Preface

As is true of previous volumes of the Bavarian American Academy (BAA) monograph series the following collection of essays, titled "Culture and Mobility," could not have materialized without the generous support of several institutions and the personal commitment of those who had been involved as contributors, editors, or proofreaders. We want to thank, above all, the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Bavarian Ministry of Sciences, Research and the Arts, the American Consulate General, Munich, and both LMU Munich and the Technical University of Munich (TUM) for their support of the BAA's 2012 biannual meeting "Cultures of Mobility," from which the essays assembled here originally sprang. Special thanks go to Manuel Sattig of BMW Group, Munich, Prof. Dr. Thomas Hamacher (TUM) and Prof. Dr. Armin Nassehi (LMU) for their participation in a public panel discussion that provided valuable insight into the many facets of modern mobility. Dr. Meike Zwingenberger, the BAA's executive director, and Jasmin Falk, M.A., its office manager, have been the driving force behind both the physical conference at the 'Amerika Haus' and the ensuing publication of its proceedings. Jasmin Falk, in particular, has provided meticulous editorial and technical support. As always, she took on the critical task of mediating between the editor, contributors, and our press, Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg, with a good deal of patience and her genuine knack for irony. Finally, Felix Tauche, our student intern, deserves praise for his scrupulous proofreading of the final draft of the manuscript.

Munich, September 2013

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Photo by Rainer Sturm / pixelio.de

Culture and Mobility: An Introduction

Klaus Benesch

We Are All in Motion

As British sociologists Mimi Sheller and John Urry have argued, "issues of movement, of too little movement or too much, or the wrong sort or at the wrong time, are central to many lives and many organizations. From SARS to train crashes, from airport expansion controversies to SMS (short message service) texting on the move, from congestion charging to global terrorism, from obesity caused by 'fast food' to oil wars in the Middle East, issues of 'mobility' are centre stage" (208). We are all on the move, or so it seems, and movement and mobility have become at once the most widespread and most important issues for social and political scientists, cultural geographers, ethnologists, cultural critics, historians, even social philosophers to look at. In fact, much of contemporary social science has been redirected from 'static' models of investigation to 'mobile' theoretical frameworks, from an emphasis on place and tradition to the foregrounding of complex, frequently interacting mobilities of people, goods, and ideas.

In a path-breaking, early contribution to what Sheller and Urry have called the 'new mobility paradigm' historian James Clifford posits traveling and movement as prime constituents of the formation of modern cultures at large. In his oft-quoted essay "Traveling Cultures" (1992) Clifford questions the traditional view of culture as a 'rooted' body that grows, lives, dies etc.; rather what drives the creative production of cultural identity are permanent displacement, interference, and interaction of people, spaces, and ideas. Cultures, according to Clifford, are essentially fluid and mobile and they thus necessitate a dynamic, mobility-oriented model of cultural behavior.

In a similar vein, sociologist Marc Augé has pointed out that modern cities are now analyzed best "by their capacity to import and export people, products, images and messages. Spatially, their importance can be measured by the quality and scale of the highway and rail networks linking them with their airports" (vii). Today's cities are no longer defined by their specific location but by how efficiently they accommodate mobility, the movement to other places as well as between their various suburban fringes and downtown economic centers. In an increasingly globalized world where traditional frontiers between city and country, between the region and the metropolis, between suburban development and the inner city have become blurred, the emerging 'third space' of so-called regional or suburban cities feeds to an even greater extent on the mobility of people, goods, and services.

At the same time, personal computing has triggered new forms of travel and movement, allowing for an as yet unseen degree of mobility, both virtual and physical. Since smartphones have taken the computer to the streets, new 'mobile' forms of communication and interaction are evolving. Not only do most of us now go online everywhere, mobile computing devices provide the opportunity for 24/7 coordination of people and events thereby subverting the role of place as a determining factor of human existence. Thanks to the new mobile communication technologies we can 'go places' even while standing in line at a ticket counter, waiting at a street light or being stuck in a traffic jam. We are all in motion, constantly.

Mobile Modernity

If the speed and extent of human movement are now greater than before, modernity itself appears to be both a consequence and cause of a significant increase in mobility. In a recent essay titled "Mobilization of the Planet from the Spirit of Self-Intensification" (2006), German Philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and cultural critic Heidi Ziegler emphasize the power of mobility as an engine of modernization. Their analysis of the present is based on a philosophical kinetics that claims that 1) we are moving in a world that is itself moving; 2) that the self-movements of the world both include and affect the self-movements of each individual; and 3) that in modernity, the self-movements of the world originate from our self-movements, which are cumulatively added to world-movement. Hence modernity's kinetic nature can be defined as an aggregate of the dynamic initiatives accumulated over the past centuries. Likewise, Zygmunt Baumann defines modernity as quintessentially 'liquid,' that is, marked by the continuous movement of individual citizens and the permanent change of social structures. In contemporary societies, according to Baumann, individuals can shift from one social position to another, in a fluid manner. Like modern nomads they change places, jobs, partners etc. easily or fluidly. Cut off from traditional networks of support such as families and long-term friendship modern citizens are bound to engage in provisional commitments and to frequently shift their political and ethical values. Not only are we all in motion, as Baumann's analysis of liquid modernity suggests, but so are our self-designated roles within society, our shifting private and public affiliations.

Geographers, urbanists, and cultural critics who conceive of modern societies as determined by movement and constant change are legion (cf. Verstraete and Cresswell). Many argue that the mobility of individuals, goods, ideas, values, etc. may well have become the single most important factor in creating modern sensibilities: it paved the way for the shift from the local to the global, from place to space, from static, rural forms of life to the mobile lifestyles of what novelist Pico Iyer calls the 'global souls,' business travelers who travel constantly and who no

longer know "where anyone is coming from … and no one really knows where anyone is at" (51). There is little doubt that what the future of mankind shall look like depends to a great extent on how we negotiate the growing tension between mobility and stasis, between those who can turn movement and mobility into positive values and those who are left behind, grounded in places that have lost their capacity to engender meaningful human interaction and bonding, or those who are moving for the wrong reason, i.e. refugees, dissidents, itinerant workers, drug dealers, terrorists etc.

Transformative Mobilities

Airports are interesting in this context because they represent both the promises of unlimited mobility and its frequent interruption, the freezing of movement while landing, interconnecting, or during preflight and checking-in periods. The latter we often experience as a significant slowing down of our respective journeys, as moments of ambivalence that leave us annoyed, frustrated, puzzled. Moreover, modern airports resemble urban agglomerations in their own right: they have (or will soon) become, in John Kasarda's poignant phrasing, globally interconnected 'Aerotropoli.' As Kasarda explains in his opening contribution to the present collection of essays, rather than being merely transportation hubs located at the edges of major cities, airports increasingly spawn – often in close proximity to their runways – instant cities which in turn thrive on the staggering airbourne traffic of the mobile age. Airports are steadily growing in size and they wield increasing economic and political power: the Dallas-Fort Worth airport, as one of the biggest in the US, houses "a small universe of five terminals, a 36-hole golf course and 400,000 jobs within a 5-mile radius" (Iyer 2011: 46), and the constant expansion of Dulles International Airport, 25 miles outside of Washington, D.C., has made the neighboring Fairfax County wealthier than either Bangkok or New Dehli.

It remains unclear, however, whether Aerotropoli can indeed provide a template for the "way we'll live next" or whether, for better or worse, they remain unavoidable yet ambivalent spaces of transit, non-places that we have come to live with but do not embrace, in an emotionally or socially meaningful way. While modern architecture has opened up a multitude of new spaces by reorganizing the urban centers of nineteenth-century industrial cities, the postmodern transformation of place into cyberspace appears to have reduced architectural design and city planning to mere functions of global economic networks. For architect Martin Pawley, the arrival of the global city network marks a "catastrophic diminution of the cultural status of architecture" (39). Similar to the fate of painting at the hands of photography, and the fate of cinema at the hands of television and video, urban space has become "no more than the detritus of consumption […]. In the new

global system, the old static arts, literature, painting, music, sculpture and architecture, would have no place" (39).

To accommodate universal mobility at ever greater speeds poses significant challenges for urban planners and architects alike. If Kasarda is right that the future of urban planning holds only the limited choices of "Aerotropolis or bust," what poses an equal challenge to human ingenuity and imagination is to envision rest zones or architectural 'landing sites' (Arakawa and Gins 150-63) where we occasionally come to a halt in order to regain a form of 'meditative thinking,' of 'Gelassenheit' as the German philosopher Martin Heidegger called it, vis-à-vis the overwhelming presence of mobility in modern societies (see Heidegger 1966; 1977).

Today many of us experience 'immobility' or even a mere slowing down of our sped-up, mobile lives as ominous; like Ryan Bingham, George Clooney's character in the 2009 movie *Up in the Air*, we are convinced that "the slower we move, the faster we die." Yet mobility, though a crucial requirement in any modern environment, is neither a juggernaut nor a doctrine to which we must succumb with despair. As Ted Bishop's, François Specq's, and Phillip Vannini's contributions to this collection reveal, there's more than one monolithic culture of mobility. Rather, mobility has many facets and it need thus be framed in more than just positive or negative terms. So, yes, we are all in motion, almost all of the time, yet as often the issue here is not to come to a complete standstill, but of finding the right speed, of what Bishop suggestively calls the "tempo giusto."

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Architecture

Photo by Andrea Damm / pixelio.de

Aerotropolis: Business Mobility and Urban Competitiveness in the 21st Century

John D. Kasarda

The 21st century is bringing competitive advantage to cities that understand and capitalize on the changing context of business mobility and commercial development. This context is being altered by a catalytic interaction of digitization, globalization, and aviation transforming where and the way business is conducted. It is also transforming the pace and distances that products and people routinely traverse.[1]

These dynamics have heightened competition among places as well as firms. Adapting to similar realities, both are employing similar strategic responses. Here, the increasingly turbulent, fast-paced, globally networked economy has made speed, agility, and connectivity the competitive mantra of not only many of the world's most successful firms but also cities such as Amsterdam, Chicago, Dubai, Hong Kong, Memphis, Paris, Shanghai, and Singapore.

Such cities, among others, have recognized that the constellation of the above factors is creating a new economic geography with aviation networks and major airports driving and shaping business location and urban development in the 21st century as much as highways did the 20th century, railroads in the 19th and rivers, canals, and ports in the 18th. Today, areas around these airports have become magnets for time-critical manufacturing and distribution, entertainment, tourism, and corporate offices, among others, that require speedy, long-distance connectivity.

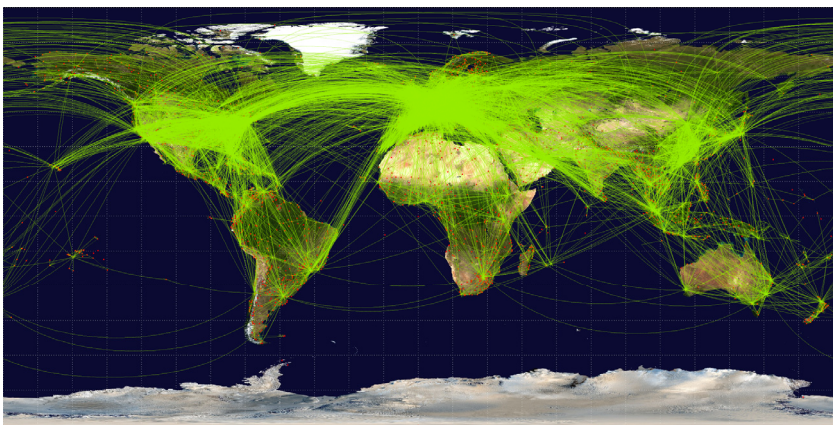

Fig. 1: Aviation's Global Physical Internet; Source: Airline Route Mapper

[1] See Kasarda and Lindsay.

Aviation routes operate as their "Physical Internet" moving people, parts, and products quickly among far flung locations with airports serving as the routers (see Aviation's Global Physical Internet in Figure 1). As this "Physical Internet" evolves in breadth and depth, route development, airport development, business development, and regional economic development are going hand-in-hand around the world.

The Aerotropolis, an airport-centric urban economic region, coalesces these development processes, spatially and functionally. Its spatial elements consist of aviation-oriented businesses and people that cluster near the airport and outward along connecting transport corridors, generating observable form. Its functional elements include the spatial elements as well as businesses and business people who may be widely dispersed throughout the metropolitan area or clustered at points some distance from the airport but nonetheless are highly dependent upon it for time-critical access to their global suppliers, customers, or enterprise partners. Simply put, the Aerotropolis is where the global meets the local.

The Aerotropolis, in fact, represents the physical manifestation of globalization made concrete in the form of aviation-oriented, airport-centric urban development where many local businesses are more dependent on distant suppliers and customers than on those in their own region. Its competitiveness rests with its aviation connectivity and corresponding ability to move people and products quickly around the world. In the 21st century Aerotropolis, aviation, globalization, and time-based competition have become inextricably interwoven in functional and spatial form.

Fast-Cycle Logistics

Driving much contemporary aerotropolis development is the growing importance of fast-cycle logistics, especially which utilizes air cargo.[2] In many respects, the 21st century is becoming as much the "Fast Century" as it is the "Aviation Century." Customers in both advanced and emerging markets are demanding speedy and predictable delivery of products, often with distinctive features. Competitive advantage is thus being gained by firms that respond flexibly, quickly, and reliably to their domestic and global customers, delivering lower cost, higher-quality (often customized) products quickly over great distances.

Nowhere is this more manifest than with high-tech manufacturers who must be able to access global networks of suppliers of materials, components, and subassemblies in order to obtain the best-quality components at the lowest possible price. Likewise, contract drug and medical testing often requires 24-hour turnaround from specimen source to distant test site with results back to the source, the latter typically done electronically. Since the web will not move a box, aviation's

[2] See Sheffi.

"Physical Internet" is heavily relied upon in the high-tech arena for speedy delivery and time-critical inventory control.

At the same time, increased flows of information worldwide are leading to accelerating changes in customer demands. Companies that can detect these changes, design and produce the desired products and services, and deliver them faster than their competitors are capturing market share. Since speed also reduces warehousing costs, stock-outs, and remaindered goods, the speed advantage becomes a cost advantage as well.

Fast-cycle logistics as a new competitive tool is being further validated by marketing research which shows that, worldwide, consumer tastes are now changing much more swiftly than was the case in prior decades. Indications are that the pace of such shifts will accelerate further in the decades ahead, resulting in situations where products that are 'hot' one month may become obsolete just a few months later. Such is already happening in the fashion clothing industry and with "smart" devices like successive generations of iPads and iPhones where delivery time to the retail shelf (or now directly to the customer) impacts sales and profits, frequently separating market winners from losers.[3]

The implications of these trends for fast-cycle logistics strategies are already evident. Adapting to growing demands for flexibility, predictability, and speed, companies such as Apple, Boeing, Lenovo, Nokia, and Siemens have reengineered their sourcing and distribution systems to become much more agile, reliable, and customer responsive. They now compete not only on price and quality but also on the basis of speedy, predictable delivery, as well as after-sales support (including repair and return) of their products. They manage complex networks that encompass the entire value chain of suppliers, distributors, and customers across national borders as is illustrated in Figure 2 for Apple's iPhone 5.

Mandating such changes are rapid and relentless worldwide technological, political, and economic transformations. Modern transportation, telecommunications, and goods-producing technologies have spread throughout the globe. Trade policies continue to be liberalized and new markets opened. Communist/socialist and former socialist countries such as China, Russia, Poland, and Vietnam are now participating in capitalist marketplace with vigor. Huge wage differences between advanced industrial and developing countries have resulted in much wider geographic dispersion of component manufacturing sites, places of assembly, and of final sale. With rising workforce skills in developing nations and rapid cross-border technology transfer, countries such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Thailand have achieved much greater levels of economic output and now produce highly sophisticated products.

[3] See Suri.

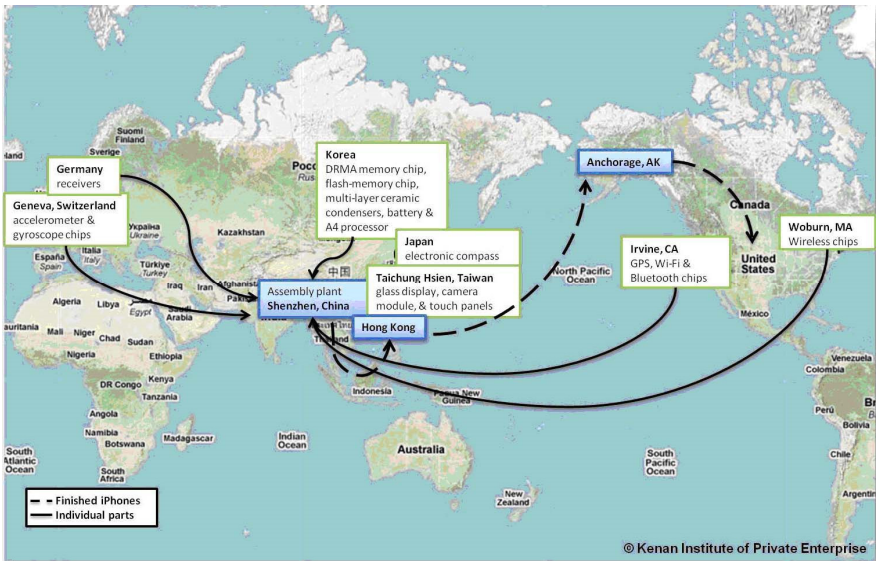

Fig. 2: Global Supply Chain of Apple iPhone 5

International customers have also become far more connected, sophisticated, and demanding. Because of increased digital and physical connectivity, they are able to see and have delivered an unparalleled variety of products from all over the world. They are able to assess and identify value, and are therefore highly selective in purchasing. They expect quality, competitive pricing, and predictable delivery. They also want customization of the products they buy, and they want these customized products right away, not in two to four months. For many purchases, not even two to four weeks is fast enough. In our 'must have it now' world, they often want them in two to four days.

Rapid, predictable delivery of high-value products over long distances has become so critical to the new economy that air commerce is becoming its logistical backbone. According to research conducted at the University North Carolina's Kenan Institute, over 30 percent of the value of world trade goes by air. Air logistics, which includes air cargo, air express, and their supporting logistics services, approached a US$400 billion industry in 2012. It is expected to double again by 2025, with international air express shipments expected to nearly triple during this period.

Already, air cargo and air express are the preferred modes of international shipping for higher value to weight business to business (B2B) transactions in microelectronics, medical instruments, smart phones, digitized auto parts, optics, and small precision manufacturing equipment, along with high-value perishables such as seafood, fresh cut flowers, and biomeds. Even lower value to weight product distribution, including apparel, footwear, and seasonal toys, have become time-sensitive and are increasingly shipped by air. With *economies of speed* becoming

as important as economies of scale and economies of scope, many such industries are gravitating to airport areas that offer them extensive speedy connectivity to global markets.

Air Passenger Connectivity

It's not just time-critical goods processors and distributors that are clustering around gateway airports. As the world's service economy also shifts into fast-forward, these airports are becoming magnets for regional corporate headquarters, trade representative offices, and professional associations that require executives and staff to undertake frequent long-distance travel. Airport access is likewise a powerful attraction to information-intensive industries such as auditing, advertising, legal, financial, and insurance services. With business remaining a 'contact sport' these so-called producer services firms regularly send out executives and professional staff to distant customers' sites or bring in their clients by air. Airports which offer a greater choice of flights and destinations, more frequent service, and more flexibility in rescheduling (that is, they possess the fastest and broadest "Physical Internet") have become particularly powerful external assets for producer service firms.

With the shortest time between two distant locations being a non-stop flight, the accessibility air passenger hubs provide has also become essential to attracting business meetings and conventions, trade shows, exhibitions, and merchandise marts. Such long-distance physical accessibility has made them attractive locations, as well, for medical tourism, executive education, and large entertainment venues such as theme parks and Formula 1 race tracks along with hotels housing distant travelers.

Knowledge-transfer firms like consulting are similarly gravitating to airport areas. With intellectual capital supplanting physical capital as the primary factor in 21st century wealth creation, time has taken on heightened importance for today's knowledge workers as has their long-distance travel to transfer complex information. Research conducted by the University of California has shown that knowledge workers travel by air 400 percent more frequently than workers in general, giving rise to the term "nerd birds" for aircraft connecting US tech regions such as Austin, Boston, and San Jose, California.

The Rise of the Aerotropolis

As more and more aviation-oriented businesses are being drawn to airport areas and along transportation corridors radiating from them, an Aerotropolis emerges stretching up to 25 km outward from some major airports. Analogous in shape to the traditional metropolis made up of a central city core and its rings of commuter-

heavy suburbs, the Aerotropolis consists of an airport-centered commercial core (Airport City) and outlying corridors and clusters of aviation-linked businesses and associated residential development. Some of these largest aerotropolis clusters including Amsterdam Zuidas, Las Colinas, Texas, and South Korea's Songdo International Business District near Incheon International Airport have become globally significant airport edge-cities whose business tentacles routinely touch all major continents.

Dozens of Aerotropolises are evolving either by design or spontaneously (see www.aerotropolis.com). Among the most prominent are those on and around Amsterdam Schiphol, Chicago, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Dubai, Hong Kong, Incheon (South Korea), Memphis, Paris Charles de Gaulle, and Washington Dulles airports. Each has attracted a remarkable amount of business investment to their airport areas generating huge economic returns to their regions and nations.

In many cases, the economic impact is in the tens of billions of US dollars annually. For example, more than 1000 firms have located in the Amsterdam Aerotropolis (including the world headquarters of ABN Amro and ING banks located just six minutes from Schiphol's terminal) in large part because of the superb connectivity this airport provides their executives. Likewise, four Fortune 500 world headquarters are located in Las Colinas Texas, less than a ten minute drive from Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport, while Chicago's O'Hare airport area has more office and convention space than most major cities. The Washington Dulles airport region is the second largest retail market in the US (just behind New York City's Manhattan Island) and has become a high-tech business and consulting hub, as well. Both Hong Kong and Incheon Airports boast leading logistics complexes with these two airports also sustaining, respectively, Hong Kong Disneyland and New Songdo IDB, the latter an "instant city" the size of downtown Boston designed and built by global corporations for global corporations. Dubai and Singapore have emerged as a full-fledged Aerotropolis with their large leisure, tourism, commercial and finance sectors dependent on aviation. They, along with Hong-Kong, Incheon, Memphis, and Paris Charles de Gaulle, have likewise effectively developed global air logistics hubs that have attracted substantial external investment, boosted trade, and made their economies far more competitive.

The economic impact of the airports has been immense. For instance, Memphis International Airport contributed nearly US$30 billion to its metropolitan area economy in 2009, led by its FedEx world super-hub.[4] And both, Dubai and Singapore, may be described as global hub aiports with city-states attached.

A spatially compressed model of the Aerotropolis depicting its main features is presented in Figure 3. No Aerotropolis will look exactly like this illustration but most will eventually take on similar features, led by newer 'greenfield' airports less constrained by many prior decades of non-aviation oriented surrounding development. The Aerotropolis is thus much more a dynamic, forward-looking con-

[4] See University of Memphis.

cept than a static, cross-sectional model whose form reflects historic airport-area development to date. Its future development will be driven by further global integration and the need for speed both fostered by the continuing expansion of aviation serving as the worlds 21st century high-speed "Physical Internet."

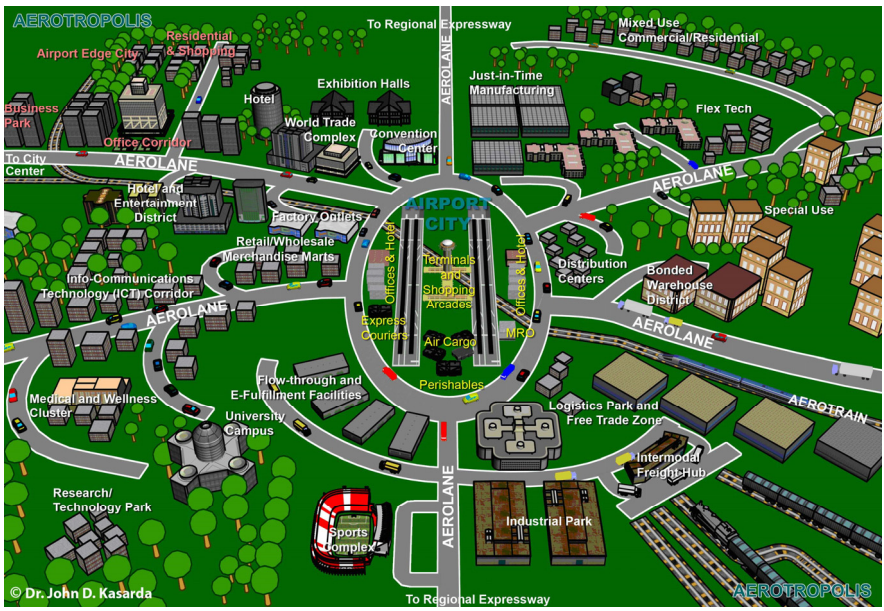

Fig. 3: Aerotropolis Schematic with Airport City Core

Although most aerotropolis development to date has been organic, spontaneous, and haphazard – often spawning congestion and environmental problems – in the future it can be markedly improved through strategic infrastructure and urban planning.

- Dedicated airport expressway links (aerolanes) and airport express trains (aerotrains) should efficiently connect airports to major regional business and residential concentrations.
- Special truck-only lanes should be added to airport expressways, as should improved interchanges to reduce congestion.
- Time-cost accessibility between key nodes should be the primary aerotropolis planning metric rather than distance.
- Businesses should be steered to locate in proximity to the airport based on their frequency of use, further reducing traffic while improving time-cost access.
- Airport area goods-processing activities (manufacturing, warehousing, trucking) should be spatially segregated from white-collar service facilities and airport passenger flows.

- Noise and emission-sensitive commercial and residential developments should be sited outside high-intensity flight paths.
- Cluster rather than strip development should be encouraged along airport transportation corridors with sufficient green space between clusters.
- Form-based codes should establish general design standards for airport area buildings, walkways, travel lanes, landscaping, and public space.
- Placemaking and wayfinding enhanced by thematic architectural features, public art, and iconic structures should make aerotropolis developments interpretable, navigable, and welcoming.
- Mixed-use residential/commercial communities housing airport area workers and frequent air travelers should be developed with easy commutes and designed to human scale providing local services and sense of neighborhood.

In short, aerotropolis development and sustainable 'smart growth' can and should go hand-in-hand.

The above outcomes will not occur under most current airport area planning approaches which tend to be localized, politically and functionally fragmented, and often conflicted. A new approach is required bringing together airport planning, urban and regional planning, and business-site planning in a synergistic manner so that future aerotropolis development will be more economically efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and socially and environmentally sustainable. The real question is not whether Aerotropolises will evolve around major airports (they surely will). It's whether they will form and grow in an intelligent manner, minimizing problems and bringing about the greatest returns to the airport, its users, businesses, surrounding communities, and the larger region and nation it serves.

Aerotropolis Skeptics

A number of observers have suggested that advances in Internet access, high-resolution videoconferencing, and other distributed telecommunications technologies will diminish the need for air travel thereby undermining the aerotropolis development model. While some substitution for air travel will no doubt occur, experience shows that most telecommunications advances promote additional air travel by substantially expanding long-distance business and personal networking, a portion of which leads to face-to-face meetings. Indeed, virtually every significant advance in telecommunications technology has actually resulted in greater, faster, and farther mobility beginning with Alexander Graham Bell's first words over his newly minted telephone: "Watson, come here, I need you." If only a miniscule fraction of today's mushrooming Internet social networking leads widely separated, new-found common interest people to text "Let's get together" or "I'd like to meet you" air travel will receive a substantial boost. The net-age and the jet-age will each continue to flourish in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Others have suggested that prolonged global economic downturns exacerbated the constant threat of terrorism, along with periodic contagious disease outbreaks will permanently diminish air commerce and air passenger travel. This does not seem likely since the imperatives giving rise to the growth of air commerce and business and leisure travel (especially global integration, rising incomes in large emerging markets, and the need for speed) are increasing in importance.

Despite periodic global economic cyclical dips and corresponding short-term declines in air travel, longer-term trends in air passenger and cargo volumes remain strongly upward (see Figure 4). Nor has the growth in aggregate global air traffic been slowed by the introduction of faster and more efficient passenger and freight rail service. If anything, the main constraint to aviation growth and urban competitiveness has been the inability of many hub airports to expand their capacity to meet increasing passenger and cargo demands. In some cases this has been a result of airport ground and air capacity limits, in others noise complaints.

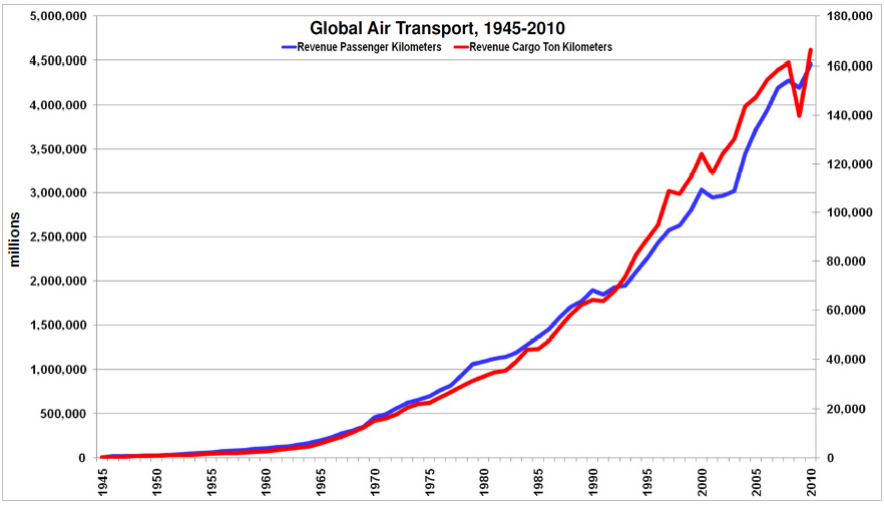

Fig. 4: Global Air Transport, 1945-2010; Source: Air Transport Association

There are also those who contend that rising jet fuel prices or greenhouse gases will curtail aviation's future growth and, hence, airport-linked development. This has not happened thus far and there is no evidence that it will diminish forecasted aviation demand. While jet fuel prices have soared in the past decade so has air travel. Significant advances are being made with biofuels as well as with lighter airframe composites and more efficient jet engines to reduce fuel burn and emissions. At the same time, aircraft manufacturers, airlines, and airports have commenced all-out efforts to limit aviation's carbon footprint. Aviation now contributes about 2 percent to greenhouse gases globally but without significant

technological advances it will generate 4 percent or more by 2050 as air traffic grows.[5]

A related issue is peak oil (when oil production no longer rises and is surpassed by growing demand). Although numerous scientific models have been put forth, nobody actually knows when peak oil will be reached because the assumptions keep changing as new sources are discovered and innovative energy extraction methods emerge. While there appears little doubt that peak oil will be reached at some point this century, there is also good reason to believe that advances in aerospace energy use will meet the coming challenge. In this regard, many skeptics seem unaware of how fast aerospace technology evolves. For instance, it was just 66 years from the time that the Wright brothers flew a little over a hundred meters in the first self-propelled airplane (1903) until both the Concorde supersonic aircraft and Boeing 747 jumbo jet were both traversing the Atlantic Ocean, and we put a man on the moon (1969).

As human beings, we seem programmed to foresee (and predict) crises but not innovation. Yet, innovation is our constant companion, especially when faced with long-term critical challenges such as greenhouse gases and peak oil. Despite the real challenges that aerotropolis skeptics correctly point out, more and more people and products are destined to take to the sky in the coming decades.

Apropos the above, the 5.5 billion passengers passing through airports worldwide in 2012 are forecasted to increase to over 12 billion by 2030, with air cargo projected to grow even faster. China is leading the way in this global growth with plans to invest nearly US$250 billion in its aviation sector over the next five years alone. Other emerging markets are following suit. This is not only where the numbers are but also where economies and incomes are growing the fastest that will stimulate even greater air travel. As one pertinent example, the World Tourist Organization forecasts that by 2020, over 100 million Chinese mainlanders will be traveling abroad. Who is going to tell them they have to stay home?

Finally, there are those who argue that the Aerotropolis fosters wasteful sprawl, lacks urban amenities, is culturally sterile and fundamentally elitist, catering exclusively to business and those who can afford the luxury of air travel, devoid of benefits to the working class. This need not be the case with appropriate aerotropolis planning, community design, and institutional development.

There are certainly limits on what can be done around older commercial airports that have been engulfed by decades of unplanned, haphazard development, creating the mess we see. Yet, for newer airports, especially those located on metropolitan peripheries with huge parcels of accessible open land nearby (e.g., Denver, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and Munich) and new greenfield airport sites such as those in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (e.g., Durban, Doha, and Hyderabad) there is almost a blank canvas for innovative, socially and environmentally positive aerotropolis planning and development.

[5] See World Resources Institute.

Here, mixed-use residential communities can be created housing airport area workers that are welcoming, provide a sense of neighborhood, and offer many urban amenities and institutional services that provide appealing life-style options. These communities should be built outside flight paths but in proximity to aerotropolis job centers and surface transportation (including public transit) that reduces commute times and costs. Redensification around the airports and planned cluster development outward can actually be an antidote to sprawl.

Such planned development should combine the best of urban and suburban. Contrary to what some aerotropolis critics seem to believe, not everyone wants to live in a large, dense metropolitan center regardless of the many amenities they provide. Indeed, the long-standing top residential preference choice, at least in US surveys, remains a lower-density suburban residential location. Ideal aerotropolis development would bring urban amenities (museums, fine dining, upscale retail) to or near these mixed-use residential clusters, as is already happening to some extent organically.

Let me conclude by pointing out that aviation and the Aerotropolis are far more egalitarian when it comes to job creation and income generation than many realize. We tend to think of aviation as serving primarily the elite – well paid business people, wealthy international tourists, and higher-income leisure travelers. The fact is that aviation and the Aerotropolis help those at the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder at least as much. For every well-heeled business person who jets from Frankfurt to Bangkok or London to New York, there are taxi drivers, hotel maids, restaurant workers, and building custodians who service them. Truck drivers move air cargo from the airports to destinations, frequently labor-intensive manufacturing or distribution facilities depending on time-critical supplies being flown in or shipping high-value finished products to distant markets. Air cargo, as noted, presently accounts for over 30 percent of the value of world trade.

Our research at the University of North Carolina has shown that nearly one out of every ten jobs in transport and warehousing in the United States is located within 2.5 miles of its 25 busiest airports.[6] Large concentrations of hotels, employing maids, kitchen help, and laundry service workers are also in close proximity to these airports. For example, 49 hotels are located within 2.5 miles of Atlanta's airport fence. The vast majority employed by those hotels are lesser educated.

Our research likewise found that, on the whole, jobs in the 2.5 mile, 5 mile, and 10 mile radius of the 25 airports generated higher metropolitan area payroll percentages than their employment percentages. This indicates that the majority of jobs near major airports is relatively well paid.

Much more research needs to be conducted on airport area employment growth and its meaning for jobs and incomes of those of the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. Suffice it to note that our very preliminary work may suggest that a fundamental transformation in the nature of income inequality could take place as

[6] See Appold and Kasarda.

the aerotropolis job machine accelerates in the 21st century. That is, the employment pie is substantially grown changing the primary discourse on aerotropolis inequality from between the haves and the have-nots to between the haves and the have more.

Income inequality will always be with us reflecting individual human capabilities and the structure of opportunities. It should not be so much the gap that is the focus of attention as where the bottom stands in terms of their absolute level of income supported by jobs providing living wages. Moving up the bottom significantly through the creation of permanent living wage jobs is far more critical to their well-being than closing their gap with the top earners who may move up as well, perhaps even further.

As the Aerotropolis leads the way to greater metropolitan competitiveness, attracting increased investment that creates jobs, and raises incomes for those of all levels of the socioeconomic ladder, it may well provide the 21st century pathway to not only faster and further physical mobility but also faster and further social mobility. Thus, instead of resisting 21st century aerotropolis evolution, metropolitan regions (including traditional central cities) might give more thought to leveraging it for their long-term competitiveness and economic well-being of their residents. After all, in our globally-connected world, cities are no longer as much the fundamental urban competitive unit as are the metropolitan regions of which they are part.

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(Post-)Modern Architectures: American Airports and the Limits of Mobility

Anke Ortlepp

American airports evolved as forms of architecture in the postwar decades. So did their meanings as landmarks in American cultural landscapes. Built as symbols of a new age of mobility in the 1950s and 1960s, airport terminals in the following decades came to give built expression to the limits of mobility. Congested, chaotic, and confusing, they came to symbolize aviation's dystopian aspects. At the same time, we have to understand airports – their aesthetics, spatial formations, and politics of movement – as articulations of hierarchies of power in American society. For, Dianne Harris reminds us, "landscapes and indeed architecture are never neutral. They are always powerful symbols and containers of cultural values, just as they simultaneously work to construct culture" (4). We therefore have to deconstruct processes of spatial formation in order to understand the ideologies of gender, race, and class difference that inform them. Critical investigations of landscapes and built form at the same time reveal their complicity in the manufacturing of societal norms and their aestheticization, which was and still is visible in many airport terminals. This essay looks at a number of case studies to explore the shifting spatial dynamics of America's aerial gateways. It raises questions about the participation of governments, designers, airport businesses, and air travelers in the creation and design of airport terminal spaces. It argues that the spatial and aesthetic evolution of this building type reflects major developments of American postwar history such as the reconfigurations of postwar consumer society, the mass mobilization of Americans, the shift of the national mood in the 1970s from confidence to crisis mode, and the construction of modern and postmodern subjectivities.

Aviation's Built Form: Terminals as Symbols of Mobility

As the number of airline passengers grew quickly in the postwar years due to the expanding airline passenger capacity and the increasing affordability of airline tickets, cities all over the United States expanded their facilities or built new airports (Szurovy; Gordon). The effort to build a viable infrastructure for commercial aviation was supported by the federal government, which in 1946 began to subsidize airport construction with funds made available through the Federal Aid Air-

port Program. Initially a seven-year 500 million program, it was renewed in consecutive years until its eventual expiration in the mid-1970s (Bednarek 114-18).

New York City was among the many cities that invested in aviation infrastructure. Having outgrown the facilities at La Guardia Airport, the city was going to put itself on the map as the major aviation hub in the Northeastern United States with the construction of a new airport at Idlewild Field, later renamed John F. Kennedy International Airport (Arend 1979, 1981). Planners rejected a unified design scheme for the building complex and instead invited airlines to develop individual designs for their terminal structures. As a result, the major airlines such as Pan American Airways (Pan Am), Trans World Airlines (TWA), Eastern Air Lines, American Airlines, and United Airlines competed over which carrier would come up with the most spectacular design to impress the public and entice postwar consumers to buy their airline tickets. At a time when service features offered on the ground or inflight lent the only competitive edge in a tightly regulated air travel market, airlines recognized splashy architecture as an effective marketing tool. Even more than modern equipment, inflight meal choices, cabin design, and entertainment features, which only those who actually flew saw and experienced, architecture as built form on the ground had the potential to communicate with both air travelers and those who only came to airports as visitors through carefully crafted languages of form that aestheticized flight as the most modern form of mobility (Ortlepp 111-40). Ideally, spectacular airport terminal buildings would inspire Americans to discover, enjoy, and stick with air travel as a mode of transportation. As such they were modeled after train stations, the cathedrals of modernity, that had drawn travelers to the railways in the century before. The mid-twentieth century transportation revolution needed its own temples, which is why airlines executives considered hiring star architects and investing in extraordinary passenger facilities good investments.

The outcome of the Idlewild design competition did not impress all architecture critics, some of whom considered the new 'airport city' an amorphous mass of uncoordinated design statements. Most agreed, though, that Pan Am's Jet Age Terminal and the TWA Flight Center were exceptional and their design would have lasting effects on functional aesthetics and the language of form employed in airport architecture. The TWA Flight Center, was designed by Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen, a star in the mid-century modern scene (Pelkonen and Albrecht; Merkel; Roman). The airline had chosen him, its president explained upon the terminal's opening, because "Mr. Saarinen was recognized internationally as a creator of structures that achieved more than simple functional excellence. They were aesthetic monuments as well that conveyed feeling and emotion, and stirred something within those who looked upon them" (Tillinghast). TWA obviously wanted to stir consumers and persuade them to fly. At its inauguration in 1962, the building was celebrated as an architectural masterpiece that gave expression to a

new postwar spirit of mobility (Fig. 1). The terminal's cool, free-flowing concrete structure was a big step away from Beaux Arts architecture, the dominant style in airport design during the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, it provided a bold, air age alternative to the internationalist style, which inspired the design of most of the other terminals such as the facilities built for Eastern, American and United, and the International Arrivals Building ("Idlewild" 157-61, 170-77). Saarinen's creation ideally translated the idea of flying into architecture, for it seemed to imitate the body shape of a landing eagle, the American national symbol. Air travel – the new American way of life had been cast into concrete.

Fig. 1: TWA Terminal Postcard

The terminal welcomed the busy traveler at the curb side to take him or her under its wings and to help him or her make the transition from ground transportation to airplane. "Our next challenge," Saarinen remarked about the building's interior,

> was to carry the same integral character throughout the entire building so that … all of the spaces … would have one consistent character. As the passenger walked through the sequence of the building, we wanted him to be in a total environment, where each part was the consequence of another and all belonged to the same form-world. ("Saarinen's" 129)

Saarinen custom-designed every element of its interior decoration creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk* that provided airline customers with a coherent aesthetic experience before they boarded their flights. Translating the celebration of the spectacle of air travel into architecture and design, Saarinen hoped to provide an environment "in which the human being felt uplifted, important and full of anticipation. He wanted to create a space which would be dynamic, rather than static, and would reveal the terminal as a place of movement and transition" (ibid.). *Architectural Forum*, the well known architecture journal, was enthusiastic: It praised the terminal as JFK's most stirring object "its structure swooping in high-speed curves all around, like an oversize Gaudi sculpture of the jet age" ("I Want to" 72). Consumers would be able to partake in the culture of mobility in such a structure and form identities as modern subjects. Critical voices like Ada Louise Huxtable's, architecture critic for the *New York Times*, were clearly in the minority. Deploring the demolition of New York's Penn Station in the summer of 1966, she found little comfort in the "new symbols for a new age": "The modern traveler, fed on frozen flight dinners, enters the city, not in Roman splendor, but through the bowels of a streamlined concrete bird" (Huxtable 405-06).[1] There was considerably less modernist agency in her perspective. Railroad stations had inspired Saarinen's terminal. Huxtable found it lacking as *Ersatz*. Even if they had never heard about it or seen it before, for travelers the TWA Terminal was easily identifiable by sculptures at either end of the drive-way that displayed the airlines three letters: TWA.

Pan Am's terminal was just easily identifiable by a set of letters that formed the airline's name. They were raised on a panel and lead the traveler's gaze to an installation of bronze sculptures that sat on a glass windscreen opposite the terminal's entrance. Each bronze represented one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Inspired by the modernist terminal's soaring roof and cantilever design, the architects' way of embodying the spirit of flying, sculptor Milton Hebald created the sings "because they seemed to me the most universal idea for an air terminal that serves international travelers. This imaginary belt in the heavens covers the passage of time, and space in time. It seemed to me to be a concept that applies particularly to aviation" (Pan Am press release).[2] The zodiac signs gave rather abstract artistic expression to the idea that in the jet age humans were able to cross barriers of time and space like no one had been before them. The airport would serve as the threshold to that frontier experience.[3]

[1] Penn Station opened for service in 1910. It was designed by Charles Follen McKim of McKim, Mead & White and modeled on the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. Cf. Diehl. Many years after its completion architect and critic Peter Blake compared Saarinen's terminal to an enlarged Danish Modern salad bowl (259).

[2] The Pan Am Terminal was designed by Ives, Turano & Gardner Associated Architects and Walther Prokosch of Tippets-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton.

[3] Cf. Courtwright for the notion of "sky as frontier."

As liminal spaces or – to use Mark Gottdiener's term – transition spaces, airport terminals served as a platform where the traveler's everyday movements and state of mind connected to his or her air travel experience, which, in the 1950s and 1960s, still had the flavor of exceptionality and exclusivity (9-11).[4] The architects of the Pan Am Terminal envisioned a flowing transition from everyday life to air travel. Travelers did not enter the building through doors but instead passed through an 'air curtain.' A relatively new feature of building development, this was a thick air screen as wide as the entrance that keeps cold air out and warm air in by blowing air out of ceiling grilles and sucking it in through floor openings in a continuous cycle ("Design of 'Air Entrance'"). The idea leading to its incorporation into the building was to remove "congestion caused by funneling passengers through several doors and confusion as to which doors are 'in' and which are 'out'" ("World's Largest Air Curtain"). As architect Walther Prokosch explained, it also provided travelers with an "unobstructed view of the entire interior" and "immediate orientation to the principal elements of interest to them: check-in counters, loading gates, restaurant, gift shops" (70). Rather than separate incoming and outgoing travelers, the terminal's entrance allowed complete freedom of movement.

Inside the Pan Am Terminal more astrology-inspired art welcomed the traveler as part of a coherent design aesthetic. Suspended from a skylight at its center hung the 18-foot bronze "Constellation" which complemented the zodiac sculpture. Its mass of light-reflective, seemingly light-weight 'star clusters' created an inspiring, sky-themed ambience for the activities associated with air travel for which the terminal provided the stage: check-in, waiting, and shopping (Ortlepp 117-18). To communicate a similar message of mobility, modernity, and luxury at the TWA Flight Center, architect Saarinen created quintessentially mid-century modern interiors combining a simple color scheme with high-end materials and sophisticated design. His modern aesthetic was applied to all terminal areas, the spaces accessible to all travelers as well as those reserved for the use of frequent flyers like the Ambassador's Club. The Ambassador's Club provided space for such activities as reading, listening to music, or doing nothing to pass the time before departure. Whereas these activities were rather mundane in nature, the select clientele the frequent flyer club's name alluded to in an effort to make the airline's returning customers feel special suggested their particular significance in conjunction with air travel. Saarinen used many of his own designs to furnish the terminal spaces, which were produced by the Knoll and Hermann Miller furniture companies.

[4] For the concept of "liminality" refer to Victor W. Turner. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

TWA's ideal customers, the Don and Megan Drapers,[5] would have the same furniture at home. Those who did not would be inspired to emulate the style or feel encouraged to enjoy such modern environments. The design of the terminal's restaurant facilities was outsourced to Raymond Loewy, the biggest name in industrial design at the time (Porter). He created the interiors for the Lisbon Lounge, the London Club, the Paris Café, and an Italian snack bar, all made to look like 'real' places. Like Saarinen, Loewy mixed modern design with easily recognizable symbols of the namesake cities, creating spaces that ranged from luxuriously plush to functionally sparse. The dining facilities offered passengers a chance to eat and calm their nerves before departure. At the same time, they offered a theme park environment that evoked anticipation and got travelers in the mood for exploration as participants in a still relatively new culture of mobility (Ortlepp 118-28). In the 1950s and 1960s, this culture of mobility the flashy airport architecture was advertising was mostly a white middle class phenomenon, which reflected the dynamics of the expanding postwar consumer society as Lizabeth Cohen and other have shown (Cohen; Cross). For members of minority groups and those below the middle class threshold claiming a stake in the consumption of air travel meant having to overcome class and racial barriers.

Mobility Interrupted: Segregated Airports in the American South

For African Americans mobility was circumscribed by the limits the Southern architecture of segregation imposed. Whereas black travelers enjoyed free access to the aircraft cabin, and the airlines as federally regulated businesses for the most part provided non-discriminatory services to all passengers, many airports across the South practiced Jim Crow. Studies conducted in the mid-1950s by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Charles Diggs, an African American member of the House of Representatives from Detroit, showed that the vast majority of Southern airports provided duplicate waiting rooms, restrooms, and dining facilities in order to separate the races in their use of airport terminal space (NAACP; Diggs). To many critical observers it seemed absurd that travelers who were en route to enjoy the most modern means of transportation – the airplane – had to subject themselves to the humiliating experience of

[5] Don Draper is the protagonist of the popular television series *Mad Man* (AMC). Set in the advertising milieu of the 1950s and 1960s, the series follows his life and exploits as creative director and later founding partner of two fictional advertising agencies. Megan Draper is his second wife. *Mad Man* has won many awards and was praised especially for its set design. In the series fifth season, Don and Megan emerge as the quintessentially hip urban couple that lives in a luxurious mid-century modern Manhanttan apartment.

having to pass through segregated terminals. Municipalities, in charge of airport management, in most places ruthlessly enforced segregation claiming local laws or local custom as the basis for their actions.

Reacting to Diggs's survey request, a questionnaire with questions about the quality and accessibility of terminal facilities that was sent to over one hundred airports, many airport directors freely admitted that racial discrimination was a reality black passengers had to cope with. The manager of the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport did not take the time to go through the lines of the questionnaire designed to assess the exact nature of local conditions. He simply scribbled "yes we do" on the form to indicate that he and his staff enforced racial segregation (Diggs). Others provided more information and explained changes in policy. At the airport in Mobile, Alabama, segregation had existed de jure and de facto since the airport's opening and, as the airport manager pointed out, had been implemented to comply with provisions in the Alabama State Code (ibid). The airport at Jacksonville, Florida, initially offered integrated facilities to air travelers according to its director, but "as colored passengers increased separate facilities were provided to comply with State Law" (ibid.). Elsewhere airport managers referred to customary patterns of behavior to explain spatial practices. At Fort Lauderdale, segregation did not exist de jure but de facto since "the small number of negro patrons using the airport appear to generally follow local custom," as airport manager L.E. Wagener explained. Tying his remarks into a long tradition of vindicatory segregationist rhetoric he went on to point out that African Americans seemed to prefer facilities and services reserved for their use (ibid.). The remarks of Hot Springs airport director Disheroon imply, however, that the use of terminal space had very little to do with individual choice (ibid.). Access to integrated facilities was not the right of each citizen of the United States but a privilege that was administered – granted or refused – by representatives of the white ruling class. Eager to preserve the South's system of institutionalized racism, airport managers like Wagener and Disheroon resisted change. They saw no contradiction between the shiny exteriors of their newly constructed modern terminals, some of which had been built with Federal Air Airport Program funds, and the datedness of the rules that structured their use.

The airport in Montgomery, Alabama is one example. The terminal at Dannelly Field was a two story modernist structure with an air traffic control tower at the end of its concourse (Fig. 2). Architecturally less ambitious than either the Pan Am Terminal or the TWA Flight Center, any visitor could nonetheless immediately recognize the effort to translate the popular internationalist style in a way that would make it meaningful in a Southern city, which although it happened to be Alabama's state capital was still a relatively small town. The terminal interior featured expensive materials such as marbles and granites. They did, however, fail to lend elegance to the building for its lack of a coherent interior design scheme.

Compared to the carefully crafted environments architects and interior designers produced in New York, the terminal appeared like a small town effort to update its infrastructure.

Fig. 2: Dannelly Field Airport, Montgomery, Alabama (United States v. City of Montgomery)

As such, it exemplifies the results of building efforts in many smaller communities both in the North and in the South, where financial resources were limited and a functionalist modernism inspired by internationalism's master builders Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius emerged as a viable language to shape aviation's built form.

Entering through the main door, travelers found themselves in the entrance area that gave them access to the ticket lobby and the main waiting area.[6] An illuminated sign reading "White Waiting" clearly demarcated this area as off limits to African American travelers. Rows of mid-century modern faux leather seats, plants, newspapers stands, and a gift counter created a pleasant and open space that also afforded access to the airport's whites-only Sky Ranch Restaurant. A much smaller sign, also illuminated, reading "Entrance Colored Waiting" directed black clients to the waiting area reserved for black airport clients, which was around the corner from the main area and not immediately visible from the terminal's main door. Whereas the waiting area for white air travelers was wide and open, the colored waiting area was a drab, contained space behind glass windows that had to be accessed through a door. To remind black travelers of their precarious status, the airport management had posted a sign on the wall that read: "We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone." Just outside the waiting room, the rest rooms reserved for the use of African Americans were located (Fig. 3). An illuminated sign read-

[6] The description of the segregated terminal facilities at Dannelly Field is based on photographs presented as evidence by the Department of Justice in a federal lawsuit against Montgomery's airport authorities. The photographs were probably taken in the spring of 1961 (United States v. City of Montgomery).

ing "Colored" in big letters emphasized the racist motivation of their existence. As smaller second line reading "Men & Women Rest Rooms" indicated that the airport management was generous enough to provide separate toilets for men and women.

Fig. 3: Entrance to Colored Men and Women Rest Rooms,
Dannelly Field Airport (United States v. City of Montgomery)

The restrooms for white travelers were located in a different, more easily accessible and centrally located area. They were situated in the ticketing lobby across from the airline check in counters next to the barber shop and the telephone booth. Illuminated signs reading "White Men Rest Room" and "White Women Rest Room" indicated their limited availability to a select clientele. The terminal also provided water fountains in the same area. In their complete identicalness, the water fountains can be read as the most obvious and absurd symbol of the "separate but equal" doctrine Dannelly Field's airport management subscribed to.[7] Like the waiting rooms and the rest rooms, their duplicate existence signified the racial hierarchy that lay at the core of the airport's spatial organization. The terminal consisted of an arrangement of clearly demarcated spaces designed to marginalize and even make invisible the existence of African American air travelers. Visual materials make visible the stark contrast between a modern facility built to function as a

[7] "Separate but equal" was established as a legal doctrine in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). It provided that the establishment of duplicate facilities to be used separately by African Americans and whites was constitutional as long as these facilities were equal in quality.

gateway to a means of transportation hailed as fast, modern, and exciting and the retrograde social philosophy that dictated the rules for its use.

In Montgomery, as elsewhere, Federal Aid Airport Program funds went into the construction of the terminal, which raised questions about the implication of the federal government in the perpetuation of segregation. The segregation of airport terminal facilities was resisted and attacked on several levels. Black travelers repeatedly ignored rules and attempted to integrate terminal facilities such as waiting rooms, restaurants and cafeterias, mostly unsuccessfully. The refusal of what African Americans framed as their citizenship right – the right of access to public (travel) facilities which fell under the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause – led a number of individuals to file complaints against airport authorities, some of which won their cases establishing important precedents.[8] Moreover, local chapters of the NAACP and CORE (The Congress for Racial Equality) organized direct action campaigns to protest against segregated facilities. Addressing its problematic role in helping to inscribe racism into Southern landscapes, the federal government became an agent of change as well: During the late 1950s, the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) on several occasions changed the provisions that regulated aviation to prohibit the construction of segregated terminals (Rochester; Kent). Moreover, in an effort to tackle racist spatial practices at existing facilities, the Department of Justice in 1961 and 1963 filed complaints against those four airports whose management unlike others resisted persuasive tactics to integrate their facilities: Montgomery, Birmingham, Shreveport, and New Orleans. Shreveport was the last airport to be forced into compliance. Losing its appeal against court ordered integration, the last signs at an American airport leading travelers to segregated facilities were ordered to come down on July 10, 1963 (City of Shreveport v. United States).

The fight for the integration of the Southern access points to air travel was part of the bigger struggle over the renegotiation of racial identities in the postwar period. Construing terminal facilities as spaces essentially reserved for the use of whites, southern white supremacists applied notions of confinement to a new spatial context in an effort to marginalize the place of African Americans in Southern cultural landscapes and the landscapes of transportation. Black air travelers resisted these practices defining access to the public spaces of air travel as their right as citizens. At the same time, they claimed their right to participate as equals in the booming postwar consumer society. To be a consumer and to be an American traveler meant among other things to participate in the modernist lifestyle of air travel and to fashion modernist subjectivities that could no longer be considered a privilege of the white middle class.

[8] They included Coke v. Atlanta, Henry v. Greenville Airport Commission, Brooks v. Tallahassee, Adams v. City of New Orleans and Turner v. Memphis.

Checkpoints and Sterile Corridors: Mobility in the Age of Post-modernity

The 1970s and 1980s saw a slow transformation of terminals from mostly open and accessible to highly controlled, monitored, and confined spaces. Although different in scale and motivation (racism seemed to be less of a factor than classism), this transformation reproduced spatial dynamics similar to the ones racial integration had only recently abolished. Growing passenger volume was one factor that triggered the rethinking of terminal space. Security concerns over hijackings and a growing sense of gloom in the 1970s were others. Like JFK Airport and the airlines that served it, airports across the country struggled to accommodate passenger volume (Bilstein 285-86). Cities like Dallas and Fort Worth built new airports. Miami and Atlanta added terminals and concourses. Other airports like Chicago added makeshift extensions to existing buildings. In the process, airports and terminal buildings became enormous structures and planners often felt they had to abandon the open and transparent style that characterized terminal architecture in the 1960s, creating different travel environments along the way. Alastair Gordon has described terminal fingers as the "architectonic form of kudzu," a plant that thrives in hot and humid climates burying everything underneath its leaves that stands in its way (221). Those who traveled found it difficult to navigate these spaces as aircraft were no longer visible from the check-in counters. Endless finger corridors "were sheer hell for the traveler, as anyone knows who has hiked what seems like miles along the noisy confusing, crowded, hard-paved, and slippery corridors, baggage in hand and/or babe in arm, anxious to catch a connecting plane," architecture critic Wolf von Eckardt wrote in 1967 (73). Rows of similar looking restaurants, coffee shops, and stores added to the sense of disorientation as did the uniformity of design that characterized terminal interiors. The need for direct passengers, which architect Simon Waitzman formulated as one of the directives for airport planning in the 1970s, was falling by the wayside (128). Only an edgy provocateur like Andy Warhol specializing in the art of serial reproduction could possibly enjoy such bland environments:

> Today my favorite kind of atmosphere is the airport atmosphere … Airplanes and airports have my favorite kind of food services, my favorite kind of bathrooms, my favorite peppermint Life Savers, my favorite kinds of entertainment, my favorite loudspeaker address systems, my favorite conveyor belts, my favorite graphics and colors, the best security checks, the best views, the best perfume shops, the best employees, and the best optimism. I love the way you don't have to think about where you're going, someone else is doing that … (160)

Few of his contemporaries agreed with his assessment. Jet age enthusiasm had given way to alienation.

When airport security became an issue of public concern at the end of the 1960s due to increasing numbers of hijackings and sabotage, airport planners and architects had to incorporate federal security regulations into their plans and designs. After the introduction of metal detectors in early 1973, the *New York Times* reported that "the security measures have already given air travel a new look at local airports" ("Air Riders"). Terminals were divided into two general areas: The 'non-sterile' area comprising the parts of the building accessible to anyone – travelers, their friends and family, as well as airport visitors; and the 'sterile' section open only to travelers who had passed security checkpoints (and thus been 'sterilized'). In this environment, Gordon has pointed out, "electromagnetic gateways became the new points of transition, providing the missing sense of 'gateway' that airports had lost in the jumbo-jet age" (234-35). They also became the visual and material markers of the newly drawn boundaries between accessible areas and those that were off-limits to non-travelers who in earlier years had been welcome sightseers.

Terminal spaces that had once encouraged movement were now reapportioned by security technologies. At the TWA Terminal these technologies jarringly interfered with the buildings expressive architecture. Makeshift arrangements disturbed the buildings free-flowing form and held up passenger flow from the check-in counters to the gates. Writing many years after the terminals opening, cultural critic David Pascoe observed:

> … passengers are still subject to ordered movement within the terminal; but while activities taking place in this space are still predicated on a single logarithm bounded in space, and applied rigidly to physical presence of the passenger using the airport … the vista which may once have been so exhilarating has been closed off in order to provide room for three main functions pertaining to passenger handling: circulation, process, containment. (201)

Architect Robert Lamb Hart found that terminal architecture of the 1970s and 1980s lacked human scale: Terminals "were more like machines for the efficient processing of passengers" (qtd. in Fisher 102). Other critics deplored the aesthetic language of an introverted airport architecture that found expression in large concrete boxes.[9] Terminal buildings at Miami, Tampa, and Boston Logan attest to the

[9] The Department of Transportation and the FAA commissioned a study on airport architecture and design to inspire airport planners. Not intending to dictate what constituted good design, the federal agencies hoped local planning committees would emulate the positive features of the airport featured. See Bowman.

popularity of the New Brutalism in the US.[10] Rather than welcome travelers in they established distance, giving expression not to an earlier spirit of mobility and excitement but to feelings of anxiety, doom, and paranoia that were associated with the 1970s. The resulting bunker mentality which historians diagnosed translated into a public architecture that spoke a defensive language. Pascoe and others have commented critically on the dehumanizing effect of a purely functionalist architecture that sought to accommodate large numbers of people and keep them secure. Architecture, they suggest, became an accomplice of airlines, airport, and federal authorities to control passenger flow and curtail the mobility of air travelers, whose agency became increasingly limited. Postmodern airport terminals, Pascoe argues in *Airspaces*, rob travelers of their individuality and control of their bodies. The airport's function as circulation device and holding container compromises freedom of choice. In such environments, he concludes, travelers become oblivious to the fact that their liberties are being taken (202).

This perspective points to the limits of mobility that became apparent in the last quarter of the 20th century. These limits comprise several dimensions. Although the second half of the 20th century is generally characterized as the time when air travel was democratized and more people of different social backgrounds traveled than ever before movement at the same time was curtailed. This curtailment, as I have shown, expressed itself in access to airport space, which was not only dependant on a person's status of 'sterilization' but increasingly defined by his other booking class. Frequent flier programs and their spatial and design perks are an invention of the late 1980s and 1990s. Movement on the ground was also curtailed by wait times, delays, and cancellations often due to high traffic volume. Moreover, after deregulation many small towns were much more difficult to reach as carriers cut direct connections focusing on profitable routes instead. Although airport architecture has taken a U-turn since the 1970s and produced some terminals as spectacular and enticing as the TWA Flight Center – among them the Denver airport – recent theory has raised new questions about their function in the process of the subject formation. Marc Augé has opened new perspectives on mobility as a defining moment of postmodern subjectivities which find their best expression at airports (i.e. the character of Ryan Bingham in *Up in the Air*). He claims that airports cannot be considered as places where people feel a sense of belonging. Instead he reads airport terminals as quintessential the non-places of "supermodernity," in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which soli-

[10] Brutalism was coined as a term by British architects Alison and Peter Smithson in 1954. It derived from the French term *béton brut* ("raw concrete"), the favorite building material of French architect Le Corbusier. When critic Reyner Banham used it as the title for his book *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic*, it found more frequent use to describe an architectural style that was emerging at the time. Often made of concrete, buildings stood out by their angular shape and their seeming inaccessibility.

tude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enable the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future (87). In that sense, they stand for what Pascoe has called "the persistent mobility and transitoriness of post-industrial life" (199).

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Geography

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“Resolving” Scalar and Spatial Mismatches in North American Freight Logistics

Peter V. Hall

Proponents regard contemporary freight logistics systems as efficient solutions to the problem of getting the goods to the right place, on time, and at low cost. Opponents are not so different, regarding them as external, irrepressible forces that impose pollution, congestion, and other costs on people and places. Both proponents and opponents understand freight logistics as tightly integrated mobility systems, and in one sense, they are both mostly right. However, in this paper I urge a modified view which recognizes the uncertainties faced by logistics chain actors as they seek to mobilize the resources required to overcome the constraints of time, space, scale, and social acceptance. Actually existing freight logistics systems are impermanent ‘resolutions’ to the problem of spatial and scalar mismatch. They display the rational logic of integration assumed by their proponents and opponents, as well as disintegration, fragmentation, and contingency.

This perspective on logistics systems is decidedly urbanist because, increasingly, the processes of integration and disintegration play out in urban regions. The analysis is grounded in the experience, context, and history of existing urban places. I use the case of Vancouver, British Columbia, to illustrate the broader theoretical argument about the way in which actually existing logistics chain systems, which are continental or global in reach, are produced in specific urban places. I start by relating enough about Vancouver and particularly its port-logistics system to inform the broader analysis. I then move to a discussion of the central problems of spatial and scalar mismatch; how to balance the desire to get the goods at the right place at the right time, given that efficient transportation systems are lumpy. Cities and urban regions play an especially important role in ‘resolving’ this mismatch, but these resolutions are dynamic and shifting. I depict the impermanent quality of transportation and logistics systems through the concepts of integration and disintegration, which I explore in further detail while concluding the paper.

Vancouver

The City of Vancouver is only 125 years old, and the port of Vancouver as a public authority is only 100 years old. They exist where they are today because local merchants were able, in the 1880s, to capture the western-most outlet of the first trans-

continental railroad across Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR). Initially, the CPR was supposed to end in Port Moody, which is located some 20 km to the east on the same body of water as Vancouver, the Burrard Inlet (Delgado). The City has grown, serving as the major urban core of a wider metropolitan region that is home to about 2.3 million people, and that has 23 local governments with a federal-type regional government for certain shared functions. The original port has also grown to become Canada's largest. Decades after it was first proposed, in 2008 the Vancouver port was combined with two smaller ports on the Fraser River to create a single port authority for the region, Port Metro Vancouver. That single regional port authority is formally an agent of the federal government (it is after all Canada's western port), but port governance is dominated by local business interests (Hall and Clark).

Until the late 1980s, Vancouver's port was predominantly a place for the export of raw materials such as grain, lumber, and coal. These commodity exports are still important to the port; however, the past 20 years have seen dramatic growth in container handling. Between 1990 and 2005 Vancouver's container throughput grew by 458%: more than double the rate for all North American Pacific coast ports. During the recent recession, throughput in Vancouver declined less in other places, and growth has since resumed. This further consolidated Vancouver's position as Canada's most important (container) port. Yet, while employment in the port-logistics sector Canada-wide grew between the 1991 and 2006 population censuses, it declined slightly in the BC Lower Mainland. The port-logistics sector here is defined as including rail, water, truck transport, and warehousing and freight transport arrangement. The growth that did occur was concentrated in the freight transport arrangement and lower-wage warehouse sectors, while rail- and dock-worker employment each declined (Hall and Farahani). This employment paradox provides the first hint of the complicated relationship between the port and city.

From being a small net exporter of containers, the port is now fully implicated in North American container freight logistics systems; so like other ports on the West Coast of North America, it is a net importer of loaded containers. This is because manufactured imports from Asian nations are more likely to be placed in containers, while North American exports are more likely to be bulk commodities. All this means that the Vancouver region now has a problem of surplus empty containers (Theofanis and Boile); empty containers are visible on the landscape in great piles, and they consume significant transportation resources in 'empty repositioning.' Again, this is not a problem that is unique to Vancouver. According to one industry source, it is estimated that more than half of the life of a standard container is spent idle or in empty repositioning. In 2011, Vancouver terminals exported 187,000 empty containers (PMV). But overall, empty containers represented 11% of all containers handled by Vancouver which is low compared to other North

American west coast ports; for example, in Los Angeles and Long Beach respectively, 22% and 25% of containers handled in 2011 were empties.

The problem would be worse in Vancouver, but for increasing exports of some traditional resource products in containers. For example, while most grain is exported via the grain terminals which dot the Burrard Inlet in bulk carriers (ships in which the product is poured directly into the hold), some specialized grains are now exported in containers. So too are wood products, especially bales of paper pulp which fit neatly into containers. This is an arrangement that works well for both carriers, who reduce the number of containers they take back to Asia empty, and exporters, who get another low-cost transport option.

Like many other container ports around the world, the urban footprint of the port is increasingly metropolitan in scale, and leading global transportation firms such as Maersk and Dubai Ports World dominate the landscape. Historically, port activities in the greater Vancouver region were clustered in two locations; in and around the Burrard Inlet, and along the Fraser River. The City of Vancouver is on the south shore of the Burrard Inlet; where the downtown core occupies a narrow peninsula between the Inlet and False Creek. It was to this peninsula that the CPR was first attracted in a deal with local merchants. Although cargo handling activities around False Creek have been replaced by high-rise residential and commercial developments, two of the port's three container terminals, a grain silo, oil terminals, the cruise terminals, and other marine operations are still located on the south shore of the Burrard Inlet. On the north shore of the Inlet are a series of terminals for grain, sulphur, chemicals, and break bulk commodities. Another historic site of marine cargo handing in the region is the Fraser River. Although most ocean-going vessels stopped calling there by the 1980s as ships got bigger and Vancouver claimed the lion's share, there are still two terminals for automobile imports and a small container terminal. The river is also used to transport logs and wood products, aggregates, and construction materials, and a small number of containers within the region, and between the mainland and Vancouver Island (Hall).

However, over the past decades, the most important change in the location of marine cargo activities is the southward relocation of container handling within the region (Hall and Clark). In 1970, a major coal export terminal opened at Roberts Bank, some 30 km to the south of the Burrard Inlet. Built on a five-kilometre causeway, this terminal extends into the deeper and more open waters of the Strait of Georgia. In the 1990s, facing congestion around the two container terminals of the Burrard Inlet, the Port of Vancouver Corporation (as it was then known) set about developing a container terminal at Roberts Bank. Opened in 1997, Deltaport terminal was expanded in 2000 and 2009, and plans are underway for an entirely new container terminal at the site. It is this massive expansion of container operations that lies behind the rapid growth in container throughput in Vancouver; and, by being relocated well south of the traditional urban core, it is also this expansion

that has redefined the relationship between the port and the region. In order to efficiently move containers from the new terminal to markets as far across the continent as Toronto and Chicago, new connections have been built. These include a major new highway, the South Fraser Perimeter Road, designed to connect Deltaport to warehouses and major continental rail yards located in suburbs to the east of Vancouver, as well as a series of rail improvements and grade separations.

One might be excused for thinking that developments in the past 20 years were a relatively simple or inevitable process that unfolded according to some greater logic; that port regionalization is the logical consequence of increasing ship sizes and other changes associated with containerization, and this wonderfully well-located place, Vancouver, was simply updating its status as Canada's Pacific and Asian Gateway. In one sense, this is true: location, situation, technology, and global routes do matter. The spatial expansion of port activities away from the waterfront has been replicated in ports across the world (Notteboom and Rodrigue; Desfor et al.). However, this way of thinking about freight logistics and their urban impacts is insufficient. In the case of Vancouver, an industry coalition known as the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council which included the Port and Airport authorities, shipping, railroad, and other transportation firms has actively promoted road, rail, and other public investments currently underway (Hall and Clark). The group, and its predecessor and associated bodies, prevailed after more than two decades of effort to convince provincial and federal governments to invest in expanded regional connectivity, and despite vocal opposition from some local governments and environmentalists. However, at least one major connection on the Gateway Council's wish-list, the North Fraser Perimeter Road has not gone ahead because of opposition from a small municipality. Actually existing logistics chains have to be constructed or produced one step at a time. It is this process that I explore here: uncertain, uneven, messy, efficient for some and harmful to others.

Spatial and Scalar Mismatch

It seems self-evident, but it is worth (re)stating that freight logistics systems exist to connect geographically dispersed points of production and consumption. Furthermore, connecting those points requires a fine balance of multiple factors such as time, cost, and reliability. In the broadest sense, these connections entail a trade-off between efficiency and convenience; the larger the volume, the more efficient the movement, but the less convenient it is to those widely dispersed producers and consumers. We can explore the implications of these simple statements with two widely used scientific metaphors, spatial and scalar mismatch.

Spatial mismatch refers to a situation in which two or more entities that need to meet in a place do not meet, or they do not meet at the right time. The most com-

mon use of this term in the social sciences refers to the residential location of unemployed people relative to job opportunities (Kain). Spatial mismatch has always been a feature of (traded) economic activity, and economic geographers have long emphasised dualities such as agglomeration and dispersion to understand the processes responsible for creating this mismatch. Hence, spatial mismatch has always been the reason for freight movement, for trading, for warehousing. Arguably, contemporary supply chains heighten the challenges of spatial mismatch with their requirements for just-in-time delivery in the right place (Hesse and Rodrigue), resulting in additional requirements for what Easterling has called 'organization space.' These are the spaces for storing, staging, and transferring goods, such as warehouses, distribution centres, inland terminals, and yards. Another example of spatial mismatch is the empty container problem, mentioned above. Vancouver's 'resolution' to this problem is an important part of its recent success as a container port.

Scalar mismatch refers to a situation when the scales at which decisions are taken do not match the scales at which those decisions are felt. The concept has been widely applied in the natural sciences and conservation management (see Berkes; Campbell); climate change for instance, is in large measure a problem of scalar mismatch. Activities at the local scale of households, neighborhoods, factories have spillover effects at much larger scales; with this comes problems of perception, governance, maintenance of the commons, and legitimacy. The concept of scale has also enjoyed attention of critical social scientists which have emphasised the notion that scales are produced or constructed through social processes (see Sheppard and McMaster). Hence, "(s)caled spaces are shaped politically, through strategising amongst social actors and agents aiming to enrol scale to advance or protect interests by (re)territorialising and 'fixing' social processes and practices at particular scales" (Atkinson et al. 2816).

With 'scale' there is also a convenient non-geographic second meaning, namely scale in the sense of size. Indeed, the scalar mismatch problem in freight logistics begins with the tension between economies of scale in transportation modes, alongside the highly dispersed nature of the final origins and particularly of the final destinations (spatial mismatch). We see ever larger nodes (ports, warehouses, distribution centres, inland terminals) and higher-volumes corridors (rail, roadways). But these intense sites of activity have to be connected through someone's backyard, and they have to travel the 'final mile,' whether that is from a 'big box' retailer to the home, or from the small urban warehouse to the retail outlet, restaurant, office, or home. The combination of spatial and scalar mismatch thus results in problems of congestion, pollution, and other externalities around nodes, and attended governance challenges. Even if we could create it, the alternative of a widely dispersed and individualized transportation systems, would be significantly less efficient.

Spatial and scalar mismatch are not static problems resolvable through some optimal engineered solution, in part, because supply chains are internally and externally competitive structures subject to conscious change by participants (Cox at al; see also Gereffi et al.). If you don't want to buy my automobile, perhaps you will buy theirs which might come from a different direction. If you don't ship your parts in my containers, perhaps you will ship them in theirs, which might follow a different route. If you don't stage the new models for this year in my port, perhaps you will stage them in theirs. If I don't want your automobiles carried on trucks past my house, perhaps I can convince, force, regulate that you carry them past someone else's. And so on.

Hence, resolutions to the problem of spatial and scalar mismatch are always incomplete, always evolving because the actors within logistics chains are constantly reconsidering them, sometimes breaking old connections and establishing new ones. They are temporary, not in a fleeting sense, but in a sense that they require constant attention to keeping them viable. So, instead of viewing freight logistics as only integrated/integrative systems, there is a constant tension between integration and disintegration in their organization. The recent growth of Vancouver's port-logistics complex illustrates how these integrative and disintegrative tendencies play out within and across different spatial scales.

The Urban Context

Indeed, I want to suggest that resolutions to scalar and spatial mismatches often take place more successfully within an urban context. An emerging literature about the relationship between cities, regions, and material flows and how this relationship has changed with globalization reminds us that cities were (and still are) the prime nodes in networks of trade and transportation (see Hall and Hesse 3-20). Given spatial and scalar mismatch, points of intersection and interaction are essential, and increasingly these occur within urban space. Urban dwellers were (and still are) the sources of the capital, skills and relationships required to stimulate and organize local and long-distance exchange. Cities were (and still are) places of intense consumption and production. However, the costs and benefits of these activities are not evenly distributed (Ducruet and Lee).

This is an emerging literature because unfortunately with notable exceptions (Vernon; Vance; Cronon), scholars in the second half of the 20th century took the physical exchanges at the core of the trading relationship for granted. Even as economic globalization focused the attention of academics and the public on heightened mobility, the physicality of that movement somehow got forgotten. One popular statement announced the "death of distance" (Cairncross); but even those who observed the selective, punctuated and heightened mobility of people, finance

and information tended to overlook the movement of goods and freight. It is however, now increasingly recognized that globalization did not free economic actors from their attachments to particular places and social relationships: on the contrary, the ability to move things, people, and money just about any place served to reinforce the economic importance of the assets and relationships which are not easily moved (Storper).

When global firms locate in cities they seek "assemblages of site and situation" (Hesse) that enable them to take advantage of local factors in order to access remote opportunities. This insight is an important antidote to much of the writing about globalism that barely mentions improvements in the technologies of movement such as containers, overnight services, inland ports, RFID, etc. that have made the persistent urbanization of economic development possible. Indeed the physical movement of goods continues to exert a powerful influence on the physical organization of space in the city (O'Connor; Kasarda).We know that these actions to remake urban space for material flows are not benignly felt by the residents of cities and urban regions. We can think here of Castells's distinction between the 'space of flows' and the 'space of places' – and the tensions between these two.

It is also important to remember that flows of people, money, data, and ideas always intersect with the material flows; all flows have human, material, and nonmaterial dimensions (Hall and Hesse 7). The logistics sector, as with many others, creates jobs at a variety of levels. Often in North America, immigrants are concentrated in some of the lowest paying segments of the industry (Bonacich and Wilson). However the resulting patterns of employment also reflect highly localised variations in immigrant settlement patterns and labour market workings. In Vancouver, although still under-represented relative to the immigrant share of overall employment in greater Vancouver, between 1991 and 2006 the share of immigrants increased from one-fifth to one-third of all port-logistics workers (Hall and Farahani). Furthermore, different immigrant populations are concentrated in specific industry and occupational segments; proportionately more East Asian immigrants are found in the freight transport arrangement sector, while south Asians dominate the trucking industry.

The following quote from a warehouse security guard who grew up in the Indian city of Chandigarh illustrates the way in which immigrants are placed in jobs that are central to the resolution of spatial and scalar mismatch in the local logistics industry:

> Q: What is involved in security at a warehouse?
> A: At a warehouse we have different sets of work. At one place, guards work at the gatehouse. Gatehouse is a place where you control the incoming and outgoing traffic of trucks. If you are working there you have to know everything that goes in and out …

> Q: What language do you speak to the drivers?
> A: Their language. Because they [the company] know the location where most of the people are coming, so they naturally place most of the Indian guys there. Mostly it is the Indian guys. So what that Filippino guy from the warehouse is doing, he doesn't need to talk to the driver.

This immigrant guard from north India is called upon to mediate between the warehouse and truck-drivers who are also drawn from northern India. The quote reveals just a glimpse of one of the ways in which actually existing freight logistics systems map onto, exploit and are shaped by the particular features of the social context in which they exist. Vancouver's port terminals require the services of truck drivers to disperse concentrated flows of containers to a variety of locations around the region. The social geography of the labour market is such that this work is done by immigrants; typically this is low-wage and highly contingent work, but it is the case that in Vancouver, strikes by truck drivers in 1999 and 2005 have resulted in regulations that have raised their earnings. Regardless, what the resolution of spatial and scalar mismatch creates is a need for a security guard who can speak Punjabi. In a thousand such small ways, the imperatives of goods flow are implicated in structuring and integrating, but also segmenting and disintegrating, the region's labour market.

Tendencies to Integration and Disintegration

By way of conclusion, I will dwell on the process-oriented concepts of integration and disintegration, drawing from two chapters in a volume I co-edited with Markus Hesse.

By now it should be clear that freight flows and logistics systems are deceptive, in this sense: they appear to be more tightly integrated and stable than in fact they are. This image is communicated every time the goods arrive on time; in other words, every time spatial and scalar mismatches are overcome. However, the deception is in no small part due to their heavy reliance on information technologies, which provide managers with greater control than ever before over some parts of the logistics chain. This is not the same thing as saying that logistics chains are perfectly integrated; on the contrary, it is precisely those information systems which allow sub-contracting of trucking services, which in turn create the conditions for the employment of Punjabi-speaking drivers and security guards in what is otherwise an English-speaking part of Canada. So information and other technologies allow integration alongside disintegration of the logistics chain. The disintegration of logistics activities has direct spatial implications in urban regions; once separated in virtual and organizational space, activities such as truck parking and repair

and container storage, which are crucial to the logistics chain but that are unable to command high land rents, and are displaced to peripheral locations within the region. The perverse result is the regionalization and suburbanization of freight activities, resulting in additional, polluting truck trips on urban roads.

Yet, we need to be cautious not to blame logistics activities for every disintegrative effect visible in urban regions and communities. The idea that global flows have such negative urban effects has found considerable support in the critical literature on globalization (Graham and Marvin; Castells). These effects are undeniably real; when it comes to freight flows, the negative effects are especially concerning because the externalities of freight are concentrated on urban regions by virtue of the scalar mismatch problem. However, this too is an incomplete picture; urban actors themselves create and maintain lines of difference. Logistics actors map onto, and compound, these existing cleavages in urban society and ecology. For example, in most parts of North America individual municipal governments have the power to regulate land use patterns, resulting in a patchwork of developments that shape the movement of freight within the metropolitan area (Cidell).

So what forms do the current 'resolutions' of scalar and spatial mismatch through processes of integration and disintegration within urban regions in freight logistics take? Logistics activity tends to cluster in proximity to large transportation nodes such as ports and airports, at inland terminals and along corridors. Often these sites are found in the world's largest metropolitan regions, while at the metropolitan scale, logistics activities tend to cluster in suburban and even ex-urban locations (Bowen). Connectivity between these nodes, within the urban region and to the rest of the world, and hence new planning and governance arrangements, is a key concern of freight interests. As the Vancouver case shows, freight proponents have strong incentives to promote efficient connectivity within urban regions. In the absence of public sector leadership, it is not surprising that industry coalitions devote considerable energy to regional visioning, planning, and lobbying efforts that are in turn are often criticized for failing any reasonable test of democratic accountability.

In Hall and Hesse (247-59), we argue that the central planning challenge for urban regions with respect to freight revolves around managing the relationship between large-scale inter-regional freight flows on the one hand, and the desire for coherence and integrity of urban places on the other hand. At this time, and in most places, this remains an aspirational goal. In this paper, I have traced some of the ways in which actually existing logistics systems in North American urban regions have been created. They work for the users, if not for everyone who is affected by them. They are constructed within, and reflect the relatively decentralized, flexibly coordinated economic and political systems that exist in North America in comparison to Europe. Precisely because urban spaces are vital sites for resolving spatial and scalar mismatches, existing logistics systems impose costs on neighbouring

communities, some workers, and the environment. They are resolutions, imperfect and temporary, to be continued.

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Time Machines: Islands, Ferries, and the Advent of a New Way of Life[1]

Philip Vannini

I feel queasy. Hecate Strait is nothing like the Salish Sea down the coast. Waters are feisty, even bullish here. I hesitantly stand up from my reclining seat – holding myself against the window to regain balance. Slowly I start walking toward the door to the outer deck. I need fresh air. The boat smells like vomit. I try to open the door, hesitantly at first, then with resolve, finally with all my strength. At last I defeat both the nasty Northwesterly wind blowing it back and my anxiety about what awaits me outside. As I step on the wet metal floor I am shocked to see I am not the only one desperate for fresh air.

"Starting to feel sick too?" I ask the lone, wet man.

"Are you kidding me?" he puts me back in my place, "this is not a storm, it's a …"

Due to the blowing wind and crashing waves I can't hear the other words he used. I think he said "wimp," but maybe he was talking about me. He then tells me – or more like *yells* to me over the waves' roar – that before BC Ferries ships came to connect Haida Gwaii with Prince Rupert in the early 1980s, the locals would have to take a barge from Masset on northern Graham Island to travel to the mainland. When the new ferry service to Skidegate, on Graham's south end, was proposed numerous protests erupted because many islanders felt Haida Gwaii would become too convenient to reach.

"Now, *that* barge and *that* route could actually make you seasick." "Not that I ever did," he promptly saves his face, "but these ships, these days, are just too damn nice; they make it easy for everyone to come over to Haida Gwaii all the time."

It's the middle of winter, and the tourists who later in the season will crowd the seats of the *Queen of Prince Rupert* are nowhere to be seen yet. As an ethnographer, I'm somewhat of a tourist, but as an islander – albeit of a far-off and much gentler island – I'm also somewhat at home. The few dozen souls travelling up the north coast have kind of adopted me as one of their own for the voyage to Prince Rupert. As they sip the third cup of drip coffee since our conversation began less

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than an hour ago, Jerry and Paul reassure me that these waters aren't as bad as they seem.

"These days the captains won't even try to sail in really rough waters," Jerry says with a grin, "they have all kinds of regulations now."

"That's right," confirms Paul, "back in the eighties the captains were all Norwegians. Those guys didn't give a shit about six meter swells. If they could find a way to float, they would go for it. They'd just get on the PA system, laugh, and tell you to hang on."

They did that until loose pieces of furniture started flying out of the windows. But that was the least harmful of their problems. One day, under the force of the waves, a truck carrying tanks filled with natural gas capsized on the vehicle deck. It could have been a disaster, but thankfully no casualty or damage was reported.

"It scared a lot of people, though," Jerry mumbles as he gets up from his seat to dig a lighter out of his jeans pocket. "So they take it easy now. Too easy."

* * *

The *Queen of Prince Rupert* is one of the oldest ships in the BC Ferries fleet. BC Ferries is a monopolistic, privately owned, but publicly subsidized and publicly overseen company. It ranks as one of the world's largest ferry transportation companies with annual revenues in excess of CAD$680 million and a fleet of some three dozen vessels of varying size. BC Ferries conducts operations in 47 ports of call through a multitude of routes ranging from ten minutes to 36 hours in length. The boats serve a large and diverse coast. Interactive maps, photography, and more can be found online at the research project website: http://ferrytales.innovative ethnographies.net. Stretching from the US border with Washington State to the marine border with Alaska, the BC coast measures 965 km in a straight line. But due to the large number of islands, inlets, arms, and fjords, the coastline measures about 27,000 km. With the exception of the Victoria and Vancouver metropolitan areas (pop. circa 2,870,000), few regions of this vast archipelago are urbanized.

Victoria, which sits in the relatively heavily populated southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, is the second-largest city in the region (greater metropolitan area pop. circa 330,000). The next largest city – Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island – is home to 88,000 people. Only two other communities in the region count more than 20,000 residents: Campbell River (pop. circa. 32,000) and Courtenay-Comox (combined pop. ca. 33,000), both in the northern half of Vancouver Island. Immediately north of Vancouver, the most populated region is the Sunshine Coast (pop. circa 50,000) – a large area of the mainland that is only reachable by ferry or small plane. North of the Sunshine Coast, the only city that can be found is Prince Rupert

(pop. circa. 12,000) on the far north coast. In between these areas, very few communities exist.

Several inhabited and uninhabited islands lie west of the mainland. The largest is Vancouver Island (32,134 km²), which is also the most inhabited (circa 741,000 residents). Flanking the east coast of Vancouver Island are the Southern and the Northern Gulf Islands: Constellations of small islands, the great majority of which are either uninhabited or populated by less than 5000 people. North of Vancouver Island, reaching up to Haida Gwaii (pop. circa 4800), are hundreds of small, mostly unpopulated islands. Amongst the few populated ones are Denny Island (pop. circa 100), Swindle Island (pop. circa 300), and Campbell Island (pop. circa 1400). These islands are better known by the villages where the ferry stops: Shearwater, Klemtu, and Bella Bella respectively.

Over the past fifty years, islanders and coasters of this region have come to rely on the operation of "British Columbia Ferry Services Inc.," (BCFS) or BC Ferries. Prior to the advent of BC Ferries, islanders and coasters relied on the services of the publicly owned Canadian Pacific Railway and the privately owned Black Ball Line. Due to the deteriorating relations between managers and unions throughout the 1950s – and the consequent instability in the services they provided – the provincial government of the time, led by W.A.C. Bennett, thought it necessary to step in and provide this essential service through a Crown corporation that was to be made part of the British Columbia Toll Highways and Bridges Authority. Services of the newly formed ferry corporation began in 1960, with the main routes connecting Vancouver Island with the greater Vancouver area and later gradually expanding to include other routes. By the mid 1980s, BC Ferries had achieved a monopoly over public transportation by saltwater ferry in the province.

Plagued by growing debt and political strife over its status as a Crown corporation, in 2003 the provincial Liberal (*i.e.*, conservative) government of BC reorganized BCFS into a private corporation. The new corporation came into being through the Coastal Ferry Act. The Act established that the only voting power within the corporation be held by the BC Ferry Authority: An organization established to maintain the autonomy of BCFS's management from the provincial government yet close enough at hand to control key aspects of its operation. Public subsidy from Transport Canada, estimated at about $25 million per year, stayed in effect. Today BCFS is neither a fully public nor a fully private company, and its independence from the provincial government varies on a case-by-case basis. The BC Liberal government and the powerful BCFS CEO David Hahn have been pushing for greater and greater separation from the initial "essential service model" provided to coastal residents as a basic response to their mobility rights, in favor of the current market-driven model. As a result, corporate bottom-line principles have taken over: Ferry routes have been turned into money-making devices, and what were previously defined as public marine highways are now essentially toll-

protected private roads. However, given the worldwide increases in fuel costs, the small populations they serve, and an ageing fleet which has demanded extensive maintenance and renewal, BCFS has had a difficult time staying profitable. This has resulted in continuous drastic fare increases, relative deterioration of service in many areas, and growth in public discontent. In the next few pages, I consider the processes of transformation of ferry-based mobility on the BC coast.

A New Social Ecology

Mechanized navigation technologies are only a recent introduction into the BC coast mobility constellations. Prior to European colonization and permanent settlement in the late 19th and early- to mid-20th centuries, indigenous peoples moved about the BC coast by canoe for fishing, trade, and ceremonial purposes (Clayton). Their journeys were frequent and vast. Early European and Asian settlers used canoes and rowboats considerably as well (White) until the early-20th century witnessed the dawn of small engine-powered vessels and some larger ships. Use of these vessels' services was, however, minimal compared to today's reliance on ferries. Not only were sailings infrequent, but they also had to compete with private fishing vessels which many small islanders used instead of ferries for personal transportation. But a series of events would progressively transform this state of affairs: The arrival of the RORO system, the decline of the extraction-based economy, and their related consequences.

RORO refers to "Roll On, Roll Off," a loading and unloading system which allows vehicles to drive on and off the ferry via a ship's car deck and a dock's floating ramp. This system replaced the previous side-loading process, which was subject to accidents and extremely time-consuming. With the RORO system, catching a ferry to go "to town" and come back home became something that most islanders and coasters could do within a day's time or less, without having to sleep overnight away from home. Today BCFS has some of the world's largest RORO ships, which can unload up to 370 cars and 32 large trucks in less than 15 minutes. As the RORO system made car-loading easier, automobility began to reach deeper and deeper into coastal regions and islands, further affecting the social ecology of the region. Vancouver Island became entirely drivable on paved roads along its south-north axis in the 1980s, and ferry terminals all over the coast became the terminuses of those roads, often displacing earlier centres. For instance the village of Alert Bay on Cormorant Island, which had traditionally functioned as a major node along the coastal marine highway, became entirely bypassed and made peripheral by the new Island Highway. Boats quickly gave way to cars and trucks.

While paved roads grew in influence, the extraction industry (i.e. fishing, logging, and mining) began to spiral downwards. Poor public and private management

and the global market collapses of the fishing industry (Harris), combined with crises in logging (Vaillant) and mining (Hinde), deeply destabilized local economies. This turned out to have serious consequences for regional mobility constellations. Firstly, due to the decline of fishing, fewer and fewer families could rely on private fishing vessels for personal transport. Secondly, the extraction industries' woes, combined with faster RORO ferry service and improved roads, meant that people in previously isolated communities had to, and could, travel farther to work and shop on a daily or weekly basis. And thirdly, a reduction in income from fishing, mining, logging, and farming – combined with an absence of government support – raised the economic importance of tourism and residential land development (Barman).

As roads and ferries made islands and coastal areas more easily reachable, progressive waves of lifestyle and amenity migration began to change the population of the region (Barman). While immigration of fisher folk, miners, loggers, and farmers had characterized early mobilities, hippies and draft-dodgers, then baby-boomer retirees, and finally the new creative class followed each other – in variable proportions throughout the region. With retirees and the creative class also came part-time residents: Owners of second or third homes who travel to the region seasonally from as far as central Canada, the USA, and Europe. Due to tight regulations on residential development, very limited land availability on small islands, and fast-increasing demand, real estate value began to skyrocket in the late 1990s, and developers (at times, the very descendents of the early pioneers) did not fail to take notice. Beautiful islands and homes – effectively protected by ferries, which operate somewhat like a moat to a gated community – have now made affordable housing on smaller islands and coastal villages very scarce. Development pressures have also collided with the traditional radical preservationist spirit of some local governing authorities.

In an archipelago where not one bridge is to be found, ferry boats play a pivotal role in this social ecology. Indeed, besides the material agency they exercise in affecting costs of living, the rhythms of the places they connect and disconnect, and the very sense of place experienced by residents of islands and coastal communities (Vannini), the ferries clearly play a symbolic role. As the coast continues to change, the ferries serve the role of scapegoats for islanders and coasters who resent change. Even more strongly, as the years go by, the BC Ferries Corporation increasingly acquires the image of an alien, demonic force pulling the BC coast farther apart from its (apocryphal) roots. It is to this symbolic role that I now turn.

The Whistlerization of the BC Coast

"Excuse me, do you have a wireless signal?" – a middle-aged lady wearing a squeaky clean white jacket asks me.

The question takes a second to register. I have my nose buried in my laptop, and my mind is busier with recording a few field notes than with making conversation with passengers. I tell her and the gentleman I assume to be her husband that there is no wireless signal on the ferries to Nanaimo.

"They just started to offer that service on the ferries to Victoria, though, I add." That's not the only luxury offered on that vessel – you can even get a massage nowadays.

"No internet, either. Oh well, isn't that just ridiculous?!" she blurts out. I'm about to nod unsympathetically, when she adds: "At least they have some TVs around the boat."

Social conventions on carrying out polite conversations with strangers demand I act agreeably, but I find it hard to do so. The trip from the mainland to Vancouver Island is only ninety-five minutes through this route, and on a nice sunny day like this, the land and oceanscape offer vastly more entertaining programming than any Hollywood producer can cook up. At least in my opinion.

Since the gentleman sitting next to her asks me how long it takes to complete the crossing, I take that as my clue that they are first-time tourists. It turns out they're from central Canada, and they're here to visit family. I tell them the ferries used to be a lot less comfortable. Tasteless upholstery, wires and cables looking as though they stuck out of the walls and the ceiling, bare-bone interior design, and a stuffy smell. None of those features seemed to bother most of the local riders though. They were fodder for jokes and newspaper comics, to be sure, but until the three new German-built ferries arrived in 2008, hardly anyone whined about the absence of modern perks like digital advertisement displays, wall clocks, or flat-screen TVs.

The *Coastal Renaissance*, *Coastal Inspiration*, and *Coastal something or other* all arrived from Germany more or less at the same time. They were given essentially the same bland corporate names, and precisely the same feel and look. You could be sipping Starbucks coffee in any one of them and not know which boat you're on. Even geeky aficionados like me, who can often tell a ferry just by the sound of the horn, are hopeless at telling these floating airport malls apart without looking for a name painted on the hull, right next to a mural depicting the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

The Olympics, that's another story altogether. Islanders have a troubled relationship with the mainland in general, but locals have treated the Olympics extravaganza with great suspicion, if not anger. "Put it this way," a Vancouver Island resident once told me, "the provincial government tells us they can't do anything

about the rising cost of ferry travel. Yet they built a multi-billion dollar road to Whistler for the games. Their transportation needs are more important than ours, apparently." But it doesn't end there.

The insult after the injury comes from the outcome of the games. The provincial government and the Vancouver Olympic committee insisted for years that the Olympics would soon pay themselves back in increased revenues from tourism. "But tourism has been going down on the islands. It's more and more expensive to get here, whereas it's more and more convenient to get to Whistler," an influential island politician explained to me. Islanders may find reasons to whine about tourists from the mainland invading their beaches but no one complains about the revenue they bring. In an economy striving to cope with the loss of fishing, mining, and logging as main sources of income generation, tourism has long been sold as a panacea to all local troubles.

And yet tourism is not an easy industry to fall in love with. Take for example the *Northern Expedition* – one of the newest vessels serving the north coast. She has replaced the old but beloved *Queen of Prince Rupert*, which was decommissioned in 2009. Just about everyone on the north and central coast essentially grew up on that stinky, dark boat. And they essentially slept on her hard floors, ate her greasy foods, and threw up overboard at one time or another. But boats, like wine, have a way of getting better with age. Regardless of upgrades, refits, and repairs – more like useless band-aids, really – a ferry boat gets better as more memories become attached to her.

So, even though she is a beautiful ship, the *Northern Expedition* feels vacuous, shallow, even precious. Like a beautiful man or woman who's just a little bit out of your league. The locals don't have much interest in her jewellery store, in her swanky restaurant, or in renting a cabin for over $100 during a trip that begins at seven in the morning and ends before bed time. "Welcome to the Whistlerization of the BC Coast," I was once told while on that boat. Like the Olympic resort town of Whistler Village, the boat feels as though she is owned by distant others and meant for distant others who are just passing by. "And yet she cruises *our* waters, she's supposed to take *us* to *our* homes," the Prince Rupert resident added. Like Whistler, she is a sign that "we are selling ourselves off to tourism."

The super-C class *Coastal* vessels that thread the more southern waterways are no different. The previous boats were named after local places, like Saanich and Esquimalt. These names signified local ownership and collective belonging. Newer ship names sound all but local. There is nothing inherently British Columbian about the *Renaissance*, or *Inspiration*, or *Adventure*. When the *Queen of the North* hit Gil Island in 2006 and sank, the residents of the remote fishing village of Hartley Bay took to the waters and rescued the passengers and took them to their homes. To honour that, it was suggested that the *Northern Expedition* – then yet to

be named – should be called the *Spirit of Hartley Bay*. But the corporation wanted nothing to do with that. The sinking was a bad memory, and it was to be forgotten.

And apparently so was any connection to the Royal family. In 2009, portraits of Queen Elizabeth II, who had been gracing all the ships until then, were reported to be gradually disappearing from more and more boats. Furious letters to the editors of local newspapers lamented the fact that the BC Ferries Corporation was more interested in advertising hotels than recognizing our Head of State. While not everyone is a fervent monarchist, the Queen's portraits "showed that there was a connection with public ownership," as someone told me, "and that too was no longer sacred; the only thing that seems to matter was money."

But perhaps the most telling indictment of the transformation of the ferries fleet – and in relation, of the symbolic image of the coast – comes from a five year old girl. As I sit nearby the kid's room on the starboard side of one of the Coastal ships, my eyes catch the sour face of a blonde little girl who looks pensive and slightly distraught. She sits on her thumbs for five minutes, listless, without playing with anything or anyone. Her mother asks her what's wrong. She's not having fun on the ferries anymore, she says. As her mother probes her, the little girl responds: "Why did they have to take away the old yellow slide from the kid's room?" she whimpers. Due to safety concerns, all kid's rooms on the newer vessels were refurbished with different toys, and the old yellow slide – on which thousands of children learned to take turns at sliding and respect the playing needs of younger kids – came to is demise. There is now a flat-screen TV showing cartoons in the room. Some of the kids appear enraptured by it, and have no interest in playing with their mates. And the latter, in turn, wish they were as exciting as Dora the Explorer, so their friends could play with them instead. "Did they really have to stick a TV in here too?" a parent remarks.

The End of Informality?

The BC Ferries Corporation – make no mistake – is often damned if it does and damned if it doesn't. This is what happens to a monopoly, like the government. And the weather. Larger-than-life figures tend to draw negative energy simply for being so powerful and for exacting so much dependence on them. History is full of examples. Symbolically, this puts the BC Ferries Corporation in the position of a tyrant; a despot who acts but demagogically when it tries to do something good and who acts but deviously when it inadvertently does something bad. And since islanders around here – arguably like elsewhere – are an opinionated and outspoken bunch, it is not uncommon for voices to be heard, and heard loudly and often, in newspapers, blogs, and community newsletters as well as in coffee shops and waiting lounges.

"Look, everyone needs an antagonist," Pierre – a resident of Pender Island tells me – "and the ferries are a very convenient one. They're easy to complain about. With the government, you're always going to find somebody who disagrees. With the ferries, it's an easy target, they're easy to hate."

I am sitting on a simple but comfy chair at a Pender Island bakery and coffee shop, a small but incredibly busy hangout at the corner of a cozy wooden mall. The occasion is a small informal group interview that I set up with a pair of locals, but for which five people – neighbours and friends of the original two informants – have turned up. As our conversation unreels, I get to appreciate another important reason why so many people feel afraid the islands and the coast are losing an important feature of their original character.

"We used to have a neighbourly rapport with the captains and the crew," Jim explains. "We still appreciate them for what they do, but now they seem to go by a different set of rules. Earlier, they hardly had any rules. For example, it used to be that you showed up a few minutes late for the sailing but you could call them on the phone from home and let them know you were arriving, and they'd wait for you. Sometimes, for some sailings, they might even turn the boat around and come to pick you up."

The end of that regime was put in place in 2003, when the new corporation made reliability a cornerstone of its promise to the public to provide efficient service. Now ferry captains' actions are ruled by what is known as 'on-time performance.' There are penalties for being late and rewards for being on time, so ferries don't travel on island time anymore.

"Even worse than that are the new cut-off policies," Ezra erupts. He is so loud in doing so that customers seated at nearby tables echo his anger with a few mumbles and grumbles. A side conversation is soon sparked, as I struggle to keep up with the note-taking. The new cut-off policies were put in place over the past three years to serve one key objective. In simple words, it was thought that by imposing an early curfew for loading a vessel – anywhere from three to ten minutes depending on the location and the size of the ship – it would be easier for the crew to load cars and passengers in an orderly manner, allowing for an accurate headcount and safe loading procedures. But for people who have deeply ingrained habits and rituals of catching a ferry, and for people whose work schedules allow them to be at the terminal only at a certain time, no change can be a good change.

"I swear I have arrived at the terminal six or seven minutes before sailing time, and they still did not let me on despite a five minute cut-off," Ezra inveighs angrily, "and I have my car clock synched in with CBC Radio, so how can I be wrong?"

"Even worse is when a sailing is five minutes late and they still won't let you board it if you arrive a couple of minutes after cut-off. They are allowed to be late, but we aren't!" Helen charges.

Informality is a key feature of island relations (Bethel). Many islanders view bureaucratic organizations, formal structures, and the features typical of modern day neo-liberal audit culture as deeply alien to their small, oral cultures. As Bethel argues, islanders' rapport with one another is based on informal sociality, making room for eclectic needs, and local conventions, not on abstract impersonal rules mandated from afar. Thus the ferries – essential players in island life – are subject to the same expectations of informality. Ferry crews, after all, are most often islanders themselves, and it's easy for Ezra, Helen, Jim, and company to expect them to work their jobs according to the same cultural practices that regulate their behaviour as next-door neighbours. But the new accountability regime practiced by BC Ferries in the name of reliability, safety, and allegiance to Transport-Canada-mandated rules has greatly done away with that level of intense informality.

Another example of this turn toward formality and audit culture comes from Cortes Island – a small island of 900 residents located in Desolation Sound. Cortes Islanders have a tricky ferry route to handle. From Vancouver Island, they first need to catch a ferry to Quadra Island, then drive across Quadra and finally catch the ferry to their own island. As if that weren't enough, the trip to Cortes is rendered uncertain by rough waters and by a small vessel with a notorious reputation for overloads and sailing waits, especially during summer. The Cortes Island ferry crews are Cortes residents, and they never used to shy away from going the extra mile to help their neighbours.

The loading crew, collective memory has it, indeed used to do something that no safety manual writer would contemplate allowing. In order to allow an additional islander onboard after the car deck was filled to capacity, they would gingerly guide one more car down the loading ramp and get it to park its front axel on the ship's deck, where a couple of meters or so of space were still available behind the last regularly parked car. At the same time, the car's rear axel would still be on the loading ramp – on the dock, that is. In doing so they would ensure that the majority of the car's weight was on the ship, as opposed to the ramp. Then, as the driver applied the brakes, the captain would slowly creep the ferry forward. In doing that the car's front axel would serve as a pivot for the car's rear axel. The loading ramp would therefore literally slip under the car as the ferry left port, and in a matter of seconds the entire length of the car would be standing on the ferry deck.

No one does this any longer, of course. Fear of lawsuits over possible accidents has stopped all kinds of edgy practices like this. "And the fact that people these days drive nicer cars they don't want to see scratched has made all this even harder to contemplate," a Cortes Islander observed to me. Similar levels of inflexibility occur over other previously acceptable behaviours. It's now possible to get in trouble for drinking beer brought from home or for smoking a marijuana joint on the outer decks. While these practices are not yet entirely uncommon, zealous crews

have been known to come down on offenders, whereas this would have hardly occurred in the past. The times, ferries show us, they are a' changing.'

Time Machines

As is the case elsewhere, islanders of the BC coast settled their island communities with a clear intent: To live a way of life markedly different from that on the mainland. Whether the early wave of pioneers, or the later waves of back-to-the-landers, baby boomer retirees, and the creative class, all islanders who chose to relocate anywhere from Saturna Island to Haida Gwaii were keen on a fresh new start. Islands offer a unique symbolic space for those wishing to begin a new life tabula rasa (Baldacchino) and experiment with a different form of livelihood (Royle). But just as is the case elsewhere, islands of the BC Coast have to deal with enormous pressures to re-connect with the rest of the world. Islands experience pushes and pulls for connection and disconnection in dramatic ways (Baldacchino), ways which leave deep imprints on the fabric of everyday life.

Within any island social ecology, ferries play a key role in these processes of pushing and pulling islanders simultaneously closer to and farther from mainlands and larger urban centers. Because of their mundane visibility – they are, after all, on the horizon daily, if not hourly – ferries therefore tend to dominate islanders' concept of what their places are, what they could be, what they will be, and what they used to be. It is common for technologies of all kinds to acquire a sort of persona-like social standing. James Carey, for example, writes that technologies are often perceived as trickster-like figures because they can be so seductive with their promises and yet so elusive in delivering those promises. What I have tried to show in these pages is how the ferries of British Columbia play a similar trickster-like role: That of time machines. A time-machine – whether it is a looking glass that allows us to peek into the future or a concoction to allow us to travel into the past – doesn't quite exist. In other words, it doesn't quite have the power to work the way we think it might. Yet the possibility of its existence is captivating enough that it exists in the social imaginary: In myth, legends, and fantasy.

BC Ferries are a kind of a time machine. On one hand, the ferries operated by BC Ferries Inc. promise islanders and coasters a better future. In places where the economy has been destabilized by the decline of fishing, logging, and mining, ferry mobility has come to signify a way out of financial doldrums. By allowing commuting, as well as by promising to bring in tourists, ferries have essentially promised islanders and coasters economic salvation. But on the other hand, that promise has begotten dependence. Easy access has meant having to de-localize the character of spatial mobility, thus reducing its idiosyncrasies in the name of improving reliability and accountability. As ferries have progressively lost their anchoring in

local culture and begun to resemble expressions of predictable, commodified, uniform consumer culture, locals have begun to look at the ferries as Trojan Horses of a future Disneyfied, McDonaldized version of place. Thus in the same breath, as years go by, ferries of the past begin to occupy a melancholic presence in local collective memory. The way the ferries used to be – unfancy, simple, laid-back, but seemingly so "authentic" – thus symbolizes the way island life used to be, in all its unglorious, unshiny, unassuming, rough-around-the-edges character. And the way the ferries are, fears grow, might just be a worrying sign of the way island life is going to become.

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Technology

Photo by Ted Bishop

Our Bikes Are Us: Speed, Motorcycles, and the American Tradition of a 'Democratic' Technology[1]

Klaus Benesch

> "Motorcycle culture retains a dim remembrance of the more involving character of the old machines." (Crawford 67)
>
> "For a lot of reasons that are often contradictory, the sight and sound of a man on a motorcycle has an unpleasant effect on the vast majority of Americans who drive cars." (Thompson 92)

In 1903 an anonymous commentator wrote in the British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*: "Our centuries-old instincts are shaken by seeing that everything on the road is faster than the horse; but as soon as our senses are educated, we'll recognize the fact that speed in itself is not dangerous; rather the inability to stop is what's dangerous." Worried by the rapidly growing number of cars, motorcycles and omnibuses on English roads, the author expresses a widespread concern about the social and psychological consequences of speed and mobility in modern society. By the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, "speed" machines, such as cars and motorcycles, had become the most visible marker of technological change; what is more, to many – both in Europe and the United States – they actually represented the ultimate shaping force of modernity itself. Small wonder that the need to "educate" the senses and to provide means of bracing our brains against the accelerating rhythm of modern life loomed large in the minds of educators, journalists, and writers of popular fiction. Numerous handbooks, school primers and heaps of adventure dime novels competed to capture the new, fast-paced, technological spirit of the times. With equal frequency, their authors expounded the danger of reckless driving, of speeding for speed's sake, and they criticized the

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modern confusion (to retool Thoreau's earlier prophetic phrasing) of technological means with cultural ends.[2]

Modernist avant-gardes likewise responded to the new phenomenon of speed. The Futurists, to name just one famous example, declared, in Marinetti's famous *Manifesto* of 1909, "that the world's magnificence has [now] been enriched by a new beauty. The beauty of speed. […] We want to hymn the man at the wheel who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit" (21). If the Futurists' wedding of art, subject-body and speed-machine stands out as a rather extreme case of what Enda Duffy recently called modernism's "adrenaline aesthetic" (3), American modernists such as William Carlos Williams, John Dos Passos, Hart Crane, Earnest Hemingway or William Faulkner, proffered their own personal views of the forming and de-forming power of speed. By translating the dynamics of metropolitan life into kinetic forms of verbal construction, they registered an interest in speed that permeated virtually all levels of modern American society.[3]

Historically, the growing importance of speed is closely linked to the introduction of new and faster means of transportation. Inventions such as the railway, the motorcycle, the automobile, and – somewhat later – the airplane dramatically altered the way in which people perceived the world: physically, they shaped and transformed the landscape by requiring a grid of extended tracks and roads and, psychologically, they changed human perception by destabilizing the relation between the fast-riding passenger and the world outside. The impact of these inventions went well beyond the fact of their physical existence to challenge perceptions of both self and the world. Though the modern preoccupation with speed is often associated with the new, twentieth-century machine technology, the wonderment and awe evoked by airplanes or the record-setting internal combustion engine automobiles were anticipated, in the pre-industrial era, by the introduction of the railroad. Emerson, who invested some of his earnings in railroad stocks, famously acknowledged the creative potential of speed and its power to change our perception of the world. "What new thoughts are suggested," he asks when looking at the fast-moving cars of the Boston-Concord railroad, "by seeing a face of country quite familiar in the rapid movement of the railroad car?" (40). In 1925 Alfred North Whitehead, pondering the role of science in the modern world, echoed Emerson's earlier observation. "In the past," he claimed, "human life was lived in the bullock cart; in the future it will be lived in an aeroplane; and the change of speed amounts to a difference in quality" (137).

[2] "Our inventions are pretty toys," Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at" (49).

[3] For an account of how speed and modernist writing intersect, see Tichi.

By then, first-hand experience with rapid movement had already become common coin. All kinds of technical and cultural changes had conjoined to generate new, as yet unforeseen experiences of speed for the masses. At the end of the 1920s, Americans were riding on turbine-driven high-speed trains, ate fast-food in streamlined diners or rushed to work in the latest Ford, Chrysler, or GM models. While thus embedded in a network of cultural forces that continuously heightened the modern sensibility for speed (from Taylorist efficiency politics to the advent of "moving" pictures), the motorcar spelled out so much more than merely a faster means of transportation: not only did it represent the ultimate modernist machine, it also rerouted the various, often contradicting connotations of speed into immense personal pleasure.[4] As Duffy remarks,

> already by World War I it was clear that the automobile was the most characteristic and most desired commodity of all in this new age of mass consumerism. However – and crucially – the car, while offering itself as the ultimate fetish of the commodity age, went beyond the commodity form to embody something more: it offered not the mere pleasure of ownership but, more, the possibility of the new pleasure of speed." (8)

If this is true for the automobile, it is true as well for its track-bound predecessor and, even more so, for its as-of-now "unredeemed" technological twin, the motorcycle. In fact, with respect to speed and its capacity to generate immediate, physical pleasure, a motorcycle ride is clearly superior to the experience of speeding in a car, where the ride is cushioned by a ton of steel and glass. And while cars have sometimes undergone considerable modification by their owners (as in stock cars or Chicano low-riders), motorcycles are equally known to invite individual tinkering and tune-ups. Contrary to the automobile, however, two-wheeled speed machines have never really made it into society's mainstream. Even today, where they have largely become toys for middle-aged, middle-class males deprived of their earlier counter-cultural identities by steady, well-paying jobs, motorcycles remain a minor phenomenon in much of the Western world.[5] Relegated to either the racing tracks or the world of weekend cruising and vacationing, they are now rarely studied as symbolic tools to achieve cultural authority and authenticity. Though increasingly marginal with respect to sales figures and their presence on American

[4] Though the new era of speed provided ostensible practical benefits, such as faster, more efficient means of transportation, it also led to a significant tightening of social control (specifically with regard to the workplace) and general 'angst' accompanying rapid social and cultural change. See, among others, Rabinbach and Seltzer.

[5] In Asia, Africa, and many Third World countries motorcycles, because of their lower costs, small size, and general agility, are still conspicuously present in public traffic and transportation. Cf. Alford and Ferriss 39-43.

roads, motorcycles, I want to argue, have served the dual purpose of symbolically enacting two seemingly antagonistic cultural stances: rebellion against mainstream capitalist America (often in the guise of Detroit car culture) and, simultaneously, a reinforcement of genuine American values, particularly, the idea of a "democratic" technology. If the former has repeatedly been the subject of scholarly inquiry, the latter – the bike's role as representative of a Jeffersonian, pragmatist tradition in technology – stands in need of closer attention.[6]

My discussion of the new experience of speed in American culture thus turns, for one, on the very ambiguity of the phenomenon itself. Critics, writers, and artists recognized the fascination and beauty of speed, but also its threat. What they feared was precisely the "inability to stop," in other words, a loss of steerage and control. Therefore, they advocated either a utilitarian, democratic use of speed (as in adventure dime novels such as the popular *Tom Swift* series) or a temporary stop, a moment of reflection to regain what was lost in the onrush of modern life (an important theme in William Carlos Williams' poem "The Right of Way"). For another, however, speed machines such as cars and motorcycles have been powerful signifiers in their own right, inscribed with all sorts of cultural meaning and values. As to the motorcycle, its social function appears to be rather muddled: if its "outlaw" status foregrounds the modern subject's desire for identity and authenticity, motorcycles serve equally well to regulate and "contain" that very desire, either by way of the social marginalization of the biker as rebel or – perhaps even more successfully – through the encompassing commodification of biking and its cooption into mainstream capitalist culture. Moreover, motorcycles also send contradictory signals with respect to their status as sophisticated, engineered machines. Their staggering technical complexity notwithstanding, they have long been associated with a kind of low-tech, home-spun mechanical quality that invites the owner to engage in an intimate, "technical" relationship with the machine. By emphasizing the mechanical skills and grass-roots ingenuity of the average biker, motorcycle culture often involves a "democratic" approach to technology that runs counter to the staggering specialization and differentiation one finds at work in the larger technological and scientific sphere. Hence the motorcycle's appeal among cultural philosophers and proponents of a "know-how" approach to technology such as Robert Pirsig or, more recently, Matthew Crawford, who advocate, among other things, a more direct involvement of the individual with his/her technical environment. Both writers imagine the motorcycle as a kind of technological "other" outside of capitalist mass production and money-making – which, of course, it is not and never has been.

And yet, given the striking identification between rider and machine, it seems that motorcycles carry special meaning for both the history of technology and mo-

[6] On Jefferson's notion of a 'democratic' technology, see Meier.

dernity.[7] As veritable "adrenaline" machines they cater to a Romantic craving for authenticity and transcendence, a deeply rooted desire to leave the constraints of the material world behind and, through acceleration and velocity, retrieve aspects of an original, authentic self. And as manifestations of an accessible, affordable, and – by and large – controllable (speed) machine, they embody the resilience and longevity of the Jeffersonian notion of a "democratic" technology. In the remainder of this essay, I comment on both aspects by juxtaposing chronologically and formally widely differing texts, in which both speed and motorcycles take center stage. Each can be read as cultural commentary on the role of automotive technology in modern society, but also as a variant of America's ambiguous love affair with the motorcycle.

At Republican Speed

If the railroad ushered in the nemesis of the Romantic era, the automobile turned out to be its belated twentieth-century incarnation. Epitomizing freedom and authenticity, of being somehow exempt from the sham, corrupted ways of modern society, motorcars are virtually Romantic "dream" machines. As Phil Patton reminds us, the automobile from its beginnings "was not associated so much with a vision of some modernistic future, but with the restoration of old values – the values that the railroad and big business had destroyed, the values of the frontier and the individual" (41). The unprecedented and well-nigh incredible rapidity of the automobile clearly added to its identification with a "new" frontier. Early on, the history of car culture ties in with the history of racing, as in the famous Paris-Bordeaux-Paris race, launched in 1895, the Chicago Times-Herald Race (also 1895), or the New York-Buffalo Endurance Run of 1901. Demonstrably faster than either the horse or the railroad, motorcars were built for speed. Although newspapers occasionally printed editorials denouncing speed excesses and careless driving, public opinion in America was practically unanimous, according to historian James Flink, "in recognizing the automobile as a legitimate pleasure vehicle and as destined to a great future in the commercial world" (19). What is more, the automobile became a symbol and a cult object in its own right. To people of all classes, it represented the ultimate "democratic" transportation machine, the technological manifestation of personal freedom and the pursuit of happiness. In 1910, some 458,000 motor vehicles were registered in the United States, making America the world's first and foremost automobile culture.[8]

[7] "Our bikes," claims Sonny Barger, the former president of the outlaw motorcycle gang Hell's Angels, "are *us*" (2).

[8] See Wilson 26.

While Americans were eager to adopt the automobile as a "democratic" technology for the masses, regulating the increasing number of motor vehicles was a problem. As of 1902, only four states had passed any special regulations governing the use of automobiles. By 1906, most states allowed a maximum speed of 20 to 25 miles per hour on the open highway, given the often narrow, winding roads of the day, the very limit of safety. Speed limits and the licensing of motor vehicle operators notwithstanding, inconsiderate drivers constituted a major danger to pedestrians and horse-drawn traffic. Against this backdrop of growing public sensitivity to the danger of speed, science fiction dime novels and serialized adventure stories began to instruct their adolescent readers in the "politically correct" use of fast vehicles, such as cars and motorcycles. To negotiate tensions between "old" and "new" means of transportation and to reduce risks caused by excessive speeding they often downplayed the car's role as modern pleasure machine. Instead, they emphasized the driver's social responsibility by appealing to a modern version of American republican ethics.

The most successful and long lasting of these publications were the dime novels featuring a young, adventurous inventor by the name of Tom Swift. The series started in 1910, with a story of how Tom built his own motorcycle, and was only discontinued in 1992, after a total of 95 published issues. Like its predecessor of the 1890s, the famous *Frank Reade, Jr. Library*, the *Tom Swift* series followed the pattern of the adventure story set against a geographical background. The novels also introduced cutting-edge machines and devices that covered almost every aspect of modern technology, from cars and motorcycles, to motorboats, airships, submarines, robots, an electric rifle or a photo telephone. Designed to uplift and entertain young, predominantly male readers, the *Tom Swift* series fully embodied the mores and attitudes of its times. Like all popular literature, it also became an important repository of contemporary cultural behavior and conflict.

Tom Swift and His Motor-Cycle, the series' premiere issue of 1910, turns entirely on the values of republican America: utilitarianism, self-reliance, antitrust sentiments, democratic technology, a fixation on the nuclear family, and, finally, the ideal of the common man. Moreover, these values are directly linked to the new phenomenon of speed. While Tom is a model republican whose fascination with rapid movement is constantly curbed by his utilitarian, democratic frame of mind, Andy Folger, the unruly scion of a local robber baron and Tom's opponent in the novel, is a veritable speed-addict: his is an irresponsible, self-centered obsession with speeding for speed's sake. In the opening chapter Andy almost crashes his car to "see what time I can make to Mansburg! I want to break a record, if I can" (Appleton 2). When he later tries to blame the incident on the young inventor, Tom briskly challenges his Social-Darwinist interpretation of speed laws: "'You automobilists take too much for granted! You were going faster than the legal rate, anyhow! … Me getting in your way! I guess I've got some rights on the road!' 'Aw,

go on!' growled Andy … 'Bicycles are a back number anyhow'" (Appleton 4). Though cars figure as aggressive and, therefore, potentially dangerous vehicles, they clearly also represent America's technological future. By 1910 swiftness and velocity have already become indelible ingredients of modern America (just note the hero's telling, eponymous name). Yet speed, according to this and many other boys' books of the era, can never be an end in itself. To make it acceptable as a form of shared cultural behavior, it needed be contained within a utilitarian, goal-oriented social framework.

Much of the novel's plot is centered around a corporate conspiracy against the self-taught inventors, Tom and his father, who are on the brink of patenting a cheaper, more economical engine for an American version of the "Volkswagen." In this Fordist tale of early automotive culture, cars are often driven by the bad guys, the representatives of corporate power and special interest, who indulge in reckless driving, while the common man, either on foot or on his bike, is run over. In contrast with the secretiveness of the motorcar, whose shaded windows are apt to conceal the evil agents of corporate capitalism, the novel proffers Tom's make-shift motorcycle as a genuinely "democratic" machine: what you see, is what you get! Not only is its rider positioned in plain view of the public, contrary to most automobilists, Tom is fully in control of the technical aspects of his vehicle. Hence his self-reliance and practical authority, features he shares with famous American inventors from Franklin to Edison, or, more recently, Buckminster Fuller. Tom's love of machinery and his pragmatic expertise is played out in several episodes involving unwitting African Americans, women, and old-fashioned townsfolk, all of whom seem totally devoid of the technical know-how essential in an age of automotive mobility. As can be seen in Andy's appeal to the car's cultural superiority ("bicycles are a back number anyhow"), the notion of unstoppable technological progress looms large in the novel. Against this evolutionary backdrop, motorcycles, for one, figure as powerful representatives of the new age of technology; yet, for another, they are also carriers of the old values of the frontier, self-reliance and individual autonomy. As manifestations of automotive technology they are clearly contemporaneous with the motorcar; with respect to their social inscription as democratic machines, however, motorcycles are as yet strikingly untouched by the corruptive practices of automobile production. For what may well have been the first time ever, *Tom Swift and His Motor-Cycle* powerfully foregrounds the complex symbolic mission of the motorcycle within modern American car culture: while being themselves high-tech products of corporate capitalism, motorcycles retain an inkling of an older, more encompassing meaning of the machine as 'democratic' technology. In doing so, they have repeatedly become entangled, for better or worse, in social commentary and counter-cultural criticism of America's capitalist lifestyle.

Motorcycles and/as Cultural Philosophy

While early twentieth-century dime novels such as *Tom Swift and His Motor-Cycle* focused on the social regulation of the new phenomenon of speed, inscribing it with Jeffersonian values and the notion of utilitarian, democratic technology, later commentators on culture and mobility often emphasized our "inability to stop." William Carlos Williams' 1923 poem "The Right of Way" is a case in point. The poem is composed of a series of independent snapshots taken at intervals of stops and crossings from within a driving car. One is immediately struck with the perfect formal enactment of what Cecelia Tichi has called the "rapid-transit moment" (230) an aesthetics of speed and ongoing transition that characterizes much of modernist writing. By avoiding diverting images, Williams allows the moments recorded in "Right of Way" to stand on their own. In fact, narrative possibility is thwarted to such a degree that the minimalist poem barely escapes banality. As we move forward, together with the nameless driver/poet, nothing actually is going to happen. The only reason for the poem to exist, it seems, is its own movement, the endlessly prolonged experience of spinning and speeding: Why bother where I went? / for I went spinning on the / four wheels of my car / along the wet road until / I saw a girl with one leg / over the rail of a balcony (Williams 120).

If "The Right of Way" embodies both formally and thematically the modern dynamics of quasi-photographic, split-second representation of the world outside, it also enacts a moment of rest. What, one is led to ask, is the girl's intention? Will she jump? Or, less dramatically, is she simply about to retrieve a fallen object? To ask these questions is perhaps to miss the point. For the "sharp, masculine eye" of the modern, as Santayana put it, all would be part of the same nameless spectacle: dramatic, rapid, vulgar (qtd. in Tichi 233). And yet, the poem unmistakably calls for a "stop," an interruption of the rapid transit experience that allows us to name and reflect what otherwise would be lost in the endless stream of modern life. In the theoretical statement preceding the poem, Williams urges us to "revalue" experience as well as to "revivify" our values: "The virtue of … improvisations," he concludes, "is their placement in a world of new values – their fault is their dislocation of sense" (119).

In 1974, when Robert M. Pirsig's widely popular *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* was published, Williams' call to revalue our experience of speed and mobility in modern society had taken an entirely new turn, a turn that led us away from the automobile altogether towards its older technological kin, the motorcycle. By the mid-1960s, cars had become the universal means of transportation that early turn-of-the-century manufacturers had hoped for. In fact, they were now so commonplace that artistic interest in the effects of rapid movement was dwindling. Most states had long instituted severe speed limits and reckless driving was relegated to the racing tracks. What is more, many Americans

began to have second thoughts about the automobile industry and its product. Disenchantment with Detroit's production and sales policies, as well as socio-cultural and environmental issues, caused consumers increasingly to rebel, as George Romney, the president of American Motors, put it, "against the size, large horsepower and the excessive styling changes made each year by many auto manufacturers" (qtd. in Flink 194). Yet even though sociological studies such as Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) or *The Waste Makers* (1960) softened the identification of Americans with the motorcar, its fetishization as an icon of freedom and authenticity persisted. If the car was defiled by the practices of mass consumption, its mythical connotation survived in the literature of the Beat movement, in countless low-budget, independent road movies, and in the reckless stockcar drivers of the South.

To some, however, the motorcycle represented a more adequate symbol of what W. T. Lhamon, Jr. has called "deliberate speed," a cultural style that dominated much of the 1950s and persisted, though it now moved from oppositional culture to mainstream, well into the 1960s.[9] One reason for the motorcycle renaissance of the 1950s and 1960s had thus to do with the fact that the bike became a powerful symbol of liberation and escape from the bleakness of suburban America. Fomented by the restlessness and pent-up anger of World War II veterans and scattered loosely over California and the Midwest, motorcycle clubs also represented a growing divide between the American middle class and the social fringe. In films such as *The Wild One* (1954), motorcycle culture not only took a ride on the "wild side," it signaled the existence of a menacing countercultural lifestyle that posed a subliminal threat to many postwar Americans. Predicated on violence, sexual permissiveness, and youthful rebellion against consumerism and middle-class values, two-wheeled outlaw culture repeatedly provoked harsh reactions from middle-class America. For those involved with the Hells Angels and similar motorcycle clubs, the bike became the pivot around which their anti-authoritarian, rebellious identities revolved. For the average car driver, on the other hand, "the sight and sound of a man on a motorcycle," as Hunter S. Thompson reminds us, rather "had an unpleasant effect" (92). The growing cultural divide between motorcyclists and car drivers eventually tipped over into the kind of deadly, irrational hostility against bikers that we find in the despairing final scene of Dennis Hopper's road movie *Easy Rider* (1969).

Easy Rider clearly reinforces well-known stereotypes about motorcycle culture's alleged lawlessness, its inclination for sexually loose behavior and drugs (in-

[9] In his path-breaking study of speed as the 1950s' dominant cultural style, W. T. Lhamon, Jr. argues that after 1955, American culture "became demonstrably speedier in style, delivery, and cycles because it was inevitably starting to represent the megapolitan, geographic, and demographic development of the postwar period" (7).

cluding drug trafficking), and its adoration for the machine as an indelible part of the biker's personality. Yet what the film also foregrounds is the idea of the motorcycle as a philosophical tool, a means to a new form of enlightenment and spiritual revelation. Hence the film's obscure, and, for contemporary viewers, rather tedious psychedelic sequences and roadside philosophical inquiry. And hence the quasi-religious pattern that has the two leading characters, Billy (as in Billy the Kid) and Wyatt ("Captain America"), achieve spiritual regeneration only at the cost of bodily violence and, ultimately, death.[10] At the end of a detailed discussion of the film's psychedelic aspects, particularly the rock group Steppenwolf's lead song from the soundtrack, Steven Alford and Suzanne Ferriss conclude that the somber ending suggests "that complete transcendence through the motorcycle remains either a dream or a delusion" (138). Though right on target with respect to the formal aesthetics of the film, their verdict does not seem to have registered with a number of subsequent books on motorcycling and philosophy such as Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values* (1974) or, more recently, Ted Bishop's *Riding with Rilke: Reflections on Motorcycles and Books* (2005), Craig Bourne's *Philosophical Ridings: Motorcycles and the Meaning of Life* (2007), and Matthew Crawford's *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry Into the Value of Work* (2009) whose subtitle loudly resonates with Pirsig's earlier inscription of the cycle as harbinger of new social skills and values. Though differing in their intellectual keenness and the actual philosophic insight they provide, all these texts proffer the experience of riding and/or maintaining a bike as central to a holistic, spiritually rewarding lifestyle. And while all of them acknowledge the heterogeneity and diversity of motorcycle culture itself, they seem to agree that the bike stands out among modern speed machines as a spiritual power source that provides moments of transcendence and authenticity within our otherwise staggeringly inauthentic, alienated lives.

In Pirsig's groundbreaking *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* the focus is on the bike's capacity to make us *see* again, that is, to make us perceive the world from an unmediated, more involved perspective than the one allowed to the driver/passenger positioned inside the iron cage of a car:

> You see things vacationing on a motorcycle in a way that is completely different from any other. In a car you're always in a compartment, and because you're used to it you don't realize that through that car window everything you see is just more TV. You're a passive observer and it is all moving by you boringly in a frame. (12)

[10] In merging the pleasure of riding, speed, sublime nature, and the sacrificial death of the outlaw individual the film's highly symbolic ending provided a kind of template for the modern association of motorcycles with rebellion and otherness.

Pirsig registers an experience of physical alienation that dates back to the earliest days of modern mass transportation. That the view from a passing railroad car could change the way people saw the landscape was a well-known fact among early travelers. At even the relatively moderate speed of 30 miles per hour, passengers experienced an enchantment and an annihilation of space and time that contemporary travelers often associated with a state of trance. "The railway journey," as historian of technology David Nye points out,

> erased the foreground and the local disappeared from the traveler's experience, while only a few scenes appeared worthy of notice … This editing of the landscape, framed by the windows of railway cars, transformed the journey into the opportunity to see a limited number of sites … The traveler was isolated from the passing scene, viewing it through plate glass, and could easily fall into a reverie, feeling that the train was stationary while the landscape rushed by. (15)

If nineteenth-century railroad passengers enjoyed the newness of taking in the landscape as a series of individual images, rather than as an encompassing, holistic environment, modern car drivers have become passive spectators utterly distanced from the real world "out there." Motorcycles, as Pirsig and subsequent philosophers of riding argue, are uniquely equipped to heal the modern ailment of mediated perception. Though sprung from the same line of technical inventions as the motorcar, motorcycles overcome the separation between rider and environment by exposing the rider to the elements and the road in a fashion unmatched by any other form of modern transportation: "on a cycle the frame is gone," Pirsig writes, "you're completely in contact with it all. You're *in* the scene, not just watching it" (12).

To recalibrate our vision so that we once again see what we were trained, according to Pirsig, "*not* to see" (13), it also takes a conscious decision of the rider to not travel on freeways and "good" roads, but opt instead for the secondary county roads, the ones that slow you down and leave you uncertain as to your actual direction. These "slow" roads are veritable training tracks for the uninitiated rider who wants to hone his/her sense of place, of *here*- and *now*ness:

> These roads are truly different from the main ones. The whole pace of life and personality of the people who live along them are different. They're not going anywhere. They're not too busy to be courteous. The hereness and nowness of things is something they know all about. It's the others, the ones who moved to the cities years ago and their lost offspring, who have all but forgotten it. (13)

Pirsig conceives of side roads and freeways and of motorcycles and cars as representations of a classic dichotomy of different visions of reality and, ultimately,

forms of knowledge. In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* he pits the dominant scientific worldview (represented by Pirsig's fellow riders, John and his wife) against what he calls "immediate artistic reality" (61), the unconditioned immersion of the self in the environment that then triggers a spontaneous, intuitive response to the world out there. Pirsig labels these different approaches to reality the "classical" and the "romantic" mode of thinking. Both attitudes, he maintains, generate specific gains and losses, and both are usually conceived of as incommensurable with each other. As his philosophic tale of riding and motorcycle maintenance unfolds it becomes increasingly clear that Pirsig's is an attempt to bridge these opposite world views, to wed the scientific with the inspirational mode and thus open up entirely new roads to perceive self and world.

The technical demands of the motorcycle, its meticulous maintenance and tune-up, are crucial factors in bringing about not only a new vision of things, but the symbiosis of intuition and deductive reasoning, of art and science. Made of steel, rubber, and numerous interacting mechanical as well as electrical component parts a motorcycle "functions entirely in accordance with the laws of reason;" the art of motorcycle maintenance can thus be taken as a "miniature study of the art of rationality itself" (98). What is more, to include the things with which rationality deals (such as motorcycles) may help to prevent the confusion and misunderstanding that often arise from abstract discussions of rationality:

> We are at the classic-romantic barrier now, where on one side we see a cycle as it appears immediately – and this is an important way of seeing it – and where on the other side we can begin to see it as a mechanic does in terms of underlying form – and this is an important way of seeing things too. These tools for example – this wrench – has a certain romantic beauty to it, but its purpose is always purely classical. It's designed to change the underlying form of the machine. (98)

The proper mode of approaching technology in the form of a motorcycle is thus not to have your vision limited by either classic rationality or a romanticizing about shapes and form. What it takes instead is an understanding of the rational function of its various component parts coupled with a comprehension of their underlying concept or idea. While his fellow rider John looks at the machine and "sees steel in various shapes and has negative feelings about these steel shapes," Pirsig looks at the shapes of the steel and sees "ideas": "He thinks I'm working on *parts*. I'm working on *concepts*" (100). To think of a broken or worn-out part in terms of its place within the larger scheme of transferring power from the engine to the wheels of the bike is fundamental to Pirsig's Zen-inspired, phenomenological worldview. Once we arrive at an understanding of the bike as a complex interplay of mechanical, chemical, and electrical parts we are also able to balance rationality and intui-

tion, to connect the crude rituals of motorcycle maintenance, on the one hand, to the magic of flying on a well-tuned, calmly throbbing machine through the American West, on the other. True, Pirsig's project to overcome the modern divide between reason and intuition, intellect and emotion, is itself utterly Romantic. Just note Edgar Allan Poe's notion of "ratiocination," a combination of deductive reasoning and artistic inspiration as embodied by Poe's fictional alter ego the artist-turned-detective figure Dupin, or his attempt to join art and science in the strikingly original prose poem "Eureka" (1848). Yet this time around it is not the willpower and creativity of the Romantic artist but the rider's intimate technical knowledge and control of his motorcycle that provide a new, encompassing vision of reality.

Pirsig's discussion of the interfaces of motorcycling and philosophy repeatedly evokes aspects of a "democratic" technology. Through a direct involvement with the mechanical intricacies of the cycle, self-conscious riders attain a level of authority and agency that is otherwise hard to find in advanced, highly differentiated industrial societies. Insofar as *Zen and the Art of Motorcycling* joins the human to the machine in an attempt to elucidate the underlying philosophical principle of both (again a genuinely Romantic project), it also promotes a program to undo the staggering alienation and isolation of what Herbert Marcuse poignantly called "one-dimensional man." As Marcuse famously argued, "today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine and over the technical organization of the apparatus." Given the blatant politicization of the technological in modern capitalist society, Marcuse pushed on to theorize technology itself as harbinger and lever of social change: To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man" (3). Matthew Crawford's recent study *Shop Class as Soulcraft* picks up on this idea to take it into the realm of social engineering and pedagogy. In keeping with Pirsig's "mechanical" philosophy, Crawford emphasizes the value of mechanical labor, particularly with respect to motorcycle repair. Motorcycles and motorcycle maintenance, he argues, retain aspects of an older form of mechanical labor that we now rarely find in the largely computerized repair work done on cars. On one level, Crawford's claim that the individual greatly benefits from the experience of manual work and that therefore the social good of shop class pedagogy at college level is – at best – underrated adds to an ongoing effort by critics of capitalist consumption to undo the consumer's passivity and reinstitute at least some control over his/her material environment. Dismissing the premium put on creativity in contemporary capitalist culture (specifically in the realm of economics and information technology), Crawford believes that the mechanical arts carry "special significance for our time because they cultivate not creativity, but the less glamorous virtue of attentiveness. Things need fixing and tending no less than creating" (82). Predicated on passive consumption and the continuous replacement of things that have become broken or dysfunctional, the modern personality is preempted from

any form of technical self-reliance and agency; though frequently fascinated by the latest technological gadgets, we are with equal frequency at a complete loss as to their underlying constructive idea or concept.

To regain a more authoritative grasp on the material world, Crawford recommends the handling of things – to *do* them rather than merely think about or theorize them. Yet his fervent plea for shop class education largely romanticizes the agency and control mechanical skills can provide in today's technoculture.[11] Even though the recent economic and financial crisis may have opened the door for a reconsideration of the value of manual work, making it possible once again for people "to think the thought, 'Let me make myself useful'," the book's motto, "to begin to fix things for ourselves" (10), strikes me as – by and large – anachronistic and naïve.

On yet a different level, however, *Shop Class as Soulcraft* powerfully attests to the longevity and resilience of the cultural myth of the motorcycle as democratic machine. Jefferson, America's earliest distinguished spokesman, for a "democratic technology," according to Hugo Meier, had always been in favor of inventions that were simple, cheap, and adaptable to the most common purposes. "A smaller agent, applicable to our daily concerns," he encouraged the young inventor of his time, "is infinitely more valuable than the greatest which can be used only for great objects. For these interest the few alone, the former the many" (qtd. in Meier 23). Though ridden largely in the shadow of the dominant car culture, motorcycles have proved to be powerful symbols of democratic values such as self-reliance, authenticity, and authority. There are numerous conflicting interpretations of how and why they have become such long-lasting repositories of cultural values. Discussing the difference between active engagement and distracted consumption, Matthew Crawford mentions an advertising poster for the Yamaha Warrior that he spotted in a 2007 issue of the journal *Motor Cyclist*. The caption reads: "Life is what you make it. Start making it your own." The poster features a guy in his home shop adding after-market parts to his Warrior; cluttered across an ancient workbench and shelves are well-used tools as well as all kinds of motorcycle parts. A smaller caption then claims: "The 102-cubic-inch fuel-injected Warrior. We built it. You make it your own." Finally, in even smaller print, the ad ends on a cautionary note: "You only got one shot at life – may as well make it mean something" (66-67). That we can *make it our own* and thus make it *mean* something to us perhaps explains best how the motorcycle has survived on the myth of being a truly "democratic" machine. What the ad – *ipso facto* – suggests, however, is that the bike's

[11] Significantly, Crawford's own experience as a mechanic is in repairing and rebuilding classic motorcycles (trained as an academic with a Ph.D. in political philosophy, Crawford runs his own independent motorcycle repair shop in Richmond, Virginia).

liberating, democratic potential, like all myths, might well have been only a delusion and dream – ride on!

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Tempo Giusto: The Art of the Slow Ride

Ted Bishop

In *Riding with Rilke*: *Reflections on Motorcycles and Books* I began to think about the relations of speed and space and pleasure. As a new motorcyclist I wanted to learn to ride better, which I thought meant riding faster; on my trip from Alberta to Texas I honed my skills, and finally, out in the desert, I found that sensation of slow in speed and the euphoria that goes with it. I wrote:

> I found myself going a little faster, a little faster, a little faster … My memory of the country is a blur – bright creek, slender pines – grabbed in laser-glimpses between corners. I tried to ride fast and stay off the brake, fast and smooth, using the Duc's linear power. I kept it in third where it pulls hard all the way from 50 to 130, and when you back off it's like throwing out an anchor. This is why riders love big twins. Then I blew by a slow camper, snapped down my visor, and dived into a bend at 140 – and found *everythingoingintoslowmo*. Instead of feeling fast it felt like I could get up, do a tap dance on the tank, smoke a Havana cigar, get back down and finish the corner with time for a snack. Glorious. Better than drugs. (52-53)

That speed-fuelled thrill was of course what I had been hoping for, something read about, heard about from other riders, the way you go to Paris anticipating the Eiffel Tower. What caught me off-guard was the silence and stillness of motorcycling. When people ask me what the book is about I say "The central thesis is that riding a motorcycle is just like working in an archive. Only different." I had discovered that

> silence surrounds them both. Motorcycling is not noisy. When you hit the starter, your breath merges with the sound of the bike, and once you're on the highway, the sound moves behind you, you ride in a cocoon of white noise. You get smells from the road side, and you feel the coolness in the dips and the heat off a rock face, but you don't get sound.
>
> The classical pianist Alfred Brendel once told a *New Yorker* interviewer, "I like the fact that 'listen' is an anagram of 'silent.' Silence is not something that is there before the music begins and after it stops. It is the essence of the music itself, the vital ingredient that makes it possible for the music to exist at all."
>
> He was speaking of classical piano concerts, but he could have been talking of the highway. (124-25)

When you go fast your focus narrows, your vision contracts, you see only the road and then only a portion of the road, you read tar strips and skiffs of gravel the way you would close-read a poem. When you stop your vision expands and you feel the space, the context, and, in the desert, your vulnerability. So I now appreciated the dichotomy of zooming and stopping, but I had not considered that there might be something in between: the unforced pleasure of the slow ride, a ride at a *tempo giusto*.

I met Joe at the Tynda rally in Eugene, Oregon. It attracts old BMWs with well-scarred panniers and decals from other continents. His blue Harley Springer Softtail was so shiny I had to put my sunglasses back on.

"I feel out of place here," he said. He sure looked out of place.

"It's okay, these people don't care how far you travel," I said, trying to make him feel better. It looked like his bike had left the showroom ten minutes ago.

"Well, I've just spent six weeks in Alaska," he said, "It's my third trip. Next time I want to go back and do the Cassiar Highway, through northern BC, into the Yukon." Alaska? That's hundreds of kilometres of gravel, sometimes mud, and even when there is pavement it is full of frost-heaves and pot holes. I said I thought you had to have a dual-sport to ride up there. I had always wanted to go but would never take my Ducati there.

Joe said, "You can go pretty much anywhere on a motorcycle as long as you take it slow, and that's what I do." The little road off the highway leading to the rally campground was two miles of *Slow to 35* corners. Motorcyclists love them – you gear down, speed up, and focus on the apex. It's a hard-wired response, genetically encoded. Humankind was made to zoom through the twisties, right?

Joe said, "Coming up the road to the campsite I was going about 40, just looking around. I loved the way the trees formed a canopy overhead." Canopy? What canopy? I remembered the dip and the sweet right-hander, but no trees. I vaguely recalled a green background. Over the next three days we rode in and out along that road and I slowed down instead of speeding up, ambled in third gear. Damned if Joe wasn't right. Canopy. Monumental cedars. Amazing.

Joe said, "I met these guys in Alaska who invited me to ride with them, and after about twenty minutes they stopped and said, 'You've got to ride faster. We go about 150.' I said, 'Well I ride 100 so you better go ahead.' Here in Oregon I ride *80*," he said, spreading his hands in a gesture of satisfaction with the wise state legislators, "Because I can."

He went on, "The driving is my sightseeing. I don't have the luxury Ducati Dave has of staying a few days in a place. I want to see it as I'm going through, not just have my nose to the road."

'Ducati' Dave was Dave Smith, who was going round the world on his 1967 Ducati 250. Where Joe's bike sparkled Dave's bike dripped. It was an assortment

of bits, with a spring-loaded single seat off an Enfield, a fuel filter hanging out in the breeze, and panniers that looked like ice buckets, loaded with tools. "It breaks down pretty well every day," he said, "But I can fix the simple stuff." That would give him a chance to take in his surroundings. He's in no hurry.

In my province I hear motorcyclists say, "Yeah, I went to Vegas straight down the freeway, 160 kmh all the way." Or, "I rode to Mexico City in three days." But these ride stories can take on the character of what my friend Steve calls "dick measuring" – My Odometer's Bigger than Your Odometer. What you never hear is, "Yep, I put together ten 300-kilometre days!" (Though in fact I've just read Simon Gandolfi's *Old Man on a Bike*, in which as a 73 year-old he rides from Veracruz Mexico to the tip of South America, often covering only 200 miles a day on his 125cc Honda. He has the right idea.) At the Oregon rally the conversation spread and soon everyone was telling me about someone who makes a policy of plonking along. "I've got a new Enfield at home that's perfect at 100 kmh … I know a guy in Germany who has 250,000 km on his Beemer and never goes over 110 … Have you seen Zdenek's Ural?" He had driven down from Vancouver in a new green Ural sidecar rig, "It's slow," he said simply. Doris Maron, who spent two years riding round the world, left her Honda ST1300 in camp to ride to dinner in the sidecar. She looked happy.

There are millions out there who live to ramble, not to race. This too is motorcycling. In fact if we admitted it, our iconic images of motorcycling from movies are of slow rides. *Easy Rider* featured endless takes of Captain America and Billy loping across the American south-west. These were the images that enthralled audiences in Europe and captured a generation at home. In Canada we had no buttes or mesas but it didn't matter. This was a landscape of the mind, and we savoured it. Speed wasn't part of it. In *The Wild One* Brando looks placid and unruffled as he rolls into Hollister (as well he might, since most of the motorcycle sequences were back-screen projection). He may be wild, but his riding is almost meditative. And in *Lawrence of Arabia* Peter O'Toole chuffs along on his Brough, moving briskly but not blasting down the country road. Though we know Lawrence is about to die, it is a sequence that makes us want to ride. A friend who was ride captain of his BMW club told me, "It was that scene that made me a motorcyclist." In Milan Kundera's novella *Slowness* the aristocratic French mistress says, "When we are too ardent, we are less subtle. When we rush to sensual pleasure, we blur all the delights along the way." That's it: we crave the blur of speed but we risk blurring the delights. We've all seen riders thrashing along a road, in feverish ungainly haste. What memory do they have, what pleasure did they take? Canadian philosopher Mark Kingwell says the longing for speed is innate, "We want to be velocitized." Yet he tells of the Belgian auto enthusiast Camille Jenatzy who in 1899 beat the existing speed record of 39.24 mph, had his record shattered a few weeks later, built a new car and won again with an astonishing 65.79 mph. But the name of his

new car? *La Jamais Contente* – "Never Happy." It's about pleasure. The luxury watches are the ones without second hands.

Italy, land of fast motorcycles, is also home to the Slow Food movement, started in the late 1980s by Carlo Petrini who was outraged by McDonalds setting up one of their fast food outlets by the Spanish Steps in Rome. The aim is to linger. Uwe Kliemt of the *Tempo Giusto* movement, dedicated to slowing down classical music says, "It is stupid to drink a glass of wine quickly. And it is stupid to play Mozart too fast" (Honoré 234). Even Frederick Seidel, the poet of motorcycles who says, "To go fast on two wheels is the point of life, isn't it?" and rode a hand-built MV Agusta, always admired "airplanes that flew low and slow. I envied a sportif young man I knew in Sagaponack, Long Island, who flew a vintage high-wing Piper Cub he owned just for the lazy pleasure of being up there in the Hamptons air." And "another kind of slow: I have always admired the beauty of the wooden sculling boats made by Graeme King in Putney, Vermont … They go fast, but they are slow. They fly through the water slowly, they whiz, stroke by stroke." But there's a prejudice against slowing down, says Canadian writer Carl Honoré, in his book *In Praise of Slow*, "Saying no to speed takes courage" (276). In fact slow can be downright dangerous – Joe the Harley rider says when he rides the speed limit people behind him get angry, ride his bumper, offer him the finger when they flick past.

Paul Virilio would argue that they have been culturally conditioned to do so. In *Speed and Politics* he insists that a national anthem "is only a road song, regulating the mechanics of the march" (21), and he ends his book with this declaration: "The violence of speed has become both the location and the law, the world's destiny and its destination" (151). Klaus Benesch in "Our Bikes Are Us: Speed, Motorcycles and the American tradition of a 'Democratic' Technology," articulates this further, showing how motorcycles have symbolically enacted "two seemingly antagonistic cultural stances: rebellion against mainstream America … and, simultaneously, a reinforcement of genuine American values." He points out that the "cultural imaginary" of motorcycles – as something outside capitalist mass production – has always been an illusion.

Virilio points out that, with the advent of artillery, a foot soldier now had only the time between the firing of one shell and the loading of the next one. The infantryman had to charge: Stasis was Death; Speed was Time, and more importantly Time directly torn from Death. The only safety on the battlefield lay in Speed. Speed rather than force, speed *as* force becomes the *sine qua non* of the modern militarized state. Mark Kingwell, reading Virilio, says the curve that dominates our age is the ballistic curve, first plotted in the 16th century, to help deliver canon payloads more accurately. "The two curves of speed and ballistics, the true golden arches, have never been far from the heart or war, our miserable keynote." Certainly the watchword today is not "survival of the fittest" but "survival of the fastest;"

George Clooney, as Ryan Bingham, the corporate downsizer who flies around the country firing people in the 2009 film *Up in the Air*, says, "The slower we move the faster we die."

Virilio argues that the political aim of the Volkswagen was to get people out on the road, "the government offer[ed] the German proletariat sport and transport" (25). The same process is enacted in America: you quell social dissent, do away with the "direct repression of riots, and the political discourse itself" (25) by offering mobility. He notes, "In the 1960s, when a rich American wanted to prove his social success, he bought not 'the biggest American car he could lay his hands on,' but a 'little European job,' faster, less limited. To succeed is to reach the power of greater speed, to have the impression of escaping the unanimity of civic training" (119).[1]

Benesch observes that in 1910 an astonishing 458,000 motor vehicles were registered in the United States, making it the first and foremost automobile culture. Culturally too this was affirmed by the Tom Swift novels, the first of which, *Tom Swift and his Motor-Cycle* appeared in 1910, back when motor-cycle was still hyphenated, not yet fully emerged from the motorized bicycle. This mechanization of the populace further supports the aims of the state: Virilio quotes the 1949 *Modern Arms and Free Men* by V. Bush, "Every corner garage … was a sort of centre of training, training that could be readily transformed in a short time, when the test came, into the ability to operate the complex implements of war" (27). The state co-opts this move toward pragmatic individualism, shaping it to its own ends.

When workers achieved their goal of the "revolution of three eights" – eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep, eight of leisure time, leisure meant paid vacation and paid vacation meant travel. But, says Virilio, "no one yet suspected that the 'conquest of the freedom to come and go' so dear to Montaigne could, by a sleight of hand, become an *obligation to mobility*" (28-30). The Marxist State first appears as "a totalitarianism very carefully programming and exploiting every form of *mass movement*," creating a nation on the move, constructing the proletariat as projectile (to go back to the infantryman charging artillery); and Virilio anticipates Clooney's frequent flyer:

> To the heavy model of the hemmed-in bourgeoisie, to the single schema of the weighty Marxist *mobil-machung* … the West has long opposed … a capitalism that has become one of jet-sets and instant-information banks, actually a whole *social illusion* subordinated to the strategy of the cold war. (118)

[1] In graduate school after a series of Volkswagens I did buy an old Alfa Romeo, in part, I now see, to set myself apart from the rabble, but Virilio would say I was just buying more deeply into the machinations of the state.

Virilio continues,

> Let's make no mistake: whether it's the drop-outs, the beat generation, automobile drivers, migrant workers, tourists, Olympic champions or travel agents, the military-industrial democracies have made every social category, without distinction into *unknown soldiers of the order of speeds* – speeds whose hierarchy is controlled more and more each day by the State (headquarters), from the pedestrian to the rocket, from the metabolic to the technological. (118)

Matthew B. Crawford, in *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, extols the virtues of hand work, of fixing things, of what Aristotle calls the 'stochastic' arts – those "pertaining to conjecture": like medicine in which failure is part of the process (81). Slow Mechanics, as it were, something intuitive and reflective, the opposite of the grinning idiots he recalls from Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, who make snap judgements and snap the heads off of bolts. But near the end of the book Crawford indulges in a smile that confirms Virilio: "People who ride motorcycles have gotten something *right*," Crawford says, "and I want to put myself in the service of it, this thing that we do, this kingly sport that is like war made beautiful" (196). A chilling echo of Marinetti. Writing thirty years before Crawford, Virilio had declared, "*In the current context, to disarm would thus mean first and foremost to decelerate,* to defuse the race toward the end" (137).

So take a slow ride. Decelerating, you become part of a multi-faceted movement – Slow Food, Slow Music, Slow Sex, of course, and Slow Cities. Even in fast cities you now find Slow Art Events. Appalled that the average person pauses less than eight seconds to take in a work of art, the adherents of Slow Art want to break the cycle of speeding through museums. On Slow Art Day (April 27 in 2013) patrons at the Tate Museum will be encouraged to look at five pieces of art slowly, for at least five to ten minutes, and then discuss them over lunch. But the experience needs not be organized; one basic principle is that exhibitions benefit from multiple viewings. As that old Campari ad said, "The first time is never the best." The aim, as my friend on the Harley said, is to slow down and see where you are at that moment.

There is even a Slow Web movement. One of its adherents, the company "iDoneThis," catalogs the things you've done each day – a useful service to keep team members up to date on what each member is doing without having to schedule yet another meeting: but what makes the company distinctive is its refusal to operate in nanoseconds. When they started in 2011 they wrote at the bottom of every email, "iDoneThis is a part of the slow web movement. After you email us, your calendar is not updated instantaneously. But rest up, and you'll find an updated calendar when you wake." They also promote "Friendship, not networking," a

slower process. The dedication to Slow can continue beyond death. Hungarian Frigyes Karinthy, who wrote about the experience of a brain-tumor operation without anaesthetic in *A Journey Round My Skull*, tells the superintendent at the Kerepesi cemetery in Budapest that he is opposed to cremation:

> It seemed to me an act of violence … I was not thinking of material nature, or of the nitrogen required by plants, but rather that one day we may learn it is important for us and for our soul – or for the part of ourselves which we call by that name – to disintegrate precisely *thus*, slowly and in the normal way. (29)

However we need not contemplate that yet. From lasagna to Bach to Modern Art to the Internet (that particle-accelerator of our daily lives), the Slow Movement is ultimately about mobilities of culture, about mobilizing culture at a human rate. Ruskin had it right:

> No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. The really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going but in being. (390)

So take a Slow Ride. *Take* the ride. It is an undoing of the military purpose, a refusal to become a projectile, a political act, as well as an act of pleasure.

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Art

Photo by Sascha Pöhlmann

Road Movie: The Legacies of *Easy Rider*

David T. Courtwright

Easy Rider has led a charmed life. A low-budget road movie about two bikers riding customized Harleys from Southern California to New Orleans in time for Mardi Gras and then on to a fatal encounter with Louisiana rednecks, it enjoyed commercial and critical success after its release in the summer of 1969. Harriet Polt, writing in *Film Quarterly*, called it "a motorcycle film and also a kind of latter-day western" with "none of the idiocies of the former genre and few of those of the latter." Perfectly timed, *Easy Rider* captured the clash of the hippie counterculture and straight America in a way that was "honest, almost always convincing, beautiful, and engrossing" (Polt 22). Less charitable critics found stretches of the film dull, incoherent, pretentious, and clichéd. "Like you're doing your thing," groused Vincent Canby in the *New York Times*. None of these defects prevented *Easy Rider* from entering the American pantheon as a rough-hewn masterpiece and cinematic icon of the 1960s. It has been acclaimed as a – perhaps the – great American road movie. It currently ranks eighty-fourth in the American Film Institute's list of 100 greatest films. It finished just behind *Titanic*, which required a budget 500 times as large to memorialize another doomed journey.

Easy Rider outranks *Titantic* in one respect: the mass of commentary it has inspired. So much commentary, in fact, that any fresh effort warrants a prologue. So let me say that this essay reflects not only my views, but those of three generations of students who watched *Easy Rider* in an undergraduate history course on the 1960s. Since its inception in 1985, the course has enrolled close to a thousand students. Ninety percent came from either "Gen X" (born between the mid-1960s and 1980) or "Gen Y" (born after 1980). Ten percent were older students, typically postwar baby-boomers returning to college to complete a degree or as auditors. Most of them had seen the film in their youth, but not since.

The annual renewal of this mixed audience offered a natural experiment. How would young viewers with fresh eyes react to a classic road movie of the 1960s? What would they see in it? What would they *not* see in it? How would their vision change over a quarter century? And how would older students who had not seen the movie in thirty or forty years react to a second viewing? What, in short, were the legacies of this remarkable movie?

America in the 1960s

Polt was right: *Easy Rider* is a cross between a motorcycle movie and a western. Yet surprisingly few students read the film in generic terms. What they first see is a movie about America in the 1960s, especially the battles over the counterculture, the environment, the Vietnam War, and civil rights.

By the time the opening credits have begun to roll, accompanied by *Born to Be Wild*, the film has checked off virtually every countercultural stereotype: long hair, outlaw drugs, bizarre dress, living for the moment, and rock and roll. More than any other decade, the 1960s have a soundtrack. More than any other fictional movie, *Easy Rider* takes advantage of that soundtrack. The 1960s also had its share of casual sex, though *Easy Rider* refrains from nudity until a discreet skinny-dipping sequence at the desert commune. The drug use, by contrast, is continuous, explicit, instructional, and close-up. The pot porn – taboo in mainstream American movies since the Reagan drug war of the 1980s – immediately registers with the younger students and defines the film as a 1960s counterculture adventure.

The film highlights the contradictions within that counterculture by emphasizing the differences between the biker protagonists. Peter Fonda's laconic Wyatt, a.k.a. Captain America, is laid-back, unarmed, otherworldly, and polite: a rebel who flies under the radar save for his outré taste in bikes and leathers. Dennis Hopper's manic Billy is touchy, armed, libertine, and rude: trouble from a mile off. They are Eros and Thantos, Woodstock and Altamont, Baez and Jagger, the hippies and the Hell's Angels. In the final campfire scene, when Wyatt utters his cryptic valedictory line, "We blew it," perhaps he is just being polite. The plural "we" glosses over the singular role that Billy's impetuous hedonism has played in their (and, by extension, the counterculture's) downfall. Few students grasp this subtlety on first viewing. Their initial experience of the film is overwhelmingly one of us versus them. The redneck's shotgun blasts obliterate the differences of character. It takes a sober second viewing to reveal their full extent and significance.

The back-to-the-land theme, by contrast, is easy to spot for students raised in an age of environmental awareness, one of the counterculture's enduring legacies. Early in the film Wyatt and Billy pick up a hitchhiker (Luke Askew) returning to his commune. Billy asks – insistently, suspiciously – "Where you from, man?" The hitchhiker replies "a city." Pressed for specifics, he says, "Doesn't make any difference what city. All cities are alike. That's why I'm out here now." The film shows cities to be environmentally and socially toxic, from the cocaine deal beneath screaming jets at the Los Angeles International Airport to the bad acid trip in New Orleans' St. Louis Cemetery no. 1: a city of the dead within a city of the debauched. Small towns, with their bullying police and brutal rednecks, fare little better. The film's good places are its open places, the highway and Monument Val-

ley, or the horse ranch and the New Mexico commune where small groups live lightly on the land. There, and only there, do people say grace over a simple meal.

Vietnam haunts the film, especially in the last aerial shot of Wyatt's Harley burning against the verdant, marshy landscape. Gen X and Gen Y students miss its significance. Boomers who grew up watching jungle napalm strikes on the evening news know the meaning of red flames in a green land. So do Vietnam veterans, many of whom encountered the film after returning home:

> When I first saw the movie in 1970, I thought, "This is my anthem." Why would I think that? First, I was recovering from wounds I received in the Vietnam conflict. Second, it was banned on my Army post. My belief was that the movie must have a message that the Army does not want me to see or hear. When I viewed *Easy Rider* downtown, three-quarters of the audience were GIs. It was almost impossible to hear the dialogue, because GIs in the audience would punctuate the air with raised fists and cries of "there it is" or "right on, brother." With every dope smoking scene [came the] cry of "toke it up." When the heroes were killed at the end of the movie there was a visible sadness and palpable anger. I often wonder if people really knew the anger experienced by the United States Army, especially Vietnam veterans, during this time.[1]

Institutionalized racism, the other great source of 1960s' rage, makes a brief yet powerful appearance in the film. Students often remark the absence of African Americans, whom they barely glimpse standing along roadside shacks or reveling at Mardi Gras. Yet Wyatt and Billy are racially protean symbols, Norman-Maileresque "white Negroes" who stand in for all groups subject to redneck oppression. In the Louisiana café sequence a waitress ignores them and George Hanson (Jack Nicholson), a renegade lawyer who has joined them on their trip to Mardi Gras. Menacing locals crack "country witticisms" that equate the trio with gorillas, blacks, and "Yankee queers." Immediately after they leave the café they are thronged by curious teenage girls, and just as immediately they hit the road. "They knew if they laid one finger on those girls," a student observed, "they would have been lynched right there." Miscegenation still poses the ultimate threat to the southern order. As if to underscore this point, it is an African American farmer who gives the harried trio permission to bed down on his land after they escape the redneck café. That scene, however, did not make it into the final cut (Hill 42).

Is there any important aspect of the 1960s that is not in *Easy Rider*? Older female students note the absence of feminism. The men are adventurers, priests, warriors, and villains. The women are cooks, waitresses, chicks, and whores: retro-

[1] All of the unsourced quotes in this text are from unpublished student papers. I have omitted the students' names to protect their privacy.

grade types for a supposedly radical film. Then again, the 1960s were the seedtime for the second-wave feminism. Activist women consigned to doing domestic work and putting out for male radicals opened their eyes to the fact that the new dispensation was every bit as sexist as the old. "Hip Culture and the so-called Sexual Revolution …," Robin Morgan declared in 1970, "functioned toward women's freedom as did Reconstruction toward former slaves – reconsitituted oppression by another name." She might have been describing Hopper's goatish Billy, who behaves in the New Mexico commune as if he were hitting on waitresses in the Playboy Club.

Another way to say this is that America's 'long 1960s' (i.e., 1954 to 1975, from the fall of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the rise of civil rights to the fall of Saigon and the rise of the New Right) divide into two gendered eras. The male-dominated 1960s ended in the chaos of 1968, while the female 1960s emerged fully around 1969 and peaked with second-wave feminism of the early 1970s. *Easy Rider*, which was written in 1967-1968 and shot in early 1968, a year before its commercial release, just missed the transition.

The 1960s transition that the film does capture, perfectly, is the one between hope and anger. Wyatt retains, however passively and narcissistically, some of the decade's early idealism. But Billy is resentful and suspicious, as are the straights whose paths he crosses. The one identifiably liberal character, George Hanson, is a charming do-gooder, but also an incorrigible tippler who casually pays off the police before embarking on a journey to a high-end brothel. He and his liberalism have seen better days. "This used to be a helluva good country," George complains. He might also have said, "This used to be a helluva good decade."

American Mobilities

If *Easy Rider* is about a critical decade in the nation's history, it is also about a critical aspect of its character: mobility. Historically, American mobility has been of two linked types. Horizontal mobility, the ability to travel from place to place, has often been a prerequisite for vertical mobility, the ability to rise in wealth and status. An antebellum New England farmer with insufficient property to divide among his sons looked west to the land and labor opportunities along the frontier. Or his sons looked east to another frontier, the sea, where they might seek their fortunes on a merchantman or a whaler. Southern slaves looked north, to the Underground Railroad, as a means of escape and freedom. Betterment required movement.

But betterment did not end movement, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America*. His American individualist possessed a singularly restless mind. "If at the end of a year crammed with work he has a little spare leisure, his restless curiosity goes with him traveling up and down the vast territories of the

United States. Thus he will travel five hundred miles in a few days as a distraction from his happiness." Death at length overtakes him, but not before "he has grown tired of the futile pursuit of that complete felicity which always escapes him" (508-09).

For Wyatt and Billy, mobility is both a dubious means of success and its equally dubious reward. Opening footage deleted from the final cut of the film reveals them to be stunt riders. They perform at county fairs, where unscrupulous promoters try to rip them off. (A vestigial piece of Billy's dialogue, "Hey, we're headliners, baby. We played every fair in this part of the country. I mean for top dollar, too!" is all that remains of the backstory.) Smuggling cocaine and then selling it to a well-heeled L.A. connection (Phil Spector) offers a way out of the carnival-circuit rat race (Hill 40-41). But it requires horizontal – in fact, cross-border – mobility, furnished by the motorcycles whose revving engines are the first thing heard on the soundtrack. Once the bikers have scored, they upgrade their wheels and set out across the continent for Florida. "Well, that's what it's all about, man," Bill later explains. "Like, you know. I mean, you go for the big money, and then you're free. You dig?" To which Wyatt replies, for the second time, "We blew it." The most common reading of this famous line, especially among younger students, is that the cocaine deal poisoned their odyssey at its source. A baby-boomer watching the film in 1969 would have understood cocaine as a hard drug, but also an exotic and expensive one: nose candy for rich hippies and show people. But students born in the 1970s or 1980s, who had watched the crack epidemic unfold, saw cocaine in a far more sinister light. It had destroyed entire neighborhoods, not to say individual lives.

Much in the film supports the cocaine-as-original-sin view. "Easy rider," the slang expression that screenwriter Terry Southern chose for the title, connotes social parasitism and freeloading as well as a steady mount for a long, leisurely journey. Though the film is unabashedly pro-pot ("Go ahead, George, light it up"), it is not indiscriminate drug propaganda. Steppenwolf's rendition of the Hoyt Axton's song *The Pusher* makes the soft drug/hard drug distinction explicit:

> You know I've smoked a lot of grass
> Oh, Lord, I've popped a lot of pills
> But I've never touched nothin'
> That my spirit could kill.
> You know I've seen a lot of people walkin' around
> With tombstones in their eyes
> But the pusher don't care
> If you live or if you die.
> God damn the pusher …

The Pusher has other lyrics, not sung on the soundtrack, which are even more militant:

> Well, now if I were the president of this land,
> You know I'd declare total war on the pusher man.
> I'd cut him if he stands,
> And I'd shoot him if he'd run
> And I'd kill him with my Bible
> And my razor and my gun.
> God damn the pusher …

Having lived through the 'total war' prophesied by the song, the students easily connect the dots from Wyatt's coke transaction to Wyatt's regrets.

Wyatt may also have regretted choosing the road over the commune. He likes the place, thinks about staying for a spell. He has fallen for one of the skinny-dipping girls, a romantic subplot made clearer by the shooting script than the slash-to-the-bone editing (Hill 46). But Billy cannot wait to split the commune. The fleshpots of New Orleans beckon. Captain America yields to his friend's stoned importuning. It turns out to be a fatal error, one that sets them on the road to jail, mayhem, a bad acid trip, and death at the hands of country cretins.

Students dislike the commune sequence, to them the dullest and most dated part of the film. But it is crucial because it reveals the film's fundamental ambivalence toward American mobility. The plot and the dialogue convey the message that it is better to make a stand on the land. That is what the rancher, the film's only unambiguously good and successful character, has done. That is what the commune's struggling farmers are trying to do, with Wyatt's parting benediction. ("They'll make it.") But the sun-flared landscapes and throbbing soundtrack and chopped Harleys – customized vehicles of personal liberation – convey the opposite message: Better to head out on the highway.

The stay-go tension is at the heart, not only of *Easy Rider*, but the western genre from which it draws inspiration. Westerns are masculine adventures in which men come together, square off against a group of opposing men, and then go their separate ways, unless they are either killed or find a girl and settle down. Adventure's road has just two exits: domesticity and death (Courtwright 105). Wyatt and Billy whiz past the first exit and then abruptly take the second.

Though first-time viewers are invariably shocked by the manner of the bikers' murders, they should not be surprised by its occurrence. It is hard to think of a film from this era in which the defiant pursuit of freedom on the road does not end badly, as in *Lonely are the Brave* (1962), *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), and *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967). Post-*Easy Rider* road movies, such as *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971) and *Vanishing Point* (1971), ring changes on this theme, implicitly in the former

and explicitly in the latter. *Vanishing Point* is in fact a stripped-down, nihilistic version of *Easy Rider*, in which Benzedrine replaces marijuana, a supercharged Dodge Challenger replaces the Harleys, and cops replace rednecks. The renegade hero, Kowalski, pays the same price for the defiant pursuit of freedom as the two bikers: sudden death on a lonely road.

American Freedom

All of these films pose the same question: What does it mean to be a free American in an age of factories and cities and disciplinary bureaucracies? *Easy Rider* raises the question in the most direct possible way, by its use of the flag. Captain America sports the stars and stripes on his bike and his helmet and his leather jacket, which he drapes over the dying Billy, in effect burying his friend with patriotic honors. But there are flags in the commune, too, and in New Orleans' French Quarter and in the towns the bikers lope through. Everyone lays claim to American freedom, which prompts Billy and George's debate in the penultimate campfire scene:

> **George**: You know, this used to be a helluva good country. I can't understand what's gone wrong with it.
> **Billy**: Man, everybody got chicken, that's what happened. Hey, we can't even get into like, a second-rate hotel, I mean, a second-rate motel, you dig? They think we're gonna cut their throat or somethin'. They're scared, man.
> **George**: Oh, they're not scared of you. They're scared of what you represent to 'em.
> **Billy**: Hey, man. All we represent to them, man, is somebody who needs a haircut.
> **George**: Oh, no. What you represent to them is freedom.
> **Billy**: What the hell is wrong with freedom, man? That's what it's all about.
> **George**: Oh, yeah, that's right. That's what's it's all about, all right. But talkin' about it and bein' it, that's two different things. I mean, it's real hard to be free when you are bought and sold in the marketplace. Of course, don't ever tell anybody that they're not free, 'cause then they're gonna get real busy killin' and maimin' to prove to you that they are. Oh, yeah, they're gonna talk to you, and talk to you, and talk to you about individual freedom. But they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em.
> **Billy**: Well, it don't make 'em runnin' scared.
> **George**: No, it makes 'em dangerous ….

Easy Rider's free souls traverse the land, or settle on their own patch of it to do their own thing in their own time, unshackled from clock and paycheck. The idea that America has drifted away from this sort of real freedom is echoed by the counter-historical direction of the bikers' journey, from west to east, from open land to the confined city. And not just any city, but to New Orleans, the most European of American places, with its Catholic ambience, crowded streets, and drunken carnival – a place where, ironically, two partying bikers with bruises on their faces and whores on their arms don't look like freaks.

For sophisticated viewers, the glorification of nineteenth-century frontier individualism stands out as a nostalgic and reactionary theme in a purportedly radical film set in the late 1960s. Younger students, however, miss the ideological atavism. Unfamiliar with the classic accounts of American individualism in de Tocqueville, James Fenimore Cooper, and Frederick Jackson Turner, they are also hazy on their western mythology. Raised after the death of the Hollywood western, they do not think of John Ford or John Wayne when they see Monument Valley. They know enough to associate the bikers' names with Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid, and to read Billy's fringed outfit and wide-brim hat as western garb. But the growling choppers, hip dialogue, and rock soundtrack drown out the western allusions. Thematically, *Easy Rider* wants to be about an idealized past and a harrowing present. Visually, verbally, and musically, it is about the present, especially for viewers unfamiliar with generic conventions. That is why, despite George's campfire history lesson, most students experience *Easy Rider* narrowly as a 1960s movie.

One way to expand their vision is to introduce a real-life George Hanson. Charles Reich was a lawyer, advocate of civil liberties and economic justice, and closeted homosexual who gave up a professorship at the Yale Law School for the gay life in San Francisco, an east-to-west journey of liberation if ever there was one. In 1970, before he departed the ivied precincts of New Haven, Reich published a bestseller called *The Greening of America*. American history, Reich declared, was the history of three types of consciousness. Consciousness I was that of the pre-industrial rugged individualists, such as the pioneer farmers. Consciousness II was that of post-industrial consumer conformism, exemplified by contemporaries who lived in smog-shrouded suburbs and who toiled in factories and corporate towers: George's "bought and sold" people. Consciousness III was the corrective, the emerging awareness among bell-bottomed young that they could create their own philosophies, shape their own culture, and find their own fulfillment in a liberated lifestyle – a term of Reich's coinage. "Start doing what you want to do," as Reich put it in his 1976 memoirs. "Stop doing what you don't want to do" (104).

Those words surely describe Wyatt and Billy. But their radical individualism also has elements of the old rugged individualism. "Wyatt's take on freedom," writes journalist Harry Shapiro, "is much more the old pioneering spirit of being your own boss and carving out your niche in the world, keeping your head down –

patriotic, but at the same time resentful of any government interference" (130). Billy is a paranoid version of the same ethos. He's a proto-survivalist and, like Wyatt, able to shift for himself. The two men bed down by their own fire and fix their own flat tire, a scene crosscut with the rancher shoeing one of his horses. The editing equates the bikes with the horses, but also the bikers with the self-reliant rancher. Wyatt and Billy are, so to speak, hybrids of Consciousness I and Consciousness III. They represent both a historical and a countercultural rebuke to a society that has lost freedom's way. That is why reactionary and radical cross-currents swirl through the film. In mixing genres, the film has also mixed its politics.

George is a different sort of hybrid. A Reich-like liberal in a rumpled coat and tie, he discovers Consciousness III (and its favorite drug) through a chance jailhouse encounter with the bikers. George is able to blend Consciousness II and Consciousness III; he is the only character who empathizes with both worlds and who has the ability to mediate between them. "As the film's moral centre, Hanson transforms the self-interest and solipsism of Wyatt and Billy," writes Lee Hill. "He represents the 60s ideal of a figure who can bring together liberal and conservative, reactionary and radical, for the sake of friendship, community and the common good. Naturally, he has to come to a terrible end" (35). Whether George ever breaks through Billy's solipsism is debatable. But he plainly touches Wyatt's conscience, and the association of George's murder with those of real-life 1960s peacemakers is spot-on.

What do students think about film's depiction of Consciousness III, either in its pure or hybrid manifestations? That depends on their religious temperament and age. Evangelical Protestants convict the countercultural heroes of the most ancient of errors, confusing freedom with license. Their eyes roll when Wyatt announces "I never wanted to be anybody else" while taking a long hit on a joint. Even students sympathetic to the film's political premises (as the self-denying Evangelicals are not) are wary of its excesses. "Everybody should be able to live the type of life they want without fear of reprisal from others," wrote one young man. "However, I don't think being an adult in your late twenties, smoking dope, and going on road trips is the way to justify your freedom. Be different but don't be stupid."

Predictably, secular students who are the most conspicuously 'different' are also the most sympathetic to the film's depiction of the 1960s counterculture. Long hair remains a marker of countercultural affinity for male students ("it still means drug use"), while skateboards and tattoos signal hipness for both sexes. In recent years the most reliable predictor of a student's enthusiasm for the film has been the number and conspicuousness of personal tattoos. The students themselves point out that, if *Easy Rider* were remade today, the bikers would display lots of tattoo ink. Judging from the digital dependency of these same students, I also suspect that Wyatt would embark on freedom's journey by tossing his cell phone instead of his watch.

The young are far more inclined to embrace the film than the old. I have noticed, though, a difference between the Gen X students who attended college in the 1990s and the Gen Y students who enrolled after 2001. Asked if the film's politics are still relevant, the Gen X students were more inclined to say no. The 1960s counterculture struck them as a comically wrong bet on the course of history. Sorry, professor, Wall Street won. As it happened, that was the same conclusion Reich reached in *Opposing the System*, published in 1995. In an unequal world of unchecked corporate power, he conceded, the only people with real independence and opportunities for self-expression were the members of the increasingly hereditary business and professional elites (48). Born to be rich had trumped born to be wild.

Since the September 11 terror attacks, however, the number of students who find political relevance in the film has increased. They see the bikers as stand-ins for all those whose civil liberties are threatened by an intrusive government. Homeland Security has replaced the redneck café. "America is afraid of what is different and the film is still pertinent in this current era of engaging the 'war on terror,'" wrote one young man, a refugee from Bosnia. "We have divided our nation today during a time when what we need most is to come together," complained another, the daughter of a Vietnam veteran. Other students see America's ongoing culture war, rather than its war on terror, as the pertinent contemporary struggle. Though Wyatt is heterosexual, his smooth-faced androgyny and the "Yankee queers" wisecrack make it easy to read him as a symbol of gay harassment. Whoever is cast in the role of Other, the pattern remains the same. The greater the backlash, the more relevant *Easy Rider* remains.

Whether the Gen X and Gen Y students who sympathize with the film's anticonformist message will do so in the future is another matter. The most interesting responses to the question of how relevant the film now seems come from those who were stirred when they first saw it, then viewed it again decades later:

> When I first saw this movie in 1969 I was in many ways on the fringe of society. I had dropped out of college, was unemployed and angst-ridden. After watching *Easy Rider* that first time I felt like I had seen the most profound movie ever made. I wanted to be free from the constraints of society, free from the expectations of parents, free from myself. Yet now as I watch the movie as an adult its impact is much diluted. I find myself wanting to tell Captain America and Billy to go take a bath and get a job.

Married, with a daughter and a second chance at completing college, she now found herself, so to speak, on the other side of the campfire.

Another woman who had protested the Vietnam War was just as disenchanted. When she first saw *Easy Rider*, the campfire bonding scenes reminded her of the camaraderie she felt during demonstrations. The film reinforced her determination

to be different, to avoid the fatal mortgage and wood-paneled station wagon. But when she finished college she traded her bell-bottoms for surgical scrubs, married a Vietnam veteran, raised two children, "and, yes, for a short while I did drive the station wagon with the wood on the sides. And I guess I should confess to actually buying into the idea of a mortgage – maybe being part of the establishment is not all bad."

Male baby-boomers reacted in much the same way. "It seems like only yesterday that I stormed from the San Marco Theater plotting carnage against all those who owned pickup trucks," wrote a former member of the Students for a Democratic Society. "Of course, since I was a resident of Jacksonville, Florida, in 1969 this meant nothing short of genocide." Once he cooled down the memory of Wyatt, Billy, and George stayed with him as martyrs for a lost but fondly remembered cause. Then, thirty years later, he popped the videocassette into his VCR and sat down to watch it again with his wife and son. What he saw was bad acting, bad dialogue, and a meaningless plot about a mindless journey financed by a drug deal. One of his contemporaries, an engineer who remembered the ubiquitous dorm poster of Billy flipping the bird, felt a similar letdown. "The primary message of *Easy Rider*, that freedom has a cost, is timeless," he wrote. "But the film itself has not aged well."

I am less inclined to think so, though I find these remarks honest and illuminating. The great truism about movies and history – that films often provide a better guide to their makers and audiences than to their purportedly historical characters and settings – also applies to student reactions. When they sit before their keyboards and compose their thoughts, they produce more than just papers. They produce autobiographical sources, reminders of how surprisingly the world has changed and how inexorable are the forces of aging and adult responsibility.

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It is only fair, in an essay that quotes liberally from other people's responses to *Easy Rider*, to close with a confession of my own views. I first saw the film in the fall of 1969. I was inspired by a friend who arrived at a high-school dance wearing biker boots and a leather jacket on which he had crookedly sewn the American flag. How inventively he cursed the rednecks! I have to see this film, I thought. When I did, I was disappointed. It struck me as a better-than-average biker flick with an edgy soundtrack, goofy stoned humor, and shock ending-spoiled, in my instance, by foreknowledge of the heroes' fate. It was political, certainly, but still essentially a commercial product. Years later, when I happened to catch *Easy Rider* on television, I realized that I had badly underestimated the movie. The second

viewing – always the key – convinced me that it was an ambitious film of real cinematic artistry.

Countless viewings later I still hold that judgment, even as I have become more aware of the film's tensions and contradictions. I now see *Easy Rider* as Polt saw it back in 1969, as a timely and clever generic mash-up. It is the least tidy, most protean, and quite possibly the most irritating of all the movies on the American Film Institute's top-100 list. Yet it is precisely those qualities that make it superior to such neat and forgettable 1960s political parables as *If* (1968) and *Wild in the Streets* (1968). If there is one, and only one, thing that we can say about *Easy Rider*, it is this: It forces every new generation that encounters the film to think.

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Reading Multiple Mobilities in Chuck Palahniuk's *Fugitives and Refugees*

Alexandra Ganser

> The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place – an experience that is, to be sure, broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric … (de Certeau 103)[1]

Mobility Studies from an American/Cultural Studies Perspective

The potential of mobility studies for literary and cultural American studies has recently emerged as a new approach in this field, asking how (US-)American cultural texts have been shaped by – and, indeed, are shaping – national myths of mobility.[2] In the foreword to the 2009 collection *The Cultures of Alternative Mobilities*, Ole Jensen claims that "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" (xv). Cultural geographer Tim Cresswell likewise refracts a simplistic binary opposition between actual and representations of mobility, distinguishing instead between three dimensions of mobility as, first, an empirical, technologically constructed reality; second, an idea formed and (re)produced by representational strategies in texts; and third, a physical experience (cf. Cresswell 2006: 3; in addition, he critically differentiates between actual mobility, defined as "socially produced motion," and mobility as potential movement (cf. ibid.). It is the interface between mobile bodies and representations of mobility that interests cultural stud-

[1] Cf. also Manzanas Calvo 113.

[2] In American and cultural studies, scholarly interest in mobility has been growing for at least two decades, from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) and the New American Studies collection *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993; cf. especially Eric Cheyfitz's essay on the "doctrine of discovery," embracing the mobility of white settlers to take possession of Native American territory) to James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), Shelley Fisher Fishkin's 2004 Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, and Stephen Greenblatt's "Mobility Studies Manifesto" (2009) – to name but a few. Cf. also Paul et al., esp. 13-17.

ies, as at this intersection, questions of ideology, subjectivity, and agency meet. As signifying systems, both cultural *practices* and *narratives* of mobility are informed by specific historical configurations of class, race, and gender, by national and imperial articulations of self and other, as well as by resistant energies that set into motion solidified, sometimes even petrified, cultural imaginaries.

In the US-American context, framed by the ideology of progress and expansion, mobility has a long history as a defining feature of the "imagined community" (Anderson). In the introduction to *Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond*, Heike Paul, Katharina Gerund, and I sketch the importance of mobility for American studies (and I largely rely on our overview in this introduction).[3] With a number of scholars, we argue that in US-American cultural history, geographical and social mobility, often seen as interrelated or even interdependent, are of major significance for the narratives of nation-building and American subject formation (cf. e.g. Campbell 285; Urry 103; Cresswell 2006: 260; Hilton and van Minnen). The history of American colonialism, settlement, expansion, and migration has been recorded as the history of a "nation on the move" (Hilton and van Minnen; Wesley xxi): the very beginnings of 'America' – both as a continent and later as a nation – have been memorized in terms of movement: the transatlantic journeys of exploration and 'discovery' of the late 15th and 16th centuries, the Puritan mission of an 'errand into the wilderness,' and westward expansion and Manifest Destiny inform the key texts of American civilization; these are followed by the celebration of upward social mobility in the American dream.

The protagonists of these narratives are explorers and travelers, Puritans and Pilgrims, settlers and pioneers, immigrants and exiles; usually of European descent, they have been cast, for a long time, as white and male, heroic figures in the national archive of extraordinary individual achievement and American exceptionality. For instance, at the end of the 19th century, historian Frederick Jackson Turner linked the American penchant for movement to national expansion at the close of his seminal speech on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," delivered at the 1893 Columbian exposition in Chicago. Even after the closure of the western frontier that he proclaimed, the nation's expansion would not be halted, Turner argued: "He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of American life has now entirely ceased. Movement has been its dominant fact, and, unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise" (38); this at a time when indeed the western frontier was translated, at the beginning of the so-

[3] I am grateful to my co-authors for their permission to use our jointly written introduction as a starting point for this article.

called 'American century,' to new 'frontiers' of empire – such as those of Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines (cf. Kaplan and Pease).

US-American expansionist mobilities are not only exclusionary, but have indeed immobilized many people(s). Following cultural geographers like John Urry and Tim Cresswell, there are "ideologically sound" (Cresswell 2006: 58) and culturally accepted forms of mobility depending on types of mobility which are illegal(ized), (socially) stigmatized, and/or unsanctioned. For example, fugitives and refugees often represent non-dominant forms of mobility; they can appear as protagonists of counter-narratives that cast light on some of the "less central stories" (Cresswell 2001: 20) of mobility that US-American myths of mobility tend to overlook. Such stories interrogate the ideological baggage of classical mobility narratives and can function as (counter-)cultural critique, but they have also been appropriated in hegemonic narratives as "symbols of romantic escape as well as of (political) scapegoating" (Paul et al. 13). As I have argued in my study of women's road narratives in the second half of the 20th century, for instance, even representations of unsanctioned mobilities are often dominated by the same white and masculine parameters as the mythical and foundational American narratives of mobility and freedom (cf. Ganser). In the study of mobilities, whether from a social science or cultural studies perspective, power asymmetries are therefore important to consider (cf. also Sager), and mobility has to be (re-)conceptualized as pluralized *mobilities*, also taking into account the fact that subjects (re)produce and challenge notions of mobility in their everyday lives, as Michel de Certeau examined in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (cf. also Paul et al. 17). Mobility studies has to address immobility as well, both as a socially exclusionary mechanism and as a textual construction.[4] After all, as Sylvia Hilton and Cornelis A. van Minnen emphasize, mobility is (re-) produced by cultural texts in its double function of affirmation and resistance – not understood as polar opposites, but as a continuum (cf. 4).

Such a "new mobilities paradigm" (cf. Urry 18) also needs to historicize (cultural) mobilities, since, following Stephen Greenblatt, "[t]he reality, for most of the past as once again for the present, is more about nomads than natives" (6) as "the local has always been irradiated … by the larger world" (4). Greenblatt calls for mobility studies 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). Following such a revised approach to mobility, literary, and cultural studies scholars inquire into the ways in which fictional or non-fictional texts (or

[4] Tim Cresswell's work has revolved around these issues for a long time. In *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*, he argues that mobility today is often clad in metaphors of fluidity and flexibility, which are positively connoted as symptomatic of a late capitalist market economy (asking for a highly mobile workforce), while localizability and rootedness are implied as the negative pole of a dichotomy.

textual hybrids like Chuck Palahniuk's *Fugitives and Refugees*) negotiate various (im)mobilities and (re-)tell the (hi-)story of mobility in the United States and beyond: in what ways do texts articulate – or seek to obscure – "tales of marginality and exclusion, which cast a different light on the grand narratives of nationhood, of progress, of democracy and of modernity" (Cresswell 2001: 20)? As an example, I am now turning to Palahniuk's guidebook to Portland, Oregon, *Fugitives and Refugees: A Walk in Portland, Oregon* in the following, critically reading the multiple mobilities that the book addresses or obscures both in form and content. I argue that through the lens of mobility studies, the city of Portland as presented by Palahniuk emerges at the crossroads of hegemonic and underground movements, framed by a discourse of 'hip' tourism.

Chuck Palahniuk's *Fugitives and Refugees*

Best-known for his 1996 novel and screenplay *Fight Club*, Chuck Palahniuk is one of the most popular authors in contemporary US-America and beyond, especially for a younger, self-declared 'non-mainstream' audience. Palahniuk is often categorized and celebrated as a writer of "transgressional" fiction, a "chronicler of pathology" (Mendieta 408). Defined by literary critics Michael Silverblatt and Rene Chun in the early 1990s, this genre focuses on characters who feel confined by social norms and who break with these in unusual or illicit ways; its protagonists often seem mentally ill, anti-social, or nihilistic, and its subjects matters frequently revolve around drugs, sex, violence, incest, pedophilia, and crime (cf. Chun; Silverblatt). Though these topics might indeed be viewed as transgressive (at least for the 1990s), the genre in fact re-enacts a core theme in American literature and culture – the search for personal freedom beyond restrictions of taste and (social or literary) convention. Though transgressive fiction is certainly capable of social commentary and critique, the celebration of personal freedom seems also one of the pitfalls of the genre; transgression for whom, and for what, one needs to ask – and at what cost? As a core movement of US-American expansionist logic, the transgression of borders for the sake of an excessively individualist national mythology, for instance, has led to conquest and exclusion for non-WASP, non-male subjects, and although these have increasingly written themselves into the American dream of social and geographical mobility, the logics itself has become no less problematic, producing new 'Others' beyond the national border: refugees of climate change, child labor, new slavery, and the like.

The fraught relationship between *transgressive* (and often metaphorical) fugitives, on the run from social norms, and *disempowered* refugees, seeking sanctuary, is also at the heart of Palahniuk's first book of non-fiction, *Fugitives and Refugees: A Walk in Portland, Oregon*, which was commissioned by the Crown

Journeys series of literary travel books by writers prolific in other genres (e.g. Ishmael Reed on Oakland; Edwige Danticat on Jacmel, Haiti; Frank Conroy on Nantucket).[5] Palahniuk's title, in the context of this particular series, interrelates the transgressive mobility of the freedom-seeking fugitive, the coerced mobility of the refugee, and the movement of tourists as a capitalist form of traveling. The power asymmetries between the three are quite obvious; but Palahniuk's text also closely, if haphazardly, associates these contrasting mobilities, as they usually come together in urban settings. At the beginning of the 21st century, tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, and it is the prospective Portland tourist who figures as the intended reader of the book; at the same time, Portland is portrayed as a destination for metaphorical (rather than legal) fugitives: individuals that feel oppressed by conformity (implicitly, and in tune with US-American tradition, associated with the east).

As Katharina Gerund notes in her characterization of the figure of the fugitive, it is characterized by a multi-dimensionality which can be conceptualized both in contrast to and in a continuum with the refugee:

> [It] 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, … 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.' (Paul et al. 22)

"Alternative geographies" is exactly what Palahniuk sets out to present in his text. In the introduction, he attributes his title to his friend, author Katherine Dunn: "Katherine's theory is that everyone looking to make a new life migrates west, across America to the Pacific Ocean. Once there, the cheapest city where they can live is Portland. This gives us the most cracked of the crackpots. … 'We just accumulate more and more strange people,' she says. 'All we are are the fugitives and refugees'" (14). Consequently, the program of this guidebook is to present "stories you won't find in any official Portland history book" (18), and Palahniuk seduces his audience into reading on by mentioning the "snapshots" they will en-

[5] In the following, I am quoting from a reprinted version of Palahniuk's book, published by Vintage in 2005.

counter in his book, of opium dens or live sex-shows. This is a guide through a world of deviance and excitement; a world which tourists usually enjoy voyeuristically and in the context of a spectacular exoticism rather than in terms of identification (offered by this introductory self-presentation). Hence the "we" in the introductory quote by Dunn, which Palahniuk heavily relies on throughout the book, is both treacherous and revealing. Not only does it flatten potential differences between conceptual fugitive and refugee mobilities – though etymologically related, they highlight different aspects of flight; it also creates a community of mobile populations that, in the history of Portland, have often been (and continue to be, e.g. in post-2000 debates about Latino/a immigration; cf. Wozniaka; "Report") in conflict with each other. On the level of representation, the book continues some notable silences regarding the city's history and present, remaining in a (WASP) pioneer mode of enunciation, so that it is difficult to see this "we" as the basis for the narrative construction of an alternative, counter-hegemonic geography.[6]

My reading 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" (250), and I am distinguishing between three levels on which these operate: the formal level that marks the text as a generic hybrid; the level of narrative representation and its silences and touristic voyeurisms – which do in no way transcend, but occasionally even remain behind, those "official histories" Palahniuk seeks to rewrite; and the discursive level, which operates in the context of what I am calling *hipster tourism* – full of good intentions and fun stories, but blind to its own politics and economics of rampaging individualism, or perhaps more accurately, individualist exceptionalism.

On the formal level, Palahniuk's guidebook mixes classical guidebook discourse, recommending (admittedly rather unusual) places to visit and to shop in, restaurants, and hotels, adding driving directions and practical advice such as the best time to visit. Chapters include "Quests: Adventures to Hunt Down," "Chow: Eating Out," "Haunts: Where to Rub Elbows with the Dead," a chapter on souvenirs and one on "Where to Get Your Picture Snapped," but also on kinky sex in Portland in "Getting Off: How to Knock Off a Piece in Portland." Interspersed between these chapters are the "postcards," which the narrator describes as not so much from places than "from specific Portland moments." The "postcard" pages

[6] In this respect, the book foreshadows Palahniuk's short story "Slumming: A Story by Lady Baglady" (2006), in which, as Ana Manzanas Calvo put it, "Homelessness-nomadism is seen … as a welcome sign of degeneration and a comfortable falling away from civilization" (116), as the protagonists' temporary excursions into homelessness are transformed into Adamic explorations of a new-found land (cf. ibid.). The story reacts to the increasing impossibility of upward social mobility in contemporary US-America by what Manzanas Calvo calls a "logic of inversion" (118), casting downward mobility as the new pioneer mode of exploration – in quite cynical ways, I would add.

are illustrated with various reproductions of US Postal Service watermarks from Portland (including some that wish "Happy Holidays"), associating the narratives they present with stories on postcards and thus highlighting the media that stories need in order for them to travel and circulate – without this mobility, they are forgotten and die. The stories themselves feature eccentric episodes from the implied author's Portland life in a fusion of journalist and literary techniques, self-mythologizing in a way that has led critics to an association with gonzo journalism (which Palahniuk, curiously enough, once criticized as too self-indulgent; cf. MacKendrick 7): we encounter the implied author at various stages of his life between 1981, when he moved to Portland as a rather poor student and 2000, when he had already turned into the celebrated author of *Fight Club*, grinding his molars on acid (27), participating in Portland's "Santa Rampage" (141-42), or trying to expose the city's Rose Festival as a sexist institution by disturbing the parade until his "gin-and-tonic political enthusiasm has worn off" (78; "[r]eally, we just want our share of the attention," 77). In a tale of social and economic ascent, the reader witnesses Palahniuk's autobiographical story of upward social mobility from a working student to a literary celebrity.

Both in the colloquially written, often legend-based chapters and the "postcards," Palahniuk breaks the distinctive conventions of guidebooks, with their sole focus on reliable information, their lack of formal or narrative experimentation, and the absence of personal voice, but by presenting judgment and advice on the "mechanics of travel," as Robert Foulke once termed it (98), he also remains within the genre. In addition, the text faces the same paradox as all guidebooks do as soon as they turn the readers' attention to 'non-touristy' places: they actually turn these into tourist places. Yet by hybridizing the genre, the text is no longer the guidebook "anti-model of travel writing" (Caesar 110), but blends it with more literary travel books, thus also infusing it with a dose of travel romance; highlighting the unbelievable and the bizarre, Palahniuk celebrates, like in many of his works, "the beauty of the grotesque" (Mendieta 400) and "romantic anarchism" (ibid. 405). Perhaps it is on this formal level that Palahniuk's text is truly transgressive, playing with the often rather rigid boundaries between different genres of the (often rather conservative) travel writing industry.

On the level of representation, Portland is first and foremost constructed as a city of quirky adventure: the perfect place for those who love to venture off the beaten track (but not into the unknown: the narrator's 'yours-truly' mediation of the guidebook-style is always present). Despite of this focus on the local, however, the larger world is also manifest in Palahniuk's Portland, even though, for the sake of presenting the city in terms of adventure, troublesome histories of (im)mobility are commodified for the traveler's entertainment in the book. The history of the Multnomah tribe, for instance, 'discovered' by the Lewis and Clark expedition and decimated within a few decades after cultural contact by malaria and smallpox (cf.

Lansing 2; Abbott 14),[7] appears in a section of ghost stories and is linked to the presence of arrowheads tourists can gather as souvenirs: "Today you can still find arrowheads scattered along the Columbia River beaches. Early morning joggers and late-evening walkers also report almost identical encounters with a naked Multnomah youth. The adolescent boy walks along the waterline and doesn't seem aware of anything except the river and the sand" (66); furthermore, Native American artifacts are referenced in a report of the Maryhill Museum (72). Critical native ('local') perspectives on pioneer mobilities, as they are still accessible today through anthologies that have collected such narratives,[8] in contrast, are nowhere to be found.

Although it is improbable that the Lewis and Clark expedition actually ever reached the site that would later become Portland (cf. Lansing 6), it is a cornerstone in the city's official narrative. In 1905, it hosted Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair,[9] which is frequently mentioned by Palahniuk; its souvenirs, the narrator tells us, can be found in the Kidd Toy Museum, which also features "[j]olly Nigger banks in their original wooden boxes" (85), the only reference to African Americans in the entire book. This elision is remarkably repetitive of Oregon's unique history in terms of its treatment of blacks: while Oregon was admitted to the Union in 1857 as a non-slave state – although slavery existed in practice – Oregonians decided the way to avoid 'racial problems,' especially alliances between blacks and natives, was to bar black residents altogether, the only state introducing a black exclusion law (the first in 1844) in its constitution (though Illinois and Indiana had similar laws).[10] Their argument was that by doing so they would abolish the inequalities between the rich and the working class. "I'm going to Oregon, where there'll be no slaves, and we'll all start even," said Captain R.W. Morrison, a pioneer from Missouri, in 1844 (qtd. in Peterson del Mar 82). The argument was later used to bar immigrants of other races as well: they would bring down wages and establish inequities. Notably, the state of Oregon ratified the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, which guaranteed citizenship for all US-born people regardless of race, then rescinded its ratification, and did not ratify the 15th Amendment, which gave African Americans the right to vote, until 1959.

[7] On contagion and disease as critical terms related to cultural mobility, cf. Kunow 344-47.

[8] See, for example, the Chinook story about the first ship coming to Clatsop country (Ramsey 174-75, relying on Franz Boas's account); Ramsey's introduction also discusses Native American trading mobilities and cultural interaction between tribes in Oregon through marriage, slave-trading, bartering expeditions, and the like before white settlement, and between tribes and French-Canadian fur traders in the early 19th century. Cf. also Abbott 13.

[9] On the Fair, whose motto over the entrance gate read "Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way" and which focused on Portland's role in Pacific expansion ("The Coming Supremacy of the Pacific" especially in terms of economic dominance), cf. Abbott, chapter 4; Lansing, chapter 17.

[10] For a detailed account of the history of African Americans in Oregon, cf. McLagan.

Likewise, citizenship and voting were denied to arrivals from China, Japan, and other Asian countries (cf. Madrid). From an African American perspective, this meant that their participation in the pioneer dream of westward migration was severely shattered once they arrived in Oregon:

> Many black people saw the West as an unsettled region where greater economic and political freedom was possible. … What these black people found when they came to the Pacific Coast states … were many of the same conditions … they had hoped to escape." (McLagan 169; cf. also Dodds 81)

Palahniuk's Portland ignores these dreams and realities; whenever the book mentions pioneers, such as in its advertisements of the pioneer cemetery (70) or the Portland Memorial, "a good place to walk, tracing the history of Portland's pioneer families" (61), his pioneers are implicitly white, repeating official terminology, which has begun to be challenged only recently. In this context, one could mention Portland's Lewis and Clark College's homage to the black pioneer York, slave to William Clark, in the form of a memorial sculpture in 2010 (cf. "York"; the Lewis and Clark journals record York's assignments as scouting, hunting, translating, and field medicine, but also hard manual labor in extreme weather conditions, cf. McLagan, chapter 1). According to historian Jay Buckley, York, like the Lemhi Shoshone woman Sacagawea, played a key role in diplomatic relations with Native Americans because of his appearance (cf. 20, 59), functioning as "wag, wit and delight of the party and Indians, who considered him Great Medicine" (Clarke 38). Blacks like York were thus not only present, but also formative in the history of Oregon's colonization despite the law of exclusion, as slaves, guides, and settlers, even though for a long time, official histories have been as silent about black mobilities in Oregon as Palahniuk.

The Chinese, an especially mobile population all along the Pacific coast, also function largely for the readers' entertainment in *Fugitives and Refugees*: they are associated with the legend of the Portland Shanghai tunnels, underground passageways near the waterfront in which the impressment of sailors in the late 19th and early 20th century was allegedly facilitated by opium dens and Chinese tongs;[11] with underground Chinese restaurants "with beautiful ceramic murals" (160), and with Chinese clients of prostitutes and other sex-workers, an association that has to do with the demographic fact that it was mostly single Chinese men

[11] 'Shanghaiing' refers to the employment of sailors who had not signed contracts voluntarily or soberly (Lansing 234). The tunnels were probably built for drainage, flood control, and cargo hauling. There is a dispute among local historians and Portlanders offering guided tunnel tours about the existence of such tunnels; shanghaiing itself (or 'crimping,' as it is also called) in Portland is backed by historical evidence (cf. Jung; Lansing 233-35, backs the legend by oral histories).

who moved to the Pacific Northwest, lured by rumors of gold (cf. Dodds 79). This episode explicitly correlates the multiple mobilities crossing in the tunnels: the immigrant mobility of the Chinese, who went underground because of racial exclusion;[12] the trading mobilities of sailing captains in need of deckhands; and the coerced mobility of impressment. The guide on the underground tour, Palahniuk reports, "talks about shanghai prisoners who were locked in holding cells, left standing in water. The Ku Klux Klan met here. So did the immigrant Chinese they persecuted …" (165). It is one of the few pages on which those represented are endowed with a place of enunciation, albeit mediated by the tour guide: he reports that the Chinese Americans' Citizens Alliance sent several members on the tour who remarked that they "could feel the spirits. This place must be cleansed" (ibid.). Less romantic stories, like those of Chinese business-class families or manual laborers, are absent from the book, while the Chinese Gardens of Portland are highlighted as "Gardens Not to Miss" (117) for aesthetic reasons. The same holds true for the representation of Japanese immigrant culture in Portland, which is reduced to a matter of fashionable and sexualized style: "silk kimonos" and "Japanese slippers and diamonds" adorn the "voluptuous blondes" in a 1912 report on Portland sex workers Palahniuk quotes from (99), and he also recommends to visit the local Japanese-style gardens (120-21) rather than the Nikkei Legacy Center or the Japanese-American Historical Plaza in Tom McCall Waterfront Park.[13] This selection on the basis of an exoticist aesthetics of the "strange" (one of the most frequent adjectives in the book), the unusual, and the unknown, has to do with a discourse I am terming 'hipster tourism' that Palahniuk's guidebook inscribes itself into.

Mobilities of 'Hip'

The hipster phenomenon establishes a tradition the text inscribes itself into that goes back even beyond the Beat generation's self-stylization as what Norman Mailer termed the "White Negroes" of America in 1957, and thus faces similar problems of exoticization and the erasure of 'Otherness' for the sake of white male

[12] For anti-Chinese incidents and discourses in Portland, see Dodds 119; in Lansing's account of Portland history, these discourses are closely linked to fears of immigrant mobility, as in a report by a "Committee of 27 Citizens of Portland": We … feel that the *influx* of Chinese works a great hardship on the laboring classes of the Pacific States, and greatly retards their *progress* … We would therefore advise as the only remedy for the existing evil, petitions to our representatives in Congress … for such modifications of our treaties with China as will *remove* the evil which has *fallen* so heavily *upon us*" (147; my emphasis).

[13] On the history of Japanese immigration, especially the large numbers of railroad laborers who were brought to Oregon in the late 19th century, the so-called "picture brides" of the 1910s, and anti-Japanese sentiments cf. Stearns; Abbott 57-58; see also the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center websites.

dreams of liberation, enacted primarily through movement and adventure.[14] Almost a decade before Mailer, in 1948, American writer and *New York Times* editor/critic Anatole Broyard defined the hipster in a *Partisan Review* article as searching for alternative ways of recognition and belonging. His "Portrait of the Hipster" opens thus:

> As he was the illegitimate son of the Lost Generation, the hipster was really *nowhere*. And, just as amputees often seem to localize their strongest sensations in the missing limb, so the hipster longed, from the very beginning, to be *somewhere*. He was like a beetle on its back; his life was a struggle to get *straight*. But the law of human gravity kept him overthrown, because he was always of the minority – opposed in race or feeling to those who owned the machinery of recognition. (n.p.)

Broyard, contrary to the readings of the hipster as rebellious and counter-cultural, insists that the hipster's restlessness, his search for a place in society via the ceaseless and hectic creation of insider (or avant-garde, "a priori," cf. Greif 2010c: 8) knowledge, in fact leads to a reconciliation with this society: "… he still wanted terribly to take part in the cause and effect that determined the real world. Because he had not been allowed to conceive of himself functionally or socially, he had conceived of himself *dramatically*" (Broyard). Retreating "to an abstract stage of *tea* [marijuana] and pretension, losing himself in the multiple mirrors of his *fugitive* chords" (ibid., my emphasis), the hipster became a "victim of his own system" as he "conspicuously consumed himself ":[15]

> The hipster – once an unregenerate individualist, an underground poet, a guerilla – had become a pretentious poet laureate. His old subversiveness, his ferocity, was now so manifestly rhetorical as to be obviously harmless. He was bought and placed in the zoo. He was *somewhere* at last … He was *in-there* … he was back in the American womb. And it was just as hygienic as ever. (ibid.)

Following Broyard, hipster mobility can be characterized as a sort of 'fugitivity' whose longing for place leads the hipster back to where he came from once his (and sometimes her) subversive impulse becomes a mere gesture that, under the

[14] On the history and definition of the concept, cf. Greif 2010c: 7-9; on its etymology from the African Wolof verb hepi ("to see") or hipi ("to open one's eyes") cf. Leland 5-6.

[15] Greif mentions a letter of protest by a "white hipster" published in *Partisan Review* a few months after Broyard's article that, in my reading, paradoxically confirms the latter's diagnosis of the self-consuming, hedonistic hipster. The writer, one Miles Templar, reproaches Broyard for being too serious about "a phenomenon that's basically for kicks" (Greif 2010d: 154).

logics of market capitalism, is "bought" and "placed in the zoo," i.e. stylized and commodified as a fringe (the potential location of alternative geographies and mobilities) that ultimately (re-)stabilizes dominant narratives of mobility. As a guidebook to Portland localities selected for their extravaganza and inaccessibility for those not "in the know," *Fugitives and Refugees* puts these places on the tourist map and thus works towards their institutionalization. Palahniuk seems to be aware of, and to regret, however, the fact that "fringes" change and finally dissolve in this process, to some extent defying commodification: twice in his book, he laments that "the only trouble with the fringe is, it does tend to unravel" (17, 173): "By the time you read this, small parts of it will already be obsolete. People don't live forever. Even places disappear" (173).

Fugitives and Refugees' program is summed up in the headline to its final chapter as "Preserving the Fringe": bizarre places and experiences on the one hand and self-stylizations of its point of observation from "the fringe" of mainstream society (here implied to be located in places one would find in the average guide to Portland) on the other take the forefront in Palahniuk's tales of fugitive appropriation. This appropriation is even spelt out at the end of the book: the narrator declares that this is exactly what he sees as his job, "to assemble and reassemble the stories I hear until I can call them mine" (175). In a *New York Times* review of John Leland's study of *Hip: The History*, David Kamp calls this "The White Negro Problem": this "uniquely American anti-establishmentarian posture" that erases the agents of 'hip' in its 18th-century origins in America's West African slave population, "where hip evolved as a sort of whitey-confounding slanguage" (n.p.). Leland himself sees the mechanisms of 'hip' more positively as a mutual copying of cultural styles (what he calls a "feedback loop of hip," 19), though he emphasizes the fact that this form of cultural mobility is not free from historical inequalities; the appropriation of white styles by African Americans needs to be differentiated from their vice-versa copying. Sociologist Mark Greif's more recent take on the hipster phenomenon takes another perspective, linking the hipster with Pierre Bourdieu's study of the struggles over taste and Thorstein Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumption, and associating the hipster with the socio-economic struggle of the creative classes in the 21st century (cf. 2010a). Hipster knowledge, Greif argues, "compensates for economic immobility" (ibid.) while still being culturally dominant:

> The hipster represents what can happen to middle-class whites, particularly, and to all elites, generally, when they focus on their struggles for their own pleasures and luxuries – seeing these as daring and confrontational – rather than asking what makes their sort of people entitled to them … Or, worse: the hipster is the subcultural type generated by neoliberalism … Hipster values exalt political reaction, masquerading as rebellion … Hipster art and thought … too

> often champion repetition and childhood, primitivism and plush animal [or Santa Claus, for that matter, AG] masks. And hipster anti-authoritarianism bespeaks a ruse by which the middle-class young can forgive themselves for abandoning the claims of counterculture … while retaining the coolness of subculture. (2010b: xvi-xvii)

That Palahniuk frames his Portland account in terms of his own social ascent as a member of this class signifies this deeply US-American reassurance: that you can make it moving West, if not because you have money, then because you are cool, have taste and insider knowledge, and are free to reinvent yourself, even if in fact you are just a hipster tourist. In a lengthy discussion at New York's New School about the hipster a participant from Portland affirms this: "A lot of people go to Portland because it's … like the opposite of New York … if you didn't make it anywhere else, then you move to Portland" (65-66). Hence one of the "hidden mobilities" in Palahniuk's text is really class mobility (cf. Clayton 30) in two directions: tapping into and appropriating the ritual power of disenfranchised groups – no matter whether black, 'ethnic,' or lower-class white (what is often called the hipsters' 'trailer-park chic') – in order to use it as cultural and knowledge capital in the (in this case, literary) marketplace. This is a paradoxical "feedback loop of hip" on yet another level: "'hipster' is actually identifying today a *subculture* of people who are already *dominant*. The hipster is that person, overlapping with declassing or disaffiliating groupings … who in fact aligns himself *both* with rebel subculture *and* with the dominant class, and opens up a poisonous conduit between the two" (Greif 2010c: 9).

Eventually, one has to ask whether "the hipster and DIY artist generation [will] become engaged as citizens as well as creators and consumers" (Abbott 174) – as more than agents of what Jim McGuigan calls "cool capitalism," the contemporary spirit of capitalist production and consumption that absorbs rebellion and neutralizes opposition, based no longer on Protestant asceticism, but rather on an ethics of narcissism, ironic detachment, and hedonism (cf. McGuigan 4; Frank), which Patrice Evans sees as the core "hipster signifiers" (108). The question is not one of hipster-blaming, of celebration or condemnation, but of his/her *function* – notwithstanding his/her *intention* – in contemporary capitalism, "selling out alternative source of social power developed by outsider groups" like Mailer's New Negroes, "spoil[ing]the resistance" as "cool-hunting collaborators and spies" in "an endlessly repeating pattern of co-optation" (Horning 79).

Conclusion

In a 2007 recent article on Palahniuk's short story "Slumming: A Story by Lady Baglady," Ana Manzanas Calvo contends that

> [t]he two-fold division of the city between the blessed and the accursed, the landscapes of belonging and exclusion, as well as the visible and invisible cities … does not usually hold anymore, for the invisible unfolds itself and becomes impossible to pin down in a spatial palimpsest. At the crossing of multiple refractions, the invisible and migrational city is not a monolithic entity; there are conflicts and silences within it, and it is traversed by simulacra. (127)

In *Fugitives and Refugees*, such silences reveal that the *Refugees* in Pahlaniuk's title is but a metaphorical denomination and an emblem of self-stylization; in that way, his stories are "simulacra" which both evoke and eradicate the more troublesome narratives of fugitives and refugees that make up Portland's cultural history and contemporary urban culture.

Cultural geographers Mimi Sheller and John Urry have argued that "urban culture as a whole is a product of mobilities," as "(c)ities are very much the crucibles of cultural juxtaposition, fusion, hybridization and syncretism" (14). The city as a mobile place and a junction of multiple mobilities (cf. ibid. 1) is at the heart of *Fugitives and Refugees*, whose representation of contemporary Portland evokes its historical role as stagecoach entrepot (cf. Winther 255-84), steamship and supply center (231-41, 193-98, 218-25; Abbott 36), railroad hub (294-300), and transport terminal (140-75; historian Carl Abbott even calls Portland the center of a "transportation empire" (39) as "[t]he Columbia [river] made Portland the gateway to the Northwest. It was an avenue of exploration, a pathway for settlement, and an artery of commerce by steamer, railroad, and highway that made – and still makes – Portland the commercial gateway to the interior" (175). Indeed, the book's textual traces of cultural contact with native America, Pacific immigrant mobilities (including that with Hawaiian laborers, whose sole remains in Palahniuk's book is a tiki restaurant),[16] and westward expansion present the reader with a crossroads of hegemonic, underground, and unwelcome movements of various populations. Rather than as a fixed locality, the city emerges as a dynamic site of interaction between such uneven mobilities, including that of the contemporary tourist and the writer of guidebooks. Yet *Fugitives and Refugees*, as I have argued in this essay, simultaneously silences the historical conflicts between these by way of hipster appropria-

[16] On the presence of Hawaiians, who, as early as the late 18th century, worked in the Pacific Northwest in the maritime and beaver trade, as canoemen, sailors, and shipbuilders, cf. Dodds 81.

tion, thereby effectively rewriting US-American myths of westward expansion. In this, it prevents, despite of itself, truly alternative geographies that would also have to be "geographies of responsibility" (Massey), producing "resubjectivation[s]" that "include also a recognition of the responsibilities which attach to those relations and aspects of our identity – including those of our places – through which we, and our places, have been constructed" (14).

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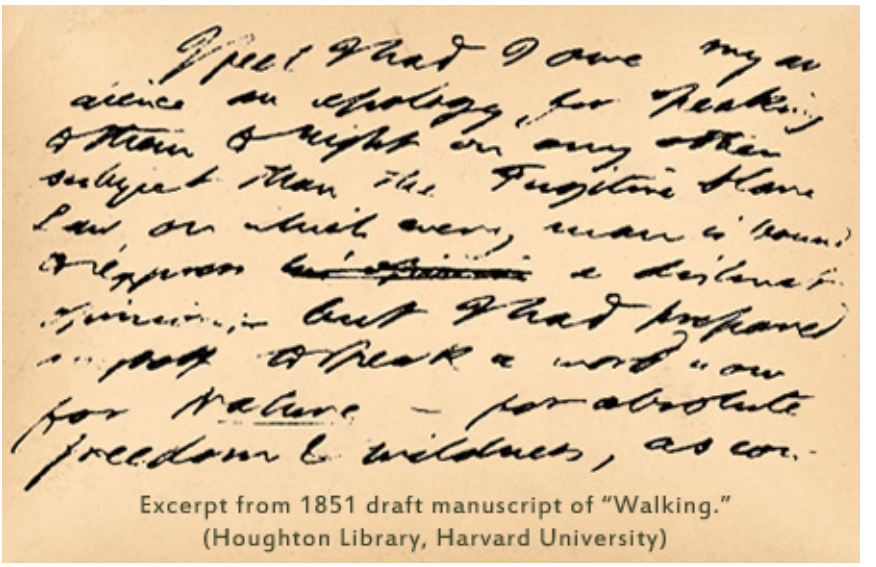
Ideology



Excerpt from 1851 draft manuscript of "Walking."
(Houghton Library, Harvard University)

Photo from www.mappingthoreaucountry.org

Thoreau's Geographies of (Im)mobility

François Specq

Thoreau's essay "Walking," published in 1862, is famous for his statement that "in wildness is the preservation of the world" (202),[1] which has long been a cornerstone of the American environmental movement. But it is simultaneously intriguing because an important part of the essay seems to enthusiastically celebrate westward expansion, which is inseparable from dominion and exploitation of the land. How are we to understand that discrepancy or contradiction? What does it suggest about Thoreau's views of mobility and immobility?

Thoreau as Proponent of Manifest Destiny?

Before I start analyzing Thoreau's various senses of mobility, let me give a descriptive outline of the essay's structure, which has so puzzled readers. "Walking" fundamentally comprises four parts:

1) in the first one, Thoreau celebrates "the art of walking" (185-95);
2) in the second one he stridently extols the West and westward expansion (195-202);
3) in the third one he enthusiastically celebrates the Wild (especially in the guise of a Concord swamp) and local mobility in the East (202-17);
4) in the fourth part he returns to the topic of walking, in a more 'intimate' or subdued way than in the opening pages (217-22).

I will refer to these sections as parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

"Walking" is certainly amenable to different types of readings, but my fundamental assumption is that the essay should be read as an inseparable whole, and, more specifically, that it cannot be adequately understood if one fails to consider the re-

[1] All subsequent parenthetical references are to the 2007 edition.

lation between its two central parts.[2] My own take on the seemingly puzzling structure of Thoreau's essay will thus be to more decidedly focus on its rhetoric.[3]

The most immediate starting point for understanding Thoreau's essay is historical, i.e. the moment and process known as 'westward expansion.' In the 1840 and 1850s, the American nation was under the spell of westward movement, and innumerable discourses articulated the belief in the westward march of civilization and the "Manifest Destiny" of the United States.[4] Thoreau seems to espouse this trend in "Walking," which offers a number of brash statements:

> My needle is slow to settle – varies a few degrees, and does not always point due south-west, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-south-west. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. (195)
>
> Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. (196)
>
> I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. (196)
>
> We go eastward to realize history, and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race – we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. (196)

Many commentators have taken those statements at face value, resulting into two antithetic approaches, but both determined by a sense of Thoreau's complicity with the ideology of Manifest Destiny. Either critics have overlooked, or skirted, Tho-

[2] The textual history of Thoreau's essay is complex, but Thoreau, in a letter to editor and publisher James T. Fields, wrote that it could not be "divided without injury" (2007: 564). I also believe that reading the essay as a whole, and focusing on its overall dynamics is necessary if one is to avoid the pitfalls of selective reading.

[3] The seeming lack of coherence of "Walking" has been central to criticism ever since Walter Harding's judgment that "Walking" is "the least organized of Thoreau's shorter works" (60). William Rossi has resolutely challenged that idea in his illuminating reading of Thoreau's essay in terms of Coleridge's notion of "polarity" as the interplay of "two forces of one power."

[4] The phrase "Manifest Destiny" is generally considered to have first been used by John Louis O'Sullivan in the July-August 1845 issue of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, in which he advocated "the fulfilment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." In the December 27, 1845 issue of the New York *Morning News*, he also argued that the United States should take all of Oregon country from Great Britain "by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent." Thoreau's emphasis on the future also echoes O'Sullivan's famous article "The Great Nation of Futurity."

reau's seemingly imperialist rhetoric, which seems to contradict the standard portrait of Thoreau, or, at any rate, appears to be unimportant. Or, in our age of political correctness, they have pleaded guilty in self-critique, and argued that Thoreau *was* along the same lines as the proponents of Manifest Destiny. In a challenging study, Richard J. Schneider has thus aligned Thoreau's essay with geographer Arnold Guyot's approach in *The Earth and Man* (Boston, 1851), a book which provided a scientific rationale for the ideology of Manifest Destiny, and which is quoted by Thoreau in his essay: "to walk westward into the wild with Thoreau and Guyot is to endanger the wilderness, not to preserve it" (46).[5]

Although the latter approach has been carefully argued, and healthily contributes to a non-hagiographic approach to Thoreau, turning him into a jingoistic expansionist so dramatically runs counter to all that we have come to regard as integral to his life and thought, that it invites further consideration. From what we know of Thoreau, how could he possibly have suddenly adopted the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny? "Walking" itself features some harsh comments on conquering the land:

> Now a days, almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses, and the cutting down of the forest, and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more tame and cheap. (191)
>
> Man and his affairs, church and state – and school, trade and commerce, and manufactures and agriculture … I am pleased to see how little space they occupy in the landscape. (191)

In case such statements would seem to be insufficient proof, let us note that in his correspondence of the very same years he was writing and delivering various versions of "Walking," Thoreau left no doubt as to his stance towards westward expansion. In February 1853, he wrote to his friend H. G. O. Blake:

> The whole enterprise of this nation which is not an upward, but a westward one, toward Oregon, California, Japan, etc., is totally devoid of interest to me, whether performed on foot or by a Pacific railroad. It is not illustrated by a

5 Although he is aware of the complexity of Thoreau's stance, David M. Robinson considers that "his implicit endorsement of the ideology of 'manifest destiny' here indicates the limits of his critical awareness of the oppressive and destructive nature of America's western imperialism" (2004: 155). In another essay, Robinson describes what he perceives to be a tension "between the desire to preserve the wild and the desire to make use of it" (1996: 171). Danielle Follett argues that Thoreau was along the lines of what would now be called "sustainable development" (97). While Follett is right to emphasize Thoreau's pervasive desire to link wildness and civilization (nature contributing to a "healthy civilization"), I think her approach tends to tone down Thoreau's more radical aspects.

> thought, it is not warmed by a sentiment, there is nothing in it which one should lay down his life for, nor even his gloves. … No, they may go their way to their manifest destiny which I trust is not mine. (1958: 296)

While it would be vain to expect full consistency from any given writer or thinker, it is nevertheless difficult to discount such a statement, and consequently to take Thoreau's celebration of westward expansion in "Walking" literally. And, when one starts thinking that he stayed home in Concord most of his life, and only left for brief excursions to places that are situated not to the west, but to the north (Maine), south-east (Cape Cod) and south (New York), and that even his daily walks took him all over Concord, it becomes clear that his stance in part 2 of "Walking" is stridently ironical. I will suggest that Thoreau ventriloquizes the dominant discourse of his time the better to distance himself from it subsequently, as a way of articulating resistance to the hegemony of the standard historical narrative (the one that altogether characterized the expanding Republic). In other words, Thoreau only mimicked imperial discourse, ironically rehearsing the American Republic's rhetoric of progress and expansion, in what is one of his most savage attacks on the prevailing ideologies or assumptions of his time. "Walking" should not be mistaken as endorsement of the existing order, as it was actually a violent indictment of its deficiencies. We need to pay more attention to irony in Thoreau's text, to the nature of voice(s), i.e. also to the question of the speaker, who cannot simplistically be identified as "Thoreau" throughout the essay – although it would be just as erroneous to consider that we are only faced with a theater of voices unrelated to Thoreau.[6]

Thoreau's Ironic Rhetoric of Expansion

I will argue that Thoreau's ironic relation to the epic ethos of the imperial narrative may be seen in two ways: 1) through close attention to Thoreau's rhetoric in part 2 of the essay itself, in which the speaker actually undermines his own celebration of the West; 2) through an analysis of the contrast between part 2 (which celebrates 'expansion') and part 3 (which as passionately celebrates localism and withdrawal, or movement toward an individual paradise within).

Even before he starts celebrating "the West" and "the westward tendency" (198), Thoreau clearly underlines the main thrust of his essay, as he decidedly

[6] Although William Rossi's reading, in "The Limits of an Afternoon Walk," is different from mine, he is similarly careful to refer to "the speaker" in his essay, which also evinces a real sensitivity to irony in Thoreau's prose.

empties "America" of reality, "transcending" it in both its geographical and historical dimensions:

> I walk out into a nature such as the old prophets and poets Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in. You may name it America, but it is not America. There is a truer account of it in Mythology than in any history of America so called that I have seen. (192-93)

That certainly seems to be a far cry from a blunt celebration of Manifest Destiny. What is America the name of? Well, Thoreau warns us (paraphrasing Shakespeare's Juliet), "I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name" (212)[7] – one has certainly encountered more frankly nationalistic thinkers! Even as he dissolves the geographical reality of "America," Thoreau evinces an ahistorical bias, "confess[ing] that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development" (210): mythology takes precedence over history, clearly downplaying "America" as historico-political project. Thoreau privileges an intemporal, or atemporal mythology, which bypasses history: America is no more than a trope, a trope for something to come. One should also note here that while the "old prophets" lived in nature, Thoreau goes there: in other words, nature is not really that of an immemorial mythology, it is not a given, the default situation of mankind, but a project, an intellectual move. And this movement is toward transcendence (see "upward" in Thoreau's letter quoted above, and "heavenward" in the pine apologue [220]), in the sense of transcending the specific conditions of history and geography.

Thoreau also uses incongruity or humorous devices, which, put together, suggest that he is definitely pulling the reader's leg in part 2 of his essay. For instance, his reference to "a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us" (185) is one of Thoreau's tongue-in-cheek puns: Henry, "the Concord hermit," as he was known at the time,[8] preaches long-distance travel! In fact, he literally disorients his readers: even as he claims to acknowledge an all-encompassing magnetism toward the west, he opens his essay on a comparison of the art of walking to travel to the Holy Land, which is situated in the east! He also states that when he goes out for a walk his "needle … always settles between west and south-south-west" (195), but then proclaims that he "must walk toward Oregon" (196), which is situated in the north-west. And it is just so ironical to see "Thoreau" present himself as "con-

[7] See *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2, ll. 47-48: "What's in a name? that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet."

[8] Thoreau was referred to as "the Concord hermit" in John Sullivan Dwight's review of *Walden* in *Dwight's Journal of Music* 5 (12 August 1854): 149-50 (reprinted in Myerson 374), or in a letter to Horace Greeley, editor of *The New York Tribune*. He was also described as "the philosophic hermit."

sent[ing] … with the general movement of the race" (197): Thoreau as historical person did not systematically head for the West, even in his daily walks, contrary to what the speaker claims; and he kept coming back to his home in Concord every night. How can one take him seriously? In fact these are only contradictions if we fail to dissociate the speaker from "Thoreau": the "person" who is at one with westward expansion is not Thoreau, but a narrative voice which he set up to achieve a certain rhetorical effect.

One of Thoreau's ironical devices is his use of paradoxes, for which he had a well-known taste. "Go[ing] to the holy land" (185) does not imply real mobility, as Thoreau defines it, since the art of "sauntering" fancifully refers to "*sans terre*, without land or a home" (185). Hence this "holy land" is not a real place, one reached by "true" displacement: it is both "nowhere" (*u-topia*) and "everywhere" (hence a mental state, a utopia forever lying ahead of us and beckoning us). As Laura Dassow Walls aptly puts it, "Thoreau reclaims the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny to his own use: a mythology of life's journey which conducts us to no place on the map but everywhere on the globe …" (236). One of Thoreau's most trenchant paradoxes in "Walking" is indeed his celebration of the West and of geographical expansion, while he goes on to praise hyper-local walks. The focus on the swamp in part 3 appears as an anticlimax when seen in contrast with part 2. The ironic tone derives an essential part of its power and efficacy from this switch from hyperbole to parabole – it is no coincidence that Thoreau characterizes his daily walks as parabolic ("parabola" 195), as distinct from the hyperbolic ("extreme" 185) propounded in his initial statements.

Thoreau also resorts to sarcasm to question the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny. The narrator evokes "something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds" (197) to refer to westward expansion – an approach which is a far cry from the heavenly claims supposedly attached to westward movement. Thoreau is even rudely sarcastic when he implicitly compares the migrants to the West with cattle unaware that they are driven by "a worm in their tails" (197): are we really meant to believe that Thoreau, who prided himself on marching to the beat of "a different drummer" (1971: 326), seriously considered himself as participating in the progress of the nation? The overall comparison is throughout with cattle and animals, as in "herd of men" (198). Thoreau animalizes the migrants to the west – "who would act the angel acts the beast," he suggests, *à la Pascal*[9] – crucially associating "true" angels, not with linear progress, but with movement "to and fro" (191).

More generally, the essay displays a combination of the grand and the trivial that points to irony: the speaker seamlessly moves from a grotesque comparison of

[9] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* #329: "L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête" ("Man is neither angel nor beast, and the misfortune is that he who would act the angel acts the beast").

men with cattle to a seemingly lofty Latin quote ("Ex Oriente lux; ex Occidente FRUX," 199), which actually sounds like a histrionic parody of learned discourse meant to justify the westward progress of civilization. As though to charitably caution us against any temptation to take his words at face value, Thoreau paradoxically accumulates learned quotations and references to justify his argument against culture – he has just declared that you "go eastward to realize history [and culture] … [and] westward as into the future" (196). "It is too late to be studying Hebrew; it is more important to understand even the slang of today," he claims (201): "slang," really? Too late to study the classics of Antiquity? Well, what did Thoreau do at Harvard? And in "Walking," he actually inserts Latin phrases ("sanctum sanctorum" 205, besides the one quoted above) and a Greek quotation of "the Chaldean oracles" (216). Although it does point to a sense of belatedness, "Walking" testifies more to an accumulation than to a rejection of culture – I will get back to this cultural nurturing ground which Thoreau calls "mould" (214).

While "Walking" features an incredible compilation of the most stridently chauvinistic texts touting American exceptionalism (197-201), we come to see this passage in a different light when we realize that the speaker rehearses what had been a *topos* for at least two centuries, namely the *translatio imperii* theme (i.e., transfer of rule or temporal power).[10] This age-old theme was very popular from the Renaissance proponents of colonization (such as Richard Hakluyt or John Smith), through George Herbert (who wrote in "The Church Militant" that "Religion stands on tip-toe in our land / Ready to pass to the *American* strand" [196]), Cotton Mather (who echoed it in the opening of the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1702),[11] Benjamin Franklin,[12] or James Thomson (whose poem "Liberty" celebrates the westward progress of liberty from Greece to Rome to Britain) – among many others – down to Walt Whitman's "Passage to India." Indeed, Thoreau concludes this section of "Walking" (201) by quoting one of the most famous versions of this idea, a line from the last stanza of George Berkeley's "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America" (written in 1726, but not published until 1752, when it became very popular):

> Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;[13]
> The four first Acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;
> Time's noblest Offspring is the last.

[10] On this notion, see Le Goff.

[11] "I WRITE the *Wonders* of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of *Europe*, to the *American Strand* ..." (opening line of the unpaginated "General Introduction").

[12] For an overview of Franklin's use and familiarity with this theme, as well as of its use by Franklin's friend George Webb, see Lemay 241.

[13] Thoreau substitutes "star" for "course."

The companion notion was the *translatio studii* (i.e., transfer of learning), to which the speaker turns further down in the essay:

> If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length perchance the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man – as there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? (200)

One can only adequately understand "Walking" if one pays attention to its tight intertextuality. Thoreau's essay displays a *parody* of imperial rhetoric: in the service of a *reductio ad absurdum* of the westward narrative, the idiom of imperialism is used to react against imperial discourse (*translatio imperii*) and the popular assumptions of cultural nationalism (*translatio studii*). Thoreau's purpose is to curb American presumption. He first seems to make his own the Americans' exalted view of their place in history – a view that ultimately amounts to the claim that the country's mission is divine, in agreement with the ideology known as American exceptionalism – the better to highlight his dissent, which he voices through his focus on the swamp in part 3. In the contrast between continental progress and burying in a New England swamp, there is something akin to a moralist's reminder of the humility of the human condition – a stance that is also made clear in the tone of one of his more memorable sentences: "To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it" (195). The animal tropes similarly bring the pioneers down to the level of animals, and – in case one would be tempted to charge Thoreau with haughtiness and condescension – it should be noted that Thoreau does not exonerate himself from that status, as his celebration of the swamp turns man into a creature enjoying an atavistic relish of *enfouissement*, although one that is simultaneously spiritualized.

The pivotal moment, in this respect, is the complete semantic reorientation or refocusing highlighted at the beginning of part 3: "The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the world" (202). There from "the Wild" becomes the outskirts of Concord, Massachusetts, thus radically taking the exact opposite position to transcontinental mobility. This is in line with Thoreau's well-known use of paradox, as described by Nancy Rosenblum: "rejecting the expected word or thought for its opposite is in keeping with a determination to disorient readers and awaken them to fresh meanings" (Thoreau 1996: xiii). Rhetorically speaking, as a

consequence of his folding the West back upon the Wild, Thoreau re-channels (or re-*orients*!) the rhetorical energy accumulated through his celebration of westward expansion in part 2 into his celebration of the wild in part 3.

I thus want to suggest that Thoreau seemingly slips into the dominant rhetoric the better to subvert ideological inscriptions and promote his own dissenting views. Thoreau sought to break the spell, and "Walking" actually is a strategy or device meant to overturn widely-accepted notions, and to dismantle the historical discourse on westward movement.

Overturning the Standard National Narrative

Thoreau's strategy operates on a variety of levels, which simultaneously sketch some of his most central stances.

The most salient change of focus is the reorientation of the essay from space to place, from the distant (transcontinental spatiality) to the local, from progress to "burying." Instead of a vectorized relation to the land, part 3, as it focuses on Thoreau's local mobility Back East, emphasizes what French theorist Guy Debord called "*dérive*" or drifting. It reinstates a contrast between outward and inward mobilities, to the clear benefit of the latter. Thoreau meant to counter the excess of *sense* – 'meaning' and 'direction' – inherent in westward expansion and the standard historical narrative. The essay's structure revolves around a contrast between westward progress as unidimensional/unidirectional advance, and a process of *repeated* departure. The latter is repetitive – or iterative (from Latin *iter*, way) – but not mechanical: what matters is less that Thoreau returns home every night, than that he departs every day. Unidimensional advance is referred to in the essay as "locomotiveness" (211), a term which suggests constant progress (from one locality to another), restlessness, mechanical motion, and is here associated with the movement of cattle.

The second essential change is a refocusing on a dystopian place. This had been prepared by Thoreau's amused celebration of the disused Old Marlboro Road in the first part:

> However, there are a few old roads that may be trodden with profit, as if they led some where now that they are nearly discontinued. There is the Old Marlboro Road, which does not go to Marlboro now methinks, unless that is Marlboro where it carries me. (193)

The swamp, as supreme embodiment of "a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure" (202), is also a place that, within American history, economy, and so-

ciety, is fundamentally dystopian,[14] as it leads away from America as world of progress and commerce, and away from a movement of appropriation (as embodied by imperial frontier narratives), toward what Lawrence Buell has called an "aesthetics of relinquishment" (143-79):

> Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. … I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village. (204)

As opposed to a celebration of "the West" as a framework in which spatial and historical narratives are interlocked and commensurate, the swamp passage features the incommensurable, the heterogeneous, the dystopian – and also, I will suggest, the "dyschronic," in the sense that it is related to "deep time." The West is "planar" (flat, two-dimensional), while the swamp is "planetary."[15] Thoreau also emphasizes the unsurveyable nature of the swamp ("survey" is a word that is used several times) as opposed to the survey of history and of the land in part 2. When the land is surveyed, it is at the expense of the real itself, as Thoreau – who was a professional surveyor – forcefully suggests through his striking apologue of the "Prince of Darkness" (191). Thoreau here embodies the Transcendentalists' understanding of the intellectual or "scholar's" function as that of awakening the intellect in others, so as to free their "imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts"[16]: the swamp itself is what Emerson called an "imprisoned thought," or, in more contemporary terms, a return of the historically repressed, and it also expresses the pent-up truth that there are gaps in continental expansion.

The third change of focus is the shift from the physical to the metaphysical: the structure of Thoreau's essay leads from physical west to metaphysical/metaphorical west, but this metaphysical west is in no way beyond *(meta)* but within the locus of ordinary experience – which after all is never so ordinary, as Thoreau makes clear, but a source of eternal beauty:

> When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever an infinite number of evenings,

[14] For a fully-developped study of the place of the swamp in nineteenth-century American culture, see Miller. The reappraisal of swamps analyzed by Miller was still by and large limited to such "thoughtful Americans" as "artists and writers" (3), the traditional negative associations remaining widespread, especially as regarded a local environment, as opposed to distant, exotic ones such as those of Florida or Latin America.

[15] I am here echoing notions developed by Dimock.

[16] "I have quite other slaves to free than those negroes, to wit, imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts" (Orth and Ferguson 80).

> and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still. (221)

This metaphorical West is actually in the East, in a way that echoes theological tropes and especially John Donne's conceit in his poems "The Annunciation and Passion," in which he writes "As in plain Maps, the furthest West is East," and "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward:" "Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West / This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East" – a rhetoric which Thoreau also echoed in the conclusion of *Walden*.[17]

Poetics of (Im)mobility

Rhetorically, what takes place in part 3 of "Walking" is a 'denarrativization' of space. As Thoreau breaks the hold of the Westering myth, space is no longer absorbed and dissolved in a grand narrative or teleological script, since the essay *resists finality* and the restless trajectories of national expansion. Space is instead unfolded through poetics: plot displaces plot – the heterogeneous plot of land ("spot" and "plot" 204) with its attendant poetics of place displaces the plot of the spatio-historical narrative. The purpose is not really to produce the reverse of mobility, i.e. immobility, but a different form of mobility: a mobility of connection vs. a mobility of appropriation. That form of mobility includes slowness but is not reduced to it (and, after all, westward expansion, although it was seemingly inexorable, was not that fast: through Thoreau's text, we watch it as a scene in slow motion).[18] What most deeply defines the mobility of connection is not so much slowness as quality of movement: Thoreau's essay emphasizes movement "to and fro" (191), the non-linear, forever tentative mobility inherent in living a "border life," in Thoreau's memorable phrase:

> For my part, I feel, that with regard to Nature, I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world, into which I make occasional and transient forays only,

[17] For an analysis of this theme in John Donne's poetry, see Goldberg. Goldberg shows that Donne developed the East/West tropes in ways that elaborated on the central metaphor of Christ as sun/Son. Thoreau, who was quite familiar with the works of the English metaphysical poets, and with the writings of John Donne in particular, echoes this tradition in the "Conclusion" of Walden, whose concluding sentence is "The sun is but a morning star," the latter phrase being one of Christ's names ("ecce vir oriens," in the terms of the Vulgate).

[18] In a famous story, Thoreau actually claims that going on foot is the fastest mode of travel: "One says to me, 'I wonder that you do not lay up money; you love to travel; you might take the cars and go to Fitchburg to-day and see the country.' But I am wiser than that. I have learned that the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot" (1971: 53).

> and my patriotism and allegiance to the state into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper. (217)

Thoreau's emphasis on a "border life" was deliberately meant to counter the overall focus on the historical and geographical complex of the 'Frontier,' or limit of the settled regions of the USA as these gradually moved west. As Thoreau distances himself from any dragooning into the cohorts of westward migrants to become instead "a moss-trooper,"[19] his resistance to the primacy of the historical narrative trains the eye of the reader to different modes of reading space, or relating to space. His passion for the swamp, a result of refocusing and magnifying, is thus bent on recovering mysteries. As opposed to the standard narrative of progress that brings everything into the bland light of conquest and does away with mysteries – in which a mobility of appropriation erases, or conceals, mystery – Thoreau promotes a mobility of connection, with a "psychogeographical" (Debord) emphasis on recapturing one's physical and emotional ties to one's environment. In the swamp, the walker is – literally and metaphorically – in the thick of things, not in the thin of vectorized space[20]:

> When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable, and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place – a *sanctum sanctorum*. (205)

Thoreau defamiliarizes the standard historical narrative by framing it in his essay – and thus containing it and putting it into perspective – and by recovering a cosmopolitan cultural archive, as against the planarity of the westering myth. Thoreau's swamp beautifully encapsulates the creative tension of the vernacular and the cosmopolitan. Whereas "the world with which we are commonly acquainted leaves no trace, and it will have no anniversary" (218), attentiveness preserves or recovers the world of culture, as the rich intertextual and intercultural layering of his essay testifies. The swamp is associated with a plurilingual vision, in which the *lingua*

[19] "Moss-trooper," strictly speaking, refers to "a member of any of the marauding gangs which, in the mid 17th cent., carried out raids across the 'mosses' of the Scottish Border; a Border pillager or freebooter" (Oxford English Dictionary), a meaning that is consonant with Thoreau's insistance on living a "border life." However, Thoreau also literalizes or re-grounds the expression, suggesting his fondness for mosses in a way that seems to criticize "mass-troopers" or regimented individuals. Thoreau certainly likes to suggest he is a latter-day outlaw or undisciplined individual.

[20] See Debord 1955: "The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground); the appealing or repelling character of certain places – all this seems to be neglected."

franca of conquest is replaced by the *gramatica parda* (or "wild and dusky knowledge," 214) of inhabitation, as Thoreau is eager not to replicate the semantic hegemonies of imperial rhetoric. Whereas standard discourse claims that "it's too late to be studying Hebrew" (201), Thoreau demonstrates an intense awareness and practice of sedimented culture: he propounds a literature that is the custodian of all eras and cultures, one that rejects a *translatio studii* which is the cultural counterpart of the *translatio imperii*.

"We have advanced by leaps to the Pacific, and left many a lesser Oregon and California unexplored behind us," Thoreau rhapsodized in the conclusion to his narrative "Ktaadn" (1848; it subsequently became part one of *The Maine Woods*). The swamp can be analyzed as a return of the (historical and cultural) repressed. Thoreau was undoubtedly eager to explode the force of containment and dominion of the standard, nearly monopolistic narrative. As opposed to the unidirectional, the linear, the planar, Thoreau foregrounds a model that is a palimpsest, a layered archive. It clearly favors sedimentation over dissemination – westward expansion only disseminates culture, rather than 'improving' it. The swamp fuses the dystopic with the utopic.

Conclusion

As he dislocates, and re-locates, the West, Thoreau counters the *hubris* of the nation and debunks Americanocentrism, i.e. its exceptionalism and celebration of its predominant world view. In so doing, he also breaks out of the grip of the narrative of "the West" as unique trajectory, one repressing spatial and historical heterogeneities within the nation – as he had also done in "Ktaadn" – and he resists the presupposition that the USA is socially and politically a homogeneous whole.

Such a stance is inseparable from an alternative sense of mobility. Thoreau may seem to be immobile, not because he does not move, but because he refuses to synchronize with commonly-accepted social and historical rhythms. There is a form of hidden or secret mobility in Thoreau, one which he encapsulates in his notion of "border life." What Thoreau does in "Walking" is to recover alternative mobilities, as opposed to the simplistic mobility associated with the mythology of westward expansion (of course westward expansion as a historical phenomenon was complex). He complexifies, 'de-linearizes' mobility; he also suggests that mobilities cannot exist or be beneficial without relative immobilities or moorings: it is because Thoreau returns home every night that he can benefit from the mobility offered by his afternoon walk.

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