also on the medium. An example of this dependency can be found at the end of the episode “Smoke Screen.” Sitting in his office, Gerard watches on television the events that have only just occurred within the episode. In an interview, a Mexican worker claims responsibility for Kimble’s deeds, thus giving Kimble, who has already escaped again, immunity for the time being. Frustrated, Gerard switches off the television set and looks at the glass map that was introduced in the pilot episode. Marked on the map is a rudimentary pattern of Kimble’s movements, leading to the town where Kimble has just absconded from justice. Gerard glumly wipes the pattern off the map.

The scene is revealing because here, the episode’s ending is negotiated intradiegetically within the narrative of *The Fugitive* as an instance of explicit media reflection. In watching the episode’s ending on television, Gerard sees first and foremost his own inability – as administrator of the cartographic apparatus and representative of the power of the state – to see Kimble. As a strategic apparatus of surveillance, the map is blind because it cannot tame Kimble’s mobility. The reason for this is that to the same degree that the fugitive is bound by the law, he also transgresses the law, and hence the map’s domain as a strategic apparatus of the law. The map can record Richard Kimble’s movements, but it cannot capture the fugitive’s movements, i.e. the movements of the function related to the law. Yet it is exactly this law-related function that is placed under the aegis of the logics of seriality. To the degree that character and type, episode and series are interlocking, the places where Kimble appears and the spaces in which the fugitive is moving also interlock: as a fugitive, Kimble enjoys a mobility that eludes territorial representation on the map but is nevertheless inscribed again and again into that territory by an invisible hand.¹⁷

A basic typology of Kimble’s movements confirms this: within an episode, Kimble as character moves along horizontal, continuous, circular, and closed paths; his perspective is that of an acting individual who

¹⁷ This is why Kimble can become a hunter himself within episodes (as long as he does not encounter Gerard), e.g. in “Search in a Windy City” or “Come and Watch Me Die.”

encounters a situation, changes it, then leaves it behind. The representation of movement follows the principles of bodily deixis; the filmic devices used are by any account conventional. The unity of place and time is guaranteed; complex movements are an exception. When they do occur they are staged in a chronological and linear manner: movement starts somewhere and ends somewhere. This coherent type of movement takes place in a reality that can be captured by the map: Kimble's movements are visible movements whose alternatives can be predicted through logical operations.

As already pointed out, these options (e.g. to take the road north or east) are of no consequence to the fugitive, however. As a fugitive, Kimble is subject to the logic of seriality and thus moves in a vertical, non-linear, and open fashion. But here his perspective is (in open contradiction to the narrative's layout) precisely not the perspective of an acting individual but of someone who through repetition is at the same time driven and stopped, someone who acts on behalf of a higher order which also acts through him. This kind of movement is not shown in the series but alluded to elliptically – by means of open horizons into which Kimble wanders, drives, or flies after a parting scene, horizons which mark the ending of an episode and the beginning of the series. Yet the visuals do not elaborate on this order. Accordingly, the pilot episode shows Kimble at a railroad crossing, walking along the tracks into the fog-shrouded darkness – a scene repeated as a film still in the closing credits of the following episodes.

This second type of movement is always incomplete: it begins but does not end – at least not visually; it ends in its serial repetition. This is the kind of movement which the map cannot capture and which troubles Gerard so much. There is no map for these spaces in which Kimble seems to move naturally. Once the parting is over, the messenger Kimble escapes into the placelessness of the series' interval. The direction of movement of *The Fugitive* is the connection with precisely the space as the messenger of which Kimble acts; an imaginary space beyond the horizon, a mythical place beyond the map through which Kimble wanders, only to reappear in the next episode. But this space (and here, the explicit media reflection on television interacts with the implicit media reflection on seriality) is the space of a doubling of the law in the sense of its infinite regression. *The Fugitive* shows neither this space nor the movement through it because this is the movement of the split into

episode and series itself, which the series does not depict within its diegetic world. Initially, the series only imagines this space as a utopian objective: the utopia of a law identical with itself, of a completely balanced, just transparency. Kimble as fugitive is to be re-included in the order of the law. Yet – and this is the point of media reflection in *The Fugitive* – this utopian notion is not represented naively by the series, but is counteracted by the series' media-reflective layout.

Thus in the episode “Never Wave Goodbye” Gerard ambiguously says: “I’m gonna bring you in someday. Stop running, Kimble” – which Kimble of course will not and cannot do, as the stability of the normative order within the episodes is insufficient. From the reinterpretation of the fugitive as a messenger, it follows that stability must also be created in the movement of the series and be subjected to the differential logic of the series. The messenger Richard Kimble is, *qua* media reflection on the seriality of the television series, a split personality who, in his movements as a fugitive, is displaced into the interval of the series – and so is, together with him, the metaphysical utopia. The series addresses this aspect implicitly in its reflection on seriality, and explicitly in its negotiation of television; and it is this aspect that relates the dialectics of the law to the regression of the series, making it possible to think of the series, again *qua* media reflection, in terms of an open question.

VII. The Medium Sends Its Messenger: Kimble as TV Star

“The End Game,” the final episode of the first season is remarkably ironic, which is no coincidence. It ironically cites the tragic irony of the series' plot (deriving its potential from its distance to the pathos-soaked tragic irony).¹⁸ As a movement within the layout of the episode, the law can at times get on to Kimble's tracks. It can capture individual acts and patterns of movement because a starting point and an end point can be identified. Yet the dynamic movement of the fugitive's mission cannot be captured by any map or apparatus of power: the fugitive's serial split in moments of his escape allows for a recurring movement that cannot

¹⁸ Another important episode in this context is “Angels Travel on Lonely Roads.”

be retranslated into a cartographic representation; Kimble moves ‘off the chart.’ “The End Game” transforms this theme of implicit media reflection into an explicit one and thus carries media reflection, at least by the standards of *The Fugitive*, to the extreme.

Local television features live reports of the hunt for Richard Kimble – a hunt planned and executed by Gerard on the map like a chess game. This has become possible because Kimble happened to be photographed and Gerard is now able to deduce his whereabouts by analyzing the photo. The hunt takes place within a closely bounded territory. Television journalists are standing on the sidelines of what is referred to as the ‘playing field’ and are observing the hunt. Within the episode, television thus observes Kimble’s movement from the same external perspective as Gerard. Both are on the side of the cartographic apparatus. In regard to what happens within their radius of vision, both television and Gerard are blind.

This blindness is not only addressed as a problem of not being able to ‘map’ Kimble. Another issue is the normative ambivalence as to whether Kimble’s capture is desirable at all. Television is indifferent in this regard, in fact it is expressly undecided. In “The End Game,” two locals living within the area monitored by television are confronted with the same problem when Kimble seeks refuge in their house. The two men, Jake Devlin (John McGiver) and Sam Reed (John Fiedler), have long been arguing about whether Kimble is guilty or not. They have been following the television coverage about Kimble ever since his trial (which took place before the beginning of the series) and are thus ‘fans’ of the series. Just as they are once again watching the hunt on Kimble on television, the fugitive turns up at their house, suddenly connecting the broadcast with their own living room. Surprised by his arrival, they detain Kimble and discuss his own role with him. While Gerard is being interviewed on television, one question dominates the discussions in Jake’s and Sam’s living room: is television reporting the truth or could it have an interest in a hunt for a wrongfully convicted man?

In *The Fugitive* television thus asks itself if it is possible for the series to have an interest in the law that errs. The moral question involved here is no longer a problem on the level of the narrative. It relates to a television-mediated narrative which refers to that act of mediation. This increases the degree of abstraction: in “The End Game,” Richard Kimble is not being observed as a fugitive. Kimble as fugitive is being observed

in regard to the third relay of this relation: television as a medium which creates in its seriality a star it wants to retain. Television, which in the narrative depicts a dialectical movement of Richard Kimble as messenger, appropriates that dialectics and confronts it with its character as medium. The media-related 'outside' becomes explicit on the diegetic 'inside' and asks: is there an ending of the series other than as a paradoxical figuration of television itself (cf. Engell).

To have Kimble in his role as fugitive and his fans follow the live coverage of Kimble's flight and discuss his guilt or innocence is not without irony. Here, television reveals why it needed the tragic irony of the law: the goal was to bring the fugitive as a television star into the living rooms of his fans. Such an increase in abstraction creates a second ironic distance from the narrative's posits: there is the tragic irony of the failure of the law; and there is the citational irony that ironizes this failure. The differentiation from which television derived the form which keeps the series going, i.e. the differentiation of 'Richard Kimble' as 'fugitive,' is copied by television into television itself, and the TV star is transferred into his fans' living room. The self-referential citation of the tragic irony of the law manifests itself as the citation of the law of the series. As is characteristic of *The Fugitive*, this distance is represented in the fugitive's patterns of movement. While the movements of his reincarnation from episode to episode, his parting into the interval, and his movements through the interval are staged narratively as a metaphysically motivated journey, the final escape in "The End Game" is not only highly elliptical but also an enigma of abstract relations of movement. Kimble manages to escape from his fans' living room and breaks through the police cordon with the help of Reed, who believes in his innocence. Again, the cartographic apparatus of power fails to keep Kimble within its bounds; again, his mobility outpaces surveillance.

The audience watches Kimble and Reed drive down an old, decrepit road along the coast, in a car whose breaks do not work. Thanks to Reed's antagonist Devlin, Gerard finds out about their plan and has a road blockade set up. Next, the fugitives are barreling down the road and lose control of the vehicle. Then the predictable elliptical cut occurs: the car breaks through the wooden guardrail, plunges into the abyss, and explodes. Gerard is immediately on site and watches the burning wreck. Everybody assumes that Kimble and Reed died in the crash. Suddenly Reed can be heard laughing from off-screen – the crash was a diver-

sionary tactic to enable Kimble to escape. As Reed reports, he and Kimble had exited the car before the crash. Kimble has gotten away once more. How exactly that was possible is neither shown nor explained; what counts is that Kimble, with the help of his greatest fan, has managed to escape. Then the epilog begins: Kimble is wandering along a road. He has re-appeared on an anonymous highway which is also used as a stock scene in other episodes.¹⁹

Seen from today's perspective, the reinterpretation of the messenger as TV star in "The End Game" appears tame, but it is remarkable for a series of the 1960s. In regard to Kimble's mobility this reinterpretation makes perfectly clear that the metaphysical legitimization investing Kimble with this power is a diversionary tactic of the series itself. It is the ruse of an 'unreliable' narrator who essentially has only one interest: that Kimble keeps fleeing, that his flight repeats itself – that it becomes serial.

VIII. Conclusion: The Serial Exclusion of the Individual

I wholeheartedly agree with Stanley Fish's view on *The Fugitive*: the 1993 action thriller as well as the attempted relaunch of the franchise as a series in 2000 failed because they got the message of *The Fugitive* wrong. Both formats staged *The Fugitive* as an action-packed extravaganza. This approach does not work with *The Fugitive* (cf. Fish 125-32). According to Fish, *The Fugitive* is about the fugitive as a medium for reconfiguring interpersonal relationships, not about the fugitive as an action hero. This is undoubtedly correct. But from a media-theoretical vantage point, something must be added: the media reflection in *The Fugitive* toys with another form of movement which determines these interpersonal relations. The fugitive's movements beyond the map, i.e. the movements which are elliptically transferred into the series' interval, constitute another kind of movement. This movement takes place invisibly and in the abstract. Kimble's potential of movement as virtual possibility is kept in the realm of latent possibility, in the realm of the invisible.

¹⁹ For example in "The Girl from Little Egypt."

What does this mean? Marshall McLuhan's work offers an answer to this question. The media-reflective structures of the narrative contrast the narrative's metaphysics with its properties as a television spectacle. A media and cultural critique derived from the message is irrelevant to the media, as McLuhan has observed – they are indifferent in that regard. The message is the media and their structures themselves. The message articulated by the series thus pertains to an altogether different aspect of the narrative: its connection to its media-specific form.

Especially in the patterns of movement beyond the zone of surveillance covered by the map (and therefore beyond the surveillance of the law), seriality is conceived as something that counteracts the narrative's metaphysical utopia. A media-reflective perspective on the fugitive's mobility must thus end with a critique of the normative implications of 'Richard Kimble' as fugitive in relation to the law. This relation is critically marked by the series through a form of irony that exposes the relation's conditions of mediality. In its depiction of mobility the series articulates the claim that the moral message of the re-stabilizing law, the re-stabilizing normative order must be conceived of in regard to a serial movement which relates the law to a paradox of regressive iteration.

In this way, the series manages to articulate a distinct view on the conflict of individual mobility and the normative order of the United States during the 1960s. Through its link with television as a medium, the series comments on this conflict from a different perspective than film genres such as the road movie. The individual's exclusion from the purview of the law is conceived especially through the reinterpretation of Kimble as a TV star; inclusion can only take place via the 'offers of meaning' presented by the media. Here, however, the individual no longer appears as the law's functional complement that restores justice and thereby achieves personhood. Instead, especially through the theme of the messenger's genuine mobility, the series stages a scenario in which the desired inclusion of the individual is undermined by infinite serial exclusion, which illustrates an irreducible distance between the individual's movements and the domain of the normative order.²⁰ *The Fugitive*, however, does not simply condemn this difference in the

²⁰ Cf. the discussion of Luhmann and Derrida in Menke ("Paradoxie der Form").

normative order but relates it back to the normative zero point of the media event. Richard Kimble as a fugitive is the star – and thus serves as an object of projection for individualization.

To today's audiences, *The Fugitive* might seem antiquated. But the conflict laid out in the series between the form of the content and the media-specific form of the narrative shows that it was up to date in regard to developments in contemporary media theory. Focusing on the patterns of movement negotiated in the series, it becomes clear that *The Fugitive* is highly aware of its own form. Such a pronounced instrumentalization of this awareness is thus by no means only a trademark of certain much-lauded American television series of the 1990s and 2000s.²¹ In the case of American television series, an aesthetics that ties movement and mobility to the reflection of its media-specific form starts much earlier – it begins with the fugitive's flight.

Translated by Sebastian Schneider and Raimund Schieß

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²¹ In this context see also Kirchmann's critical remarks on the praise of contemporary TV series.

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FORUM

RÜDIGER KUNOW

An ABC of Mobility: Reflections on Analytical Models and Critical Vocabularies¹

I.

Mobility is one of the crucial experiences, perhaps even *the* hallmark experience of our time. In the context of what Jürgen Habermas has called an “economically fashioned global society” (95; my translation), mobility has become an aggregate of complex individual and collective, real and imagined processes. Such processes involve the deregulated mobility of goods and capital (mobility ‘from above’), the regulated mobility of people (mobility ‘from below’), and the simultaneously regulated and anarchic mobility of ideas, images, and information. These various forms of mobility have fashioned and refashioned also the research protocols and the analytical vocabulary of the humanities, especially of American Studies, as the wide currency of terms prefixed with ‘trans-’ or ‘post-’ amply demonstrates. Calls for programmatic discursive shifts such as Stephen Greenblatt’s “mobility studies,” Tim Cresswell’s panoply of intersecting “mobilities,” or John Urry’s “mobility turn” are further indications of how mobility is haunting us, socially, politically, and culturally – inside and outside the academy.

Mobility is often intuitively regarded as a quality or property inherent in people or objects. These can be and indeed have been mobilized from their former locations and attachments by processes of dislocation/relocation, exile, or migrancy. Moreover, we can assume that some people or objects are more easily mobilized than others. However, mobility – social as well as cultural – is more easily invoked than analyzed. As

¹ This article is a revised and expanded version of my “American Studies as Mobility Studies: Some Terms and Constellations.” *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*. Ed. Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College P, 2011. 245-64.

the ‘trans-’ and ‘post-’ debates of the last decades have shown, mobility is something like a moving target of cultural analysis.

In order to avoid the risk of “dissolving ‘America’ as an object of study in a diffuse globalism” (Fluck 30), the argument of this essay will take a different direction. While centrally interested in relating culture to various forms of mobility, what I will be offering is not so much a macrological but a micrological analysis. For this, I will identify a number of *constellations* in which cultural objects, practices, or values are constituted and performed across different social and cultural spaces.

The focus on constellations of mobility that I am proposing here has the advantage of transcending the spaces of ‘monological’ nationalism without losing itself in the vast and empty spaces of the transnational. I will read these constellations as providing the *structure* of which cultural mobility would then be the *concept*; in other words, these constellations map the complex field of cultural arrangements as they presuppose and are based on actual or potential forms of mobility. These constellations, then, are the representation of the otherwise invisible “‘global flows’ of transnational cultural traffic” (Benita Parry qtd. in Robbins 1). I will attempt to show that these constellations are different in scope and intensity, and that they are decidedly non-locational and non-monological.

In what follows, I will present in alphabetical order several of such constellations to establish a vocabulary in the field of cultural mobility studies and to help organize research conversations. Some of the terms I am proposing may seem unusual or even odd, a fact that serves to highlight the difficulties of finding a vocabulary of cultural mobility beyond “nation-based intellectual geographies” (Sassen 5). The alphabetical order in which I have arranged them mirrors Raymond Williams’ *Keywords* (1976), a collection of terms that he intended to provide a “historical semantics” of cultural transformation and differentiation (23). This may suggest a degree of systemic coherence and comprehensiveness that is not attempted here. Also, considerations of space and scope allow me to present only a preview of what such a vocabulary might look like. Hence, in keeping with the title of this essay, I will offer entries ranging from letters A to C.

II.

AIRPLANE/AIRPORT

For thousands of years, fantasies of mobility and of the fascinating world elsewhere aggregated themselves around ships. With the advent of jet travel and the time/space compression it offered, the skies have become a veritable theater of mobility, and airplanes have become the principal embodiment of this mobility. Ian McEwan opens his novel *Saturday* (2005) with the image of a burning airplane in the nightly skies; after 9/11, he offers his readers a potent, if not an over-determined image. He reminds us that planes are no longer just tools for seemingly effortless movement across vast distances: they have become charged with a semantic burden far in excess of the instrumental rationality they also embody. In that sense, they have attained a phantasmagoric quality.

A playful elaboration of this phantasmagoric quality can be found in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988). In Rushdie's novel, a plane is blown up over London by terrorists; two passengers literally tumble out of the wreckage and land, miraculously unharmed, on the very spot where in 1066 William the Conqueror set foot on English soil. Involving plane travel, terrorism, and the landing – literally out of the blue sky – of immigrants from the Global South, this scene permits the unfolding of an exemplary constellation of mobility which, in its fantastic over-determination, emphasizes what Rushdie has called those “far-fetched notions of getting across that supernatural frontier into some wild hallucination of a promised land” (qtd. in Cundy 49).

Luis Rafael Sánchez uses the air commute between Puerto Rico and New York City as the setting of his short story “The Flying Bus” (1987), which thus is set neither in the American metropolis nor in San Juan but right in between both. The airplane never lands and the passengers, “an airbound crowd of mestizos,” live, as it were, “in the air,” forever, suspended in movement, “float[ing] between two ports, licensed for the smuggling of human hopes” (638). The hope underwriting many practices of mobility of relocating to another place is forever deferred in this narrative.

Rana Dasgupta's 2006 novel *Tokyo Cancelled* tells the story of passengers snowed in at an unidentified airport. The novel explores what the narrator calls “the feeling of globalization” as “a black corridor

between two worlds” (1). In this way the narrative enters into a conversation with theoretical conceptualizations of mobility by Meaghan Morris (1988), Marc Augé (1995), and others who have focused on certain nodal points which constellate movement and its enabling conditions around the notion of “non-places” (Bender 78) that in spite of their spatial insubstantiality nonetheless fulfill management functions for the traffic between “real” places. Dasgupta goes one step further than these theorists by turning the airport into a place of conviviality as the passengers begin to tell stories to one another. The stories are set in different locations all around the world and are told in different styles. The book reads like an updated *Canterbury Tales* or *Decamerone* and uses the contingencies of global air travel to develop a sense, again in the narrator’s words, “[of] how the experiences of one place flow into those of another” (2).

The hijacked planes crashing into the Twin Towers have given an ominous twist to airborne mobility as an allegorical embodiment of world-wide interconnectedness. In the wake of 9/11, airplanes can no longer simply function as an unambiguous cipher for people and cultures being ‘in touch:’ planes since then have attained an agency of a sinister, destructive kind. They are *representative representations* of an undesired mobility, coming out of the blue sky, as in Rushdie’s novel – only more deadly.

Airplanes are useful research frames because they make visible the invisible fabric connecting the outside of the US with the inside, in fact and fantasy. They remind us, moreover, that fantasies of mobility are themselves mobile flights of the imagination which are never about movement in the abstract: they are about reaching a goal, a destination. To return once more to Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, “the migrant can do without the journey altogether; it’s no more than a necessary evil; the point is to arrive” (94).

ARRIVAL

All human movement – travel, migrancy, displacement – will, sooner or later, terminate somewhere, and *arrival* is the term for this finality. Arrival is one of the archetypal ‘American experiences’ that to this very day remains deeply rooted in individual and collective memory. One of the most prominent symbolic icons of US-American nationalism, the

Statue of Liberty, is an expression of this memory, a collectively shared fantasy of arrival. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that moments of arrival have figured prominently in American representations, especially so when the representation of 'America' itself was at stake: indeed, arrival in this context often functions as a *metonymical signifier for America itself*.

Such a scripting can be found in many foundational texts of American history, such as those by William Bradford, John Winthrop, and also Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. In a famous passage from *Letters of an American Farmer* (1783), arrival serves as the vantage point from which any attempt at comprehending the social and historical realities of that new entity 'America' should properly begin. Thus, in his third letter, "What Is an American?" Crèvecoeur organizes his argument concerning the essence of Americanness around the perspective of arrival, more exactly the arrival of "an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent" (381). Crèvecoeur's ensuing argument repeatedly returns to this foundational moment of advent in the New World because it allows to juxtapose the European and the American perspectives as his "traveler" begins to reflect on "this great American asylum" (382) and the transformation it effects on the people arriving there. In the often-quoted passage, "[w]hat then is an American, this new man?," the experience of arrival becomes the original moment of Americanness: "[a]n European, when he first arrives, seems limited in his intentions, as well as in his views; but [...] he no sooner breathes our air than he forms schemes and embarks on designs he never would have thought of in his own country" (387).

As time went by, the "great asylum" of which Crèvecoeur had spoken became an increasingly important social and cultural reality because of the exodus of millions of people trying to enter the US. The complex new realities created and inhabited by the migrants demanded representation in both political and symbolic terms. Immigrant fiction attempted to chart in and through texts the vicissitudes of migrants coming to the US; in this textual practice, the moment of arrival often became the pivotal center of representation, a rite of passage, signifying the transition from old to new dispensation, or, in the words of Edward Steiner's 1907 novel, *From Alien to Citizen*.

Arrival, however, not only describes the process of becoming American – arrival is also an event that instantiates an irruption into the

status quo and in an important sense always occurs belatedly. Whenever and wherever somebody arrives, someone else is already there. Arrival is thus a moment of intense affect, not only for the migrants themselves but also for the people encountering them. In California, bumper stickers saying “Welcome to California! Now go home!” remind us that arrival positions human beings in determinate relations with social and cultural Others which need not necessarily be convivial. It creates a constellation in which the need to admit the Other into existing social and cultural dialogues becomes pressing.

BODIES

Within the co-ordinates of Western rationality, the human body is most often conceived of as passive matter, *res extensa*, an object-thing that is inert, *motus*, not *movens*. This view has been one of the anchoring points of the Cartesian mind-body dualism according to which the body is matter “that can be comprised in a certain place, and so fill a certain place [...] that can be moved in different ways, not indeed of itself [...]” (Veith 25). Following Descartes, the human body was conceived of as the lodestar from which humans experience the world around them, a world that in all its complexity and mobility was anchored, as it were, by their body as “the pivot of the world” (Merleau-Ponty qtd. in Coole 93).

It is also true that bodies have been understood as being mobile and capable of being relocated in innumerable ways. This mobility was understood as affecting the body negatively (through illnesses or psychological stress) or positively (through stimulation or even the enhancement of somatic functions). All the while, the integrity of the body itself as a visceral entity remained unchallenged by its mobility. This, however, has been changing dramatically in the context of developments since the 1980s in biomedicine and biotechnology, most notably the genome revolution, through which bodies have been mobilized in hitherto unimaginable ways. This is especially true of human bodies in disaggregated form – genes, blood, organs – which are at one and the same time being mobilized and capitalized within the circuits of market-driven globalization. What was once contained within the gift economy of family and kin – the gift of life – has now become a burgeoning world-wide trade in human body parts: skin, bone, ligaments, tissue, organs.

The trade routes of biomaterial crisscross the globe, from Brazil to Israel, from Peru to the United States, but almost always from the Global South to the Global North. Each year, an unknown number of people from Europe, the US, and the Gulf region – estimates range from 5,000 to 10,000 – receive organs ‘harvested’ (this is indeed the term used) from donors in countries and regions such as Egypt, the Philippines, or Latin America. One area in which the “marketability of the body” (Sharp 52) has generated a particularly intense mobility of body parts is the illegal trade in kidneys. In the so-called ‘kidney belt’ of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, poor people, mostly women, have in large numbers been donating their kidneys for cash to recipients mostly from outside of India who are in desperate need of a transplant. These people become ‘donors’ in reaction to financial emergencies; they have to pay off debts, assemble dowries for their daughters, or have other reasons forcing them to donate, all of them due to their dire poverty. This “collateralization” (Cohen 128) of the human body illustrates Fredric Jameson’s prescient observation of 1985 that “the prodigious new expansion of multinational capital ends up penetrating and colonizing [the last noncapitalist] enclaves (Nature and the Unconscious) [...]” (49). As the dark underbelly of medical tourism – another growing market depending on mobilization – the trade in human organs effectively reconfigures the relations over long distances into which human life, as a whole and in parts, is being embedded. At the moment when life becomes the embedded, or embodied, expression of the inequities of neoliberal capitalism, a whole ‘brave new world’ of material bodily inequities is beckoning in which the Global South becomes something like the spare parts depot in matters of health for the Global North.

This example of the growing mobilization of body parts furthermore shows what happens when market-driven globalization meets advanced biotechnology. In the wake of this encounter, not only kidneys and blood, but

[t]he elements of [human] reproduction – eggs, sperm, and later embryos – also became separable from any particular body [...]. [In this way biotechnology] is conferring a new mobility on the elements of life, enabling them to enter new circuits – organic, interpersonal, geographical and financial. (Rose 14-15)

In the not-too-far future it is very likely that the 'body shop' of global bioeconomics will generate a highly mobile, composite body, with a brain coming from, say, a Filipino/a, the heart from a Mexican, and the kidneys from an Indian donorperson. Sanjay Nigam's novel *Transplanted Man* (2002) anticipates this very moment, featuring an Indian politician who is known as the "transplanted man" because his heart, liver, pancreas, lungs, and corneas all were donated from different people of different faiths from all over India. While his transplants secure him a cabinet post as minister for religious diversity, they cannot secure his health, and a kidney failure brings him to a New York City hospital where he encounters other transplanted men, including his doctor, sleepwalking Sonny Seth, who finds India too Indian for his taste even as he encounters Indian migrants both as patients and as co-workers. In this way, the novel projects a metropolitan hospital not as a healing space in which advanced Western medical knowledge is successfully applied (the Indian politician dies) but as a microcosm of suffering.

In the context delineated here, the human body is no longer simply involved in practices of mobility but has itself become a constellation of mobility: the ever-increasing harvest of biomaterial from bodies living or dead effectively mobilizes the body and divorces it from its attachment to its 'original' habitat – and also from all marks of personhood, ownership, or local origin.

BORDERS

Like airports, borders are nodes that are crucial for the management of mobility. As they organize social and cultural identities around unequal life chances, they also catalyze moments of both transnational *angst* and desire. All over the world borders have for a long time been "high-intensity zones" (Pries 113, my translation) of material and personal interaction; in the Western academy in recent years, they have become high-intensity zones also of cultural theory-building and critique, often conducted under the label 'border studies.' As a site of theoretical production, borders, and chief among them the US-Mexican border, have attained "a paradoxical centrality" (Clifford 7) and have come to be invested with an extraordinary explanatory valence for accounting for

the social and cultural contradictions of an increasingly connected, yet also increasingly unequal world.

The border matters, as José David Saldívar quipped (1997) – and what matters about it has been theorized around a plethora of border-related terms (in both English and Spanish): *borderlands/frontera* (Anzaldúa, Alvarez), *transfrontera*, more specifically as “*transfrontera* contact zone” (Saldívar), or “geopolitical wound” (Gómez-Peña qtd. in Mendoza 139). The “fragmented, paranoid” character (Davis 238), especially of the US-Mexican border, has been the anchor also for a wide variety of conceptual metaphors variously reading it as an interface (Arteaga 14), as a socio-cultural membrane (Wilson and Donnan), or as mere social fiction (Limerick) – and this list could be extended almost *ad infinitum*.

Looking back at more than two decades of border studies, it becomes increasingly obvious that the “borderization” (Saldívar 191) of cultural theory and critique has produced not only ambivalent, but deeply contradictory results: borders have been equally theorized as sites of serendipitous encounters, even as “*initiatory* interstices” (Bhabha 227), or, inversely, as precarious junctures marking “the ending of a safe zone and the beginning of an unsafe zone” (Alejandro Morales qtd. in Lugo 43). Renato Rosaldo summarizes the critical orthodoxy when he says that “borderlands should be regarded not as analytically empty transitional zones but as sites of creative cultural production that require investigation” (207-08). However, such views tend to turn a blind eye on the materiality of borders and their equally material implications for the majority of people crossing them or attempting to do so; in this context, David Johnson and Scott Michaelson note that

[i]n the majority of this work [recent work across the humanities] [...] the entry point of ‘the border’ or ‘the borderlands’ goes unquestioned, and, in addition, often is assumed to be a place of politically exciting hybridity, intellectual creativity, and moral possibility. The borderlands, in other words, are the privileged locus of hope for a better world. (3)

In order to gain a critical distance from this surfeit of often optimistic conceptualizations of ‘the border,’ it is necessary to unpack the term and move beyond its hitherto site-focused understanding. I proceed in two steps. In the first, I present what I describe as a *formal* reading of the border. In the second, I move beyond a ‘grounded’ understanding of the

border as always located at the liminal site of the nation and towards the organizational work performed at and with the help of borders.

Borders, I propose, mark a critical *now* of mobility, the moment when the transversal movement of people, commodities, or ideas gets organized around differential outcomes. These outcomes may involve unequal life chances, economic developments, or concepts and theories. Borders arrange and categorize practices of mobility along the axis of desired vs. dreaded, legal vs. illegal, anticipated vs. un-anticipated, etc. In all these cases, the border is above all else a “formal moment”² that works by disciplining people, spaces, or ideas, patrolling and separating them according to a binary logic of either-or.

Discipline is quite crucial here as a form of praxis determining the horizons of intelligibility in which new data (people, ideas, goods) can appear and be understood. Since classical antiquity, thinking has been conceptualized in the West as a mobile, even mercurial process³ moving from one idea or impression to another. The constitutive instability of thinking needs to be ‘disciplined’ in order for a particular way of knowledge production – a discipline – to emerge and consolidate (Surin 15). In this way, the formation of a discipline in academia depends on a trajectory similar to that which people and material objects take before they reach a new location.

The view of the border as discipline allows us to understand the intrinsic relationship between liminal spaces and epistemology: borders manage and control the flow of data, and sometimes they do so by reducing human beings to data. Debates about the future of human and civic rights in the context of market-driven globalization have led to the realization that this disciplining function of borders has long since been divorced from a specific location. Borders have themselves become

² My reading of the border as a “formal moment” builds on an otherwise only slightly related argument proposed by Fredric Jameson in *Valences of the Dialectic*. Jameson develops the concept of the “formal element” which abstains from offering a content-oriented analytic in favor of a focus on “ideology and method” (164). What links Jameson’s understanding of the “formal element” and my own is the joint interest in conceptualizing moments of transformation.

³ For a further elaboration of this concept cf. Dubrow.

mobile in previously unknown and often inventive ways.⁴ As Seyla Benhabib has argued, modern multiethnic communities continue to define themselves “by drawing boundaries as well, and these boundaries are territorial as well as civic” (45) – civic here understood as belonging to a group with definable rights. Such civic boundary lines do not always depend on a specific location for their functioning. We do not have to turn to the United States and the proverbial “herida abierta where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds [...]” (Anzaldúa 25) to see that. In the context of the European Union, for example, big cities and their airports have become border sites through the Schengen Agreement. One result of this process are effective restrictions on the mobility of airline passengers from/to the Global South, who at a number of European airports are not allowed to disembark while their plane makes a stopover. In the same vein LAX (Los Angeles International Airport) has become an Ellis Island of the age of air travel.⁵ The movie *The Terminal* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 2004), even while set at New York City’s John F. Kennedy International Airport, highlights the airport’s site-specific function as a non-place border which organizes mobility around differential outcomes.

Viktor Navorski (Tom Hanks), *en route* from Eastern Europe, has just arrived at JFK when his home country ceases to exist in the wake of a military conflict. As a citizen of a state that no longer exists he is denied entry, but he is not allowed to go someplace else, either. As a transnationally homeless person, Navorski is forced to settle temporarily in a non-place, setting up residence in the corridors of the airport and making friends with the airport personnel. In doing so, he epitomizes the very values the US has always demanded of its immigrants: self-

⁴ This view of borders as disciplinary machines differs from the hegemonic view of “borderline engagements” theorized by Homi Bhabha and others. For Bhabha, “the borderline negotiations of cultural translation” (223) are instances of intercultural contact in and by literature which subvert First World national cultures. The view developed here takes up critiques of border theorizing such as that by J. Heyman who argues against the “facile idea [that] [...] at the border, two sides equal one hybrid” (47). Cf. also the special issue of *Theory, Culture, and Society* on borders edited by Mike Featherstone; Miyoshi.

⁵ These developments are by no means new. Cf. “Los Angeles: The New Ellis Island.”

reliance, ingenuity, and a hands-on approach to the vicissitudes of everyday life. He is caught on the wrong side of a border that in the film is marked (reassuringly for a US-American audience) by glass doors. Even as he can see his destination, the US, through these doors, he remains on the outside, much as he also remains outside of the horizons of intelligibility of the airport's administrative logic. At the same time Navorski does not remain outside the logic of the administrators: his movement is monitored even if it is necessarily confined to the terminal building.

This Hollywood film speaks to a historically new situation in which, in a world of heightened mobility, borders themselves have become highly mobile, open to multiple deployments and redeployments. They can pop up in unexpected places and at unanticipated moments when people inside and yet outside a nation are confronting each other. As Tim Cresswell notes:

[f]ew would think of the borders of Europe as being in Manchester, Amsterdam, or Bologna, but there they are – a multitude of dispersed nodal borders. It is in these transport nodes that Schengen space was enacted and, indeed, materially produced. (234)

Cresswell's argument harks back to the early moments of sociology, especially the phenomenological sociology of Georg Simmel. Simmel, who wrote extensively on the stranger as a 'form' of modern urban life, paid specific attention to national borders which he understood in ways similar to the formal reading attempted above: a border, for Simmel, "is not a spatial fact that produces social effects, but rather a social fact which realizes itself in spatial ways" (qtd. in Wald 140). From this perspective the physicality of the border – including its physical geography – is less important than its formal role. Borders thus understood are the condensation, or rather, the formalization of socio-cultural processes; they can be located at the political limits of the nation-state but also anywhere else, as long as they organize relations of belonging and non-belonging.

CITATION

Citation is a term that does not routinely surface in discussions of mobility. Nonetheless it is quite useful in understanding the transverse

dynamics of mobile cultural material. Citation references a form of cultural mobility that stands on the middle ground between quotation and intertextuality. What is being cited – a passage of a text, a plot, an image, or a constellation of figures – is by that token transposed into a different context. Depending on the spatial and temporal distance between ‘original’ and quotation, citation may be a figure of *cultural translocation*.

The concept of citation goes back to Derrida’s notion of ‘iterability,’ and from there it has entered the critical vocabulary mainly through the reception of Judith Butler’s performance theory of the body. My own understanding of citation however is indebted to Walter Benjamin’s use of the term in his 1931 essay on “Epic Theater.” In this essay, Benjamin insists on the disruptive, unruly aspect of citation: “to cite a text means to interrupt a context,” and interruption, as Benjamin has repeatedly argued, “is the mother of dialectics” (307). Citation thus understood constitutes a double move. It is both located and moveable, sedentary and open to employments at other sites. There is thus a tension between *sitting* and *citing* in cultural translocation which re-inscribes in conceptual terms what Simmel expressed spatially as the “peculiar structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement” (403).

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that citation has become a hallmark of counter-hegemonic cultural practices. Elvis Presley impersonator El Vez, for example, both cites the songs of the King of Rock and Roll and invests them with new meanings.⁶ Hence his “In the Barrio” refers to, indeed even repeats Presley’s “In the Ghetto” in a way which both uses the pop-cultural icon’s recognition effect while at the same time overwriting it with a message that challenges the hegemony of ‘white’ American pop culture. A similar citational re-investment was involved when *bhangra* music from India became incorporated into international pop music in a way sometimes viewed critically and disdainfully by Indians living in India (Banerjee 61-62).

⁶ This form of citation has become one of the hallmarks of counter-hegemonic ethnic writing, which takes canonical forms of the hegemonic culture and reinvests them with new, often subversive meanings. My thanks to Frederike Offizier for alerting me to this context.

Another use of citation can be observed in the writings of Salman Rushdie, for example in *Midnight's Children* (1980): “once upon a time there were Radha and Krishna, and Rama and Sita, and Laila and Majnu; also (because we are not unaffected by the West) Romeo and Juliet, and Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn. The world is full of love stories [...]” (311). This text consists of a tissue of more or less direct citations through which it combines culturally diverse narrative elements. Cross-cultural citation has become a trademark of Rushdie’s style, which has invited criticism of the author’s allegedly dismissive attitude to national cultural traditions.

What these examples, as different as they may be, furthermore show is that for citation to achieve its effect it is not necessary that a certain element be cited *verbatim* – what is necessary is that the element be recognized as citation. Thus, *Tokyo Cancelled*, the novel from which I quoted above, ‘cites’ both Boccaccio’s *Decamerone* and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* not *verbatim*, to be sure, but as recognizable cultural templates for multi-actor, multi-locale narratives.

What I find useful about citation in the context of cultural mobility is that it impels us to think about mobility not as a smooth transfer between different contexts but to view it as an event, an encounter, a disruption of the cultural status quo. The paintings of classical modernity offer many examples of how the ‘encounter-quality’ of citational material is being put to use, both for the sake of a shock effect (*épater les bourgeois*) and to add to the force of formal experiment. This is certainly true of Picasso’s citation of African masks in his *Desmoiselles d’Avignon* (1907).

Cultural citation is a Janus-faced phenomenon: on the one hand it is transgressive, taking a given element out of its established context; on the other, it is also conservative in a very literal sense of the term by preserving the element across temporal, spatial, or cultural distances – in this way, it remains curiously committed to that which it displaces.

CONTAGION

Contagion names a biomedical or, more precisely, an epidemiological fact which poses compelling questions about community and the perils of human contact. Contagion works through contact and might even be said to constitute particularly intense forms of self-other relationships.

Contagion is not only intimately linked to movement, both visible and invisible. It is, in fact, the moment when the chickens of mobility come home to roost, or, in the words of Mary Shelley's narrator in *The Last Man* (1826), when disaster comes "home to many bosoms, and, through the various channels of commerce [is] carried so entirely into every class and division of community" (qtd. in Wald 12).

During the 1910s Mary Mallon, a.k.a. "Typhoid Mary," brought home to many Americans the connection between mobility and contagion. A first-generation immigrant from Ireland who worked as a cook in casual employment on Long Island, NY, she was suspected of spreading typhus among the families of her employers. It turned out that she was the first healthy person ever identified in the United States to be nonetheless the carrier of a contagious disease. Moreover, tracking her down and quarantining her was the first proven success of the new public health system (Wald 9). What especially deserves mention is that medical knowledge and epidemiological expertise in her case did do important and wide-ranging social and cultural work: the 'Typhoid Mary' case provided the public with a welcome excuse for the 'Irish need not apply' signs in store windows or company offices, proving the Foucauldian insight that discourses of knowledge cannot be separated from effects of power. From this perspective, Mary Mallon's case stands at the beginning of a series of increasingly frequent normalizing interventions in the name of public health into the everyday lives of people especially from the working classes, interventions which must be understood also as acts of representation, "expressing cultural anxieties about economic interdependence and racial mixing" (Tomes 626).

At the same time, there is an important gendered dimension to the Mary Mallon case. The 1910s in the US were the time also of the 'New Woman,' 'unattached' and independent young females from the lower and the middle classes living away from home while working in factories or offices. This historically unprecedented form of female mobility was perceived critically in many quarters of US-American society at that time, and it provides the backdrop of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), and also of the contemporaneous reaction to 'Typhoid Mary.'

Looking at the Mallon case, it becomes apparent that biotic mobility precipitates critical situations in which the line between the public and the private becomes blurry. Contagious diseases shift the focus from the

individual to the community as a whole, and with regard to this realignment of the public and the private I want to suggest that imagined communities seem to require strategies of containment which control and minimize the threat posed by an infectious Other. From this perspective, the performance of medicalizing Otherness, of biological xenophobia, reveals itself as a particular form of community formation. In times of contagion, people come to be viewed as systems that are constantly haunted by perceived or real medical dangers, by biotic invasions from the outside. Take, for example, the excitement over 'Asian Flu' a few years ago. At that time, students in a number of places in Canada were barred from attending their High School classes because as people of Asian descent they were believed to be dangerous carriers of the disease even though they had shown no symptoms and had not recently been to Asia (Logan).

Pop cultural representations of contagious diseases are a flourishing genre. As in the film *Outbreak* (dir. Wolfgang Petersen, 1995), they often follow a recognizable representational economy, the so-called "outbreak narrative" (Wald 26), which does not just capitalize on titillating *angst* effects but also fashions a national or even transnational responsibility; in the latter case, US-American medical institutions are charged with the responsibility of saving the world from biohazard.

In *Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), Amitav Ghosh offers a fictional record of the medical discovery of the causes of malaria. In doing so, he stresses the ineptitude of Western epistemologies and explores the contours of alternative, indigenous epistemologies. Contagion, as Ghosh's novel also shows, references the parallel that exists between the mobility of dangerous biotic material and the often equally dangerous and at times undesired mobility of ideas, which is no less contagious. Identity and belonging in this context take on a recognizable "biological turn" (Wald 30).⁷

⁷ The biological concept of belonging played a great role in Cold War rhetoric. Thus, Director of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover repeatedly referred to what he called "the virus of Communism," which in his view was "a condition akin to disease that spreads like an epidemic and like an epidemic a quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting the Nation [...]" (qtd. in Wald 175).

Hegel conceptualized contagion as a generic form of the translocation of ideas. In *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807), he discusses the historical progress of the Enlightenment in terms of “a penetrating infection, which does not make itself noticeable beforehand as something opposed to the indifferent element into which it insinuates itself, and therefore cannot be warded off” (VI, Spirit, B. Self-alienated Spirit: Culture No. 545). Forms of commercial advertising called viral marketing seem to have picked up on this very idea.

(CULTURAL) COPYRIGHT

The enhanced mobility of people, products, and ideas constitutes a challenge to notions of cultural origin and originality. This process can be observed on a number of levels. For example, English, the *lingua franca* of our day, has become subject to influences from all across the globe. English can no longer be said to be ‘at home’ in, much less in the ‘possession’ of, the English speaking nations across the North Atlantic or settler colonies such as Australia or New Zealand. In a related way, ‘Spanglish’ or ‘Denglish’ cannot only be identified as linguistic varieties of cultural minorities but have become forms of expression circulating in the mainstream as well.

In these as in many other cases, words, images, texts, and other cultural artifacts, as they get ‘cited’ and move freely and continuously across and between national cultures, are being deployed and redeployed in so many ways that it has become increasingly difficult to identify their ‘original’ features and their point of origin.

Paul Gilroy argues that “ideas of cultural ownership and experiential copyright [...] are anachronistic” (133). The endangerment, even loss, of cultural copyright is often blamed on the transnationalization or globalization of mass cultural products, a process which some people identify as Americanization. Possibly as a compensatory gesture attempting to shore up core national cultural practices, the United Nations have recently undertaken to broaden the definition of “world heritage,” now including “intangible heritage” such as French cuisine, the Beijing Opera, and the Peruvian Scissors Dance, and thereby reassert the copyright for immaterial cultural practices and traditions.

All the while, the loss of cultural copyright purportedly inflicted by American hegemony on the rest of the world is a deeply ambivalent

process, a process which also has effects on the US itself. Consumers who all over the world have become trained in new 'American' lifestyles do not merely copy these styles but subject them to combinations and re-combinations and bring in their own traditions and preferences, all of which eventually have their impact on the US-American culture industry.

The mobility of such cultural practices and 'copyrighted' material affects not only the status of nation-states (like the US), which can then no longer be unequivocally seen as "civilizational paradigms" (Gabaccia 7) – the perceived weakening of cultural copyright is an especially vexing issue in the context of counter-hegemonic, oppositional cultures. As the Spanglish/Denglish example shows, "the integrity of marginal identity" (Gilroy 133) is in danger when social and cultural movements appropriate what once were distinctive markers of cultural tradition.

Copyright is thus a field whose importance is not exhausted by legal regulations of property rights: copyright poses questions about what people identify as 'their own' identity or cultural heritage in the context of global mobility.

III. Conclusion

My provisional list of entries breaks off here. Other useful entries might reference terms such as hospitality, mass hysteria, or risk because they name constellations where cultural objects and practices are constituted and performed across different social and cultural spaces. In view of these necessary additions, much of what has been presented in this essay still remains a mere outline that needs to be filled in with more detail. But then, my reflections on an analytical vocabulary for describing the urgencies created by the flows of global capital, of people, products, and ideas provide no master plan for 'Mobility Studies' or the 'mobility turn.' The various entries presented here do not offer definitions of what mobility, and especially cultural mobility, *is* – rather, they are designed to indicate what such mobility *does*, especially at the "transfer points [or] places of in-betweenness" (Urry 42), in places which lie outside given social or semantic regimes without being awash in the nowhere or anywhere of the transnational.

What is more, the entries in this ABC mark a *move* from the vastness of global interactions to local, concrete, constellational sites. I am calling these sites constellational because they cannot be reduced to a single perspective or to a rigid binary opposition between ‘here’ and ‘there.’ They instead indicate moments in which the ‘here’ and ‘there,’ or ‘them’ and ‘us,’ intersect and interact in processes of mediation and negotiation, or adaptation and acculturation, or rejection and expulsion, as the case may be. Such localized forms of analysis allow us to arrest for a moment the flows of mobility, both the mobility under observation and our description of it, in a specific instant which is composed of both “distance and nearness, indifference and involvement” (Simmel 110).

Much contemporary discourse on cultural mobility in the humanities and in American Studies has exhibited a strong tendency to conceive of cultures as self-contained, now increasingly porous realms which are then somehow ‘penetrated’ by phenomena such as intercultural contact and global flows. In the process, heterogeneous, even irreconcilable elements are then assumed to be somehow incorporated, combined, mixed, or scrambled into new, hybrid configurations. Concepts of interculturality or multiculturalism, while ostensibly moving beyond traditional holistic concepts of culture, in fact still conceptually presuppose these very same cultures as givens, and the recombinatory thrust of their theories depends on this presupposition. A prime example of this view is Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity. In his view, “every nation is hybrid; becoming more so as migration increases and in spite of the rise of the archaic violence of ‘ethnic cleansing’ [...]” (199).

From this perspective, the mobility of cultural objects or practices appears as a lateral movement traversing a fixed, inert space. Such a view does not tell the whole story. Mobility is also, and perhaps more importantly so, *relational*, establishing “reciprocal obligations between people” (Urry 11) otherwise separated by political, social, or cultural borders. In other words, mobility produces *encounters*, and in our descriptions of these encounters we have a choice: we may show how the differences between the cultural parties involved are sublated into ‘hybridity,’ or we may focus instead on processes of mediation, conflict, or incompatibility as they unfold in such encounters. In the former view, mobility is that which lies always already behind us; in the latter, mobility is seen as containing *a moment of reflexivity*. It is often believed that mobility abolishes distances, but whatever distance mobility erases in

space, it reinstates in other, intellectual or affective forms. Bernhard Waldenfels has called this the “the sting of the unfamiliar” (130, my translation) which militates against a rash and simplistic assimilation of the unfamiliar to the familiar.

This latter understanding of the cultures in/of mobility also has important disciplinary implications: it requires of humanities scholars to fine-tune their analytic abilities so that they may become able to deal with difference without negating or submerging it. The entries presented above may perhaps represent a first, still imperfect step in that direction.

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List of Contributors

Martin Butler is Junior Professor of American literature and culture at the University of Oldenburg. His main areas of research are the study of popular culture, with a particular focus on (the history of) political songs as well as on urban cultures. His publications include *Voices of the Down and Out: The Dust Bowl Migration and the Great Depression in the Songs of Woody Guthrie* (2007), a volume on protest songs (*Da habt Ihr es, das Argument der Straße: Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zum politischen Lied*, co-ed., 2007), *Sound Fabrics: Studies on the Inter-medial and Institutional Dimensions of Popular Music* (co-ed., 2009), and *EthniCities: Metropolitan Cultures and Ethnic Identities in the Americas* (co-ed., 2011).

Konstantin Butz has studied American Studies and Cultural Studies at the University of Bremen and at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He completed his dissertation entitled “Grinding California: Culture and Corporeality in American Skate Punk” as a scholarship holder of the a.r.t.e.s. Research School at the University of Cologne in 2011.

Tim Cresswell is Professor of Human Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of four books: *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression* (1996); *The Tramp in America* (2001); *Place: A Short Introduction* (2004), and *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (2006). He has co-edited a further four volumes including: *Gendered Mobilities* (2008) and *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects* (2011). He is a managing editor of *Cultural Geographies*.

Christoph Ernst studied German Philology, Philosophy, and History at Johannes-Gutenberg-University Mainz. He received his PhD in 2005 and is currently assistant professor at the Department of Theater and Media Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg. His main research areas are diagrammatics, visual culture, and film and media theory. His publications include *Diagrammatik: Einführung in ein kultur- und medienwissenschaftliches Forschungsfeld* (2010, with Matthias Bauer), and *Essayistische Medienreflexion: Die Idee des Essayismus und die Frage nach den Medien* (2005). He has also co-

edited the volume *Kulturhermeneutik: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zum Umgang mit kultureller Differenz, Perspektiven interdisziplinärer Medienphilosophie* (2008).

Alexandra Ganser studied English and American Studies and History at the Universities of Vienna, Triest, and Oklahoma at Norman (Fulbright 2002/03). She was doctoral fellow at the Graduate School “Cultural Hermeneutics: Difference and Transdifference” at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg, where she is assistant professor for literary and cultural studies. Her dissertation, which won the Bavarian American Academy’s Award for best dissertation in 2008, has been published as *Roads of Her Own: Gendered Space and Mobility in American Women’s Road Narratives, 1970-2000* (2009). She has co-edited *Screening Gender: Geschlechterszenarien im gegenwärtigen US-amerikanischen Film und Fernsehen* (2007, with Heike Paul). Her current book project examines the textual representations of piracy from the late 17th century to the Civil War. In the context of this project, she has been Christoph-Daniel-Ebeling fellow at the American Antiquarian Society (2009).

Nina Gerassi-Navarro is Associate Professor of Latin American literature at Tufts University. Her research focuses primarily on nineteenth-century Latin American literature and visual culture. She has published extensively on nation-building, popular culture, and the culture of out-laws in both literature and film. Her books include *Pirate Novels: Metaphors of Nation Building* (1999) and a co-edited volume, *Otros estudios transatlánticos: Lecturas desde lo latinoamericano* (2009). She is currently working on a book on the circulation of knowledge between the United States and Latin America, 1840-1880, with a specific emphasis on the discourses of science, politics, and aesthetics.

Katharina Gerund studied American Cultural Studies, Theater and Media Studies, and Psychology at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg as well as Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison as a DAAD fellow (2004/05). She was a doctoral fellow at Bremen University and a lecturer in American Studies at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. She currently teaches at FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg. Her dissertation is entitled “African Americaniza-

tions: African American Women's Art and Activism in (West) German Discourses," and her research interests include African American literature and culture, cultural mobility, Americanization, and Black Diaspora Studies.

Christina Judith Hein holds a doctorate in American Literature from Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg, where she was a member of the Graduate School "Cultural Hermeneutics: Difference and Transdifference." In her dissertation *Whiteness, the Gaze, and Transdifference in Contemporary Native American Fiction* (forthcoming), she brings Critical Whiteness Studies and Native American Literature together and looks at how whiteness is being represented in four novels by indigenous authors Louise Erdrich, Gerald Vizenor, Craig Womack, and Sherman Alexie. Her research interests also include phenomena of transdifference, Queer Studies, comic books, and graphic novels.

Rüdiger Kunow is Full Professor and Chair of the American Studies program at Potsdam University. He has taught at the Universities of Würzburg, Erlangen-Nuremberg, Freiburg, Hannover, and Magdeburg and worked as a Research Fellow at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was a visiting professor at the University of Texas at Austin, the State University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and the State University of New York at Albany. He is a founding member of ENAS, the European Network in Aging Studies. He also served as speaker of the international research project "Transnational American Studies," a cooperation of the University of Southern California, Dartmouth College, the Free University and Humboldt University in Berlin, and Potsdam University. Furthermore, he was the speaker of the European Union research and teaching project "Putting a Human Face on Diversity: The U.S. In/Of Europe." Currently he serves as Director of the interdisciplinary research project "Cultures in/of Mobility" at the School of Humanities Potsdam University. Until 2008 he held the position of the President of the German Association for American Studies. His major research interests and publications focus on cultural constructions of illness and aging, transnational American Studies and the South Asian diaspora in the US.

Peter Kuras is a doctoral candidate in the Department of German at Princeton University. His dissertation research focuses on discourses of specificity in early cinematic theory and contemporaneous legal scholarship. He is also interested in the case study as a literary form, the concept of the fiction in a variety of disciplinary constructs, and discourses of human inadequacy.

Dorothea Löbbermann (Humboldt University, Berlin) has previously worked with *Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung* and Technical University, Berlin. For her current research on “Figurations of Homelessness,” she spent seven months as a Fulbright scholar at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her book publications are *Memories of Harlem: Fiktionale (Re)Konstruktionen eines Mythos der zwanziger Jahre* (2002), *Other Modernisms in an Age of Globalization*, co-edited with Djelal Kadir (2002), and *Cinematographies: Visual Discourses and Textual Strategies in 1990s New York City*, co-edited with Günter H. Lenz and Karl Heinz Magister (2006).

Gesa Mackenthun is Professor of American Studies at Rostock University, Germany. She received her MA in 1986 and her PhD in 1994, both from Frankfurt University, and completed her *Habilitation* at Greifswald University in 2002. Her research centers on the analysis of colonial and imperial discourses in the Americas from the colonial period to the nineteenth century, on postcolonial literature and theory, on the history of the ocean, and more recently on the intersections between scientific and imperial discourses. She is vice spokesperson and initiator of the Graduate School “Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2006. Her publications include *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature* (2004), *Metaphors of Dispossession: American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492-1637* (1997), and *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (2004, co-edited with Bernhard Klein). She is co-editor of *The Fuzzy Logic of Encounter: Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship* (2009, with Sünne Juterczenka), *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone* (2010, with Raphael Hörmann), and *Embodiments of Cultural Contact* (2011, with Sebastian Jobs). Her current research deals with nineteenth-century

travel writing in the Americas and the concurrent scientific discourses about antiquity.

Heike Paul is chair of American Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg. She received her MA from Frankfurt University in 1994, her PhD in 1998 and her Habilitation in 2004, both from Leipzig University. She was a member of the Graduate School “Gender and Literature” at the University of Munich (1995-1997), a postdoc at Harvard University (1999-2000), and a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study, 2003-2004) in Berlin. Currently, she is spokesperson of the Graduate School “Präsenz und implizites Wissen” (“Presence and Tacit Knowledge”) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). She is the author of *Mapping Migration: Women’s Writing and the American Immigrant Experience from the 1950s to the 1990s* (1999) and *Kulturkontakt and Racial Presences: Afro-Amerikaner und die deutsche Amerika-Literatur, 1815-1914* (2005) as well as the editor of *Amerikanische Populärkultur in Deutschland* (2002, with Katja Kanzler), a special edition of *Amerikastudien* on “American Studies and Multilingualism” (2006, with Werner Sollors) and *Screening Gender: Geschlechterszenarien im gegenwärtigen US-amerikanischen Film und Fernsehen* (2007, with Alexandra Ganser). Her current research interests include American myths, Afro-Canadian history and literature, and discourses of ‘presence’ in American culture and literature.

Heike Steinhoff studied British and American Studies and Media Studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum and Utrecht University and received her Master (with Honors) in 2007. Since then, she has worked at the Department of American Studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum, where she teaches American and Cultural Studies with a particular focus on gender, sexuality, queer theory, popular culture, youth literature and film, beauty, and the body. Her doctoral project investigates discourses of somatic transformation in contemporary US-American culture. She is the author of *Queer Buccaneers: (De)Constructing Boundaries in the PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN Film Series* (2011).

PAUL · GANSER · GERUND (Eds.)

Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility
in the US and Beyond

Figures of mobility appear prominently in US-foundational narratives of ‘discovery’, the ‘Puritan errand’, and westward expansion; the protagonists of these hegemonic tales of settlement and nation-building are (mostly) European travelers, pioneers, and colonists. By contrast, figures such as pirates, drifters, and fugitives are for the most part absent from canonical narratives of New World beginnings and may be considered as expressing/representing alternative mobilities. Their stories and their representations raise questions of legitimacy and legality – often from a transnational perspective – and imply a critique of the American empire and its concomitant domestic discourses of marginalization. Yet, pirates, drifters, and fugitives also appear as ambiguous figures with regard to US-exceptionalist rhetoric: they may tap their subversive potential, while they are also bound to and complicit with the ideologies they seek to expose. This volume investigates these figures in a variety of cultural productions (pamphlets, song lyrics, autobiographies, novels, memorials, legal texts, video, television, and film) from the 17th century to the present.

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