Women on the road

Regendering Narratives of Mobility

Enevold, Jessica

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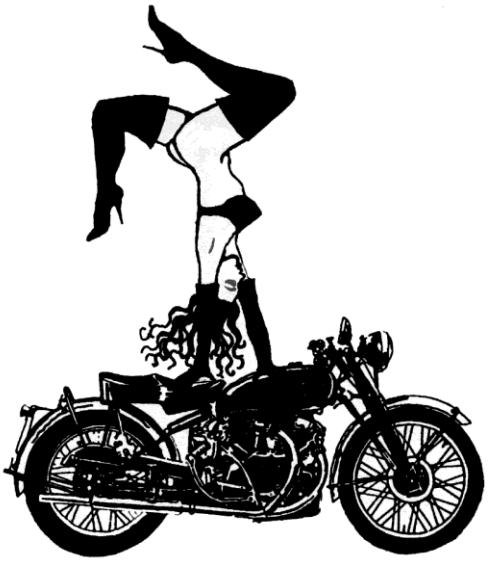

Blekinge Institute of Technology
Department of Human Work Science, Media Technology, and Humanities
and
Göteborg University
Department of English
2003

For :

Grandmother Mariana

Mamma Made & Aunt Kaje

Isak & Anders

Bosse & Karin

Titti

&

The Girls

Jessica Enevold

Women on the Road

Regendering Narratives of Mobility

Doctoral Dissertation

to be publicly discussed in English at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Campus Gräsvik, Room 2304A, on October 18 at 13.15, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by due permission of the Faculty of Arts of Göteborg University

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is founded on the premise that traditional discourses of travel and mobility are inherently masculinist, that is, travel is seen as a masculinity rite-of passage for the Euro-American male, shaping his subjectivity through the othering and marginalization of women. Taking Jack Kerouac's *On the Road (*1957), the epitome of masculinist travel literature, as a starting point for an examination of women's road narratives, it poses the questions: what happens when women abandon their marginal positions and take to the road? How do authors write women into moving subjects? To answer these questions I investigate a number of mainly North American late twentieth-century narratives of the road, for example, Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1980), Scott's *Thelma & Louise* (1991), Morrison's *Paradise* (1997), Lopez' *Flaming Iguanas* (1997), and Tuttle's *The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road* (1999). I also refer to pre-twentieth-century texts. What the texts have in common is a concern with women's mobility.

Methodologically this study posits itself at the crossroads of feminist, cultural, literary, and sociological inquiries. It is neither a pure literary-historical nor narratological investigation, its interest lies in exploring the topos of the road. The thesis consists of: an introduction, a chapter presenting my theoretical departures, two published and two forthcoming articles, and a brief conclusion. Each of the articles proposes terms that can be used to discuss "women on the road" from a feminist theoretical point of view. By gendering the discourse of travel and mobility I aim to renew the understanding of women in conjunction with mobility. By coining new signifiers I encourage readings of representations of mobile women in literature and film from a revised, feminist perspective.

In the first article I propose two alternative female on-the-road subjects: the *model* and the *stripper*, insisting on their roles as female agents rather than sexual objects. In the second article I investigate "the maternal conditioning" of mobility. To describe the situation of women in a network of overlapping discourses on motherhood and mobility from a feminist perspective, I suggest two cartographic neologisms: *materotopia* and *materotopology*.The third article emphasizes the significance of the roadmovie *Thelma & Louise* for the figuring of "successful" representations of *female mobile subjects*. Mobile women regender the road narrative in two steps: an *appropriative turn* and a *metafictional turn*." The new features emerging with women's textual appropriation of the road, I claim, must be appreciated as constituting a *new aesthetic of the road*.

The fourth article synthesizes the regendering performed by Second-Wave feminist narratives (e.g. *Thelma and Louise)* with the Third-Wave feminist sensibility displayed in collections like Goode's *Drive* (2000). This generation female travelers demonstrate that women are no longer only mother figures waiting at home, sexual objects on the margin of the story, or passengers in the back of the car; they are mobilized, active, and empowered subjects, steering their own destiny.

Keywords: female mobile subject, feminist theory, feminism, narratives of mobility, mobility, materotopia, materotopology, regendering, road topos, travel, travel writing, women-on-the-road.

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This is the 2nd printing of the thesis. A few minor errors have been corrected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When you learn how to drive a car you are encouraged to look often and carefully in the rear view mirrors. But only looking for reflections is not enough. You have to turn your head as well. As I now conclude my thesis project and look a long way back and to the sides, I see so many people—family, friends, and colleagues—that I would like to include here for a collective "thank you for helping me down the road." Let me here only mention a few of this large crowd.

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INTRODUCTION

> Marylou, why are you traveling around the country like this and what are your womanly intentions concerning the shroud?
>
> ----*On the Road* (1957)
> Jack Keroauc

> I think I've got a knack for this shit.
>
> ----*Thelma & Louise* (1991)
> Ridley Scott

> Magdalena and I are gonna cross America on two motorcycles. […] And we'll be spitting our mango pits like fucking bullets if anyone says anything about our huge Latin American breasts.
>
> ----*Flaming Iguanas* (1998)
> Erika Lopez

> Throw a few things in the car and squeal away from the curb. Mother Road is always there for you.
>
> ----*The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road* (1999)
> Cameron Tuttle

"Thelma and Louise"-Discourse and Narratives of Mobility

In 1991, the women at the Feminist Research Institute (FRI) of the University of New Mexico were getting ready for the annual University Halloween party. The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings were being held and the projected outcome of the sessions was not exactly what the feminist community was looking for—Thomas was getting off with a clean bill. Some kind of demonstration was called for, and the idea that arose was to go to the party dressed up as Thelma and

Louise, arriving with guns and a take-no-prisoners mind-set.[1]

This is not the only time the 1991 road movie *Thelma & Louise* and its protagonists Thelma and Louise have lent image and frame of mind to people feeling frustrated by overwhelming gender inequality, sexism, and patriarchal law.[2] As will become evident in my thesis, *Thelma & Louise* has come to stand as a role model—in fiction as well as in real-life situations—for counter-discursive engagement with repressive systems that legitimize oppression of women. Jon Katz' article from 1998 makes the connection between the movie, the Hill case, and their iconic importance to feminist politics very explicit:

> Anybody who went to see *Thelma & Louise* a few years ago might have been prepared for the sound and fury that followed the Anita Hill fiasco, when the sight of all those befuddled, vacillating, middle-aged male senators caused women to blow one of the biggest collective gaskets in political history. After all, the roar of women (and a few men) cheering in movie theaters all across the country when Thelma and her buddy blew up the lughead's oil truck was unforgettable, and helped punctuate a defining moment in our shared popular and political culture. That the men involved in the Senate hearings on Clarence Thomas's confirmation "didn't get it" touched an equally deep chord among otherwise politically diverse women, and their reaction to the senators' cluelessness illustrated just how broadly feminism might alter American politics. (n. pag.)

The film left a legacy, "the Thelma and Louise-style

[1] I would like to thank Virginia Scharff and Cindy Tyson, the Center for the Southwest, at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, for this very telling anecdote. The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas-hearings were held October 11-13, 1991.

[2] Race was of course, also an important issue of race that figured in the Hill/Thomas hearings. I will discuss it in the next chapter "Theoretical Departures."

empowerment," states Barbara Miller (210). Quoting columnist Jon Katz, she submits, "the '*Thelma and Louise* discourse'—not the film itself—played and continues to play an important role in the political mobilization of women" (205).

Like Katz and Miller I see the important role the "*Thelma and Louise*-discourse" has played for feminist mobilization. However, my focus is on a particular aspect of the film's mobilization, namely the regendering of mobility. Behind the powerful impact, influence on, and usefulness for feminist politics of *Thelma and Louise,* I see the regendering of a traditional model of mobility. As I understand it, the much debated film supplied its audience with a controversial regendered representation of the way women move around in public space—here represented by the road—as bodies among other (and for the context most important *male*) bodies. With *Thelma & Louise* the road narrative traditionally construed around the poles of masculine notions of (auto)mobility and feminine roadside attractions, and the subject formulations that come with this polarization, were challenged by a gender reversal.

The traditionally construed road narrative that I am here referring to is the "Kerouacian" road story *On the Road* (1957), which I have taken as a starting point for my readings of a number of women-on-the-road narratives. What my study has in common with, for example, Ronald Primeau's investigation of road stories is the assumption that the Kerouacian narrative more or less epitomizes the road narrative. Primeau writes:

> Although road stories are indebted to a variety of older travel forms including the pilgrimage, the Bildungsroman, and the picaresque—the genre began to be recognized in its own right only as readers began to recognize familiar patterns of structure, theme and style closer to home. Beginning about 1900, cross-country auto trips were popular

> topics for essays and short stories, and for several decades mainstream writers from Theodore Dreiser (*Hoosier Holiday*, 1916) to John Steinbeck (*Grapes of Wrath*, 1939) included elements of the highway quest in their works. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), however, *brought formal recognition of the cultural ritual, and the genre began to accumulate its own distinctive features*. Others followed over the next four decades either repeating with some variations the road pattern Kerouac had made popular or trying to get out from under his influence. (8, emphasis added)

The Kerouacian road narrative, as Primeau understands it,[3] has come to stand for the archetypal modern road story. In his study, *Romancing the Road* (1996), Primeau categorizes Kerouac's cult novel of the beat generation as an example of the "literature of the American Highway" by which he means "fiction and nonfiction prose narratives by and about Americans traveling the highway" (ix). By this definition he has limited his study by excluding transportation by other means than the car (although he does trace the literary influence "before the coming of the auto"), other media (poetry, songs, film), and "accounts written by either foreign observers in America or Americans abroad" (ix). In my thesis, I deal with the road narrative from a different angle, focusing specifically on *gender* and *mobility*. Unlike Primeau, I also include other media, such as film; I analyze novels that treat transportation by means of walking, hitchhiking, or going by train, and I take account of narratives written by non-Americans, and non-Americans hitting other roads than the U.S. highways. Let me hasten to add that my focus is not on the specificity of these narrative genres or media but on the interest in mobility that they all have in common. Because of the different focus and different scope of my

[3] And other critics such as Kris Lackey.

thesis than Primeau's, I have decided not to use "road story" as a primary term. Instead I would like to introduce and use another term for the narratives included for analysis: *narrative of mobility*. It is a term that encompasses any example of highway literature that Primeau includes in his study.

Stories of travel and of the road are in my view more than road or travel narratives, they are narratives of mobility. From my perspective, narratives of mobility are stories about gendered mobility,[4] that is, they are stories of how mobility has been exercised by men and women. The term "narrative of mobility" in my study signals that what is under scrutiny is the aforementioned traditional gender polarization of men and women when it comes to travel, questing, hitting the road, etc. The dichotomy mobility/sessility is thus understood as a *gendered* dichotomy (binary opposition), which means that mobility/movement is regularly associated with masculinity, whereas sessility/stillness/fixity is associated with femininity.

Departing from the Kerouacian road narrative of the 1950s into two different directions, one backwards in time, one forwards, I examine a number of narratives of mobility (listed in the article presentations below) in terms of what they have to say about women's and men's mobility. I trace the road narrative backwards to see whence contemporary narratives of mobility stem, and I go forward to investigate the "regendering" of the narrative of mobility, in terms of what happens to a road narrative when its protagonists no longer are male, but female.

By proposing the term narrative of mobility I maintain a focus on the gender aspect while allowing for an analytical scope wide enough to encompass traces of these stories' historical past outside American literature. It also permits me to include road narratives as Primeau defines

[4] It is also about the gendering of space and place. I will return to this aspect in my theory chapter as well as in Articles 1-4.

them. Consequently, in my use of the term "road narrative" the road takes on a wider significance. The road is nevertheless to be understood as a physical space, or its representation as such, that is possible to travel. The metaphorical use of the road meaning "life path" is nonetheless employed in my thesis, but only in the context of illustrating how far-reaching the gendering of the road goes, and how far what I call the "language of mobility" dictates women's movements by associating them with sexuality. To exemplify this vocabulary, deeply entrenched in literary expression and everyday discourse, a "fast" woman is a promiscuous woman, "trafficking" signifies selling women's bodies, and a "wayward woman" is a wanton female. Women's mobility is consistently linked to sexuality, and traditionally, women's sexuality is associated with immorality and should be contained or controlled. Historically, mobility carries negative social and racial connotations, including male subjects in the categories of vagrants and gypsies. However, mobility associated with women has been placed at an even lower and socially more abhorred rung of the mobility ladder.

Using the term "narrative of mobility" allows me to include literature in which women take to the road in other ways than using the automobile. For example, Sylvie in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1980) is a vagrant who does not make use of the car, but wanders or jumps on trains like a hobo. What is at stake, however, is her mobility, contested by upset villagers who would prefer she stay at home, "keeping house." The same thing goes for Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1776), in which Moll makes use of a number of modes of transportation including horse-carriages, ships, and walking rather than the car. Her movements exceed the normative frameworks that prescribe "honorable" and suitable occupations for women, namely staying in the house, caring for the home and the children, and thus assisting in the upholding of the patriarchal model of existence. *Moll Flanders* is also a British novel about traveling

mainly in Europe, and thus an example of a road narrative from outside the U.S. border.

Despite historical digressions into pre-automobile time realms, like that of *Moll Flanders*, my main focus is on twentieth-century narratives of mobility that are recognizable as stories of women on the highway. I consequently use *both* the terms "road narrative" and "narrative of mobility," but I subordinate the road narrative to my overarching project of investigating attempts at regendering narratives of mobility. Contemporary road narratives taking place on the highways pose a particular challenge to regendering because they are, on the one hand, modeled after the masculinist Kerouacian narrative, and, on the other, they engage the masculinist paradigm of automobility. Cars and driving have been, and continue to be, generally associated with masculinity (see, for example, Polk). The road narrative that includes women in the driver's seat is thus a particularly interesting phenomenon giving rise to questions like: how does women's presence on the road alter the Kerouacian road narrative and the narrative of mobility?

To return to the movie *Thelma & Louise*, this film was a factor, perhaps the most pivotal one, in effecting vital changes in the Kerouacian road narrative, revising its status from being exclusively a masculinist buddy road trip, a project of masculine identity-formation, to a possible vehicle also for the feminist voyage of the female I.[5] With *Thelma & Louise*, something important happened. Although I do not regard the movie as a complete success as far as women's liberation goes—the two women do

[5] It should be noted that by saying that the masculinist road trip changes into feminist voyage, I do not preclude the possibility that the masculinist buddy road trip has survived and continues to exist. It is outside the scope of this thesis to investigate what happens to the road narrative in which no women enter as protagonists. It would undoubtedly be interesting to follow men on the road, and also men and women *together* on the road. An interesting example of two men and a woman traveling the road is the Mexican-American road movie *Y tu mamá también [And Your Mother Too]* from 2002 (Cuarón). It is a fascinating film because it seems to combine a masculinist and a feminist road narrative. It appears to represent both traditional and regendered mobility.

die in the end—I claim that with this narrative the drama of the road definitively took a first *regendering* turn.[6] It injected explosive fuel into the feminist project of *appropriating* the geographic and generic space of the road, enabling the figuring of what I have termed *female mobile subjectivity* in cultural representation.

I make two main claims in this dissertation. The first is literary and the second sociological. First, as females take the role of protagonists, the road narrative changes. My readings demonstrate that women-on-the-road regender the road narrative and the narrative of mobility. The new features that emerge with women's appropriation of the road—feminist-inflected characters, plot, content and the re-scripting and de-scripting strategies, which will be introduced below—must be appreciated as constituting a *new aesthetic of the road*. To recognize this aesthetic as something "new," gender must be seen as a transformative rather than complementary category, one which changes the road narrative rather than merely adding a gendered appendix to an otherwise unaffected canon of travel or road literature.

The second claim is that new female *mobile* subjects emerge as a result of women's novel access (in modernity) to actual movement and public space. This physical *mobilization* of female subjectivity is crucial to the political mobilization of women. The first and second claim are linked; as narratives of mobility are regendered, new representations of female mobile subjectivity become available that are useful in the political mobilization of women.

Exposition of Thesis and Presentation of Article Contents

The dissertation is a compilation thesis and consists of seven parts. First a short introduction, a longish presentation of theoretical departures,

[6] By "first" I mean the first regendering attempt that has had a lasting impact.

Articles 1-4, that is, four articles of which the first two are published and two are forthcoming, and a brief conclusion.[7] The introduction accounts for the feminist inspiration of the study, launches the concept of the "narrative of mobility," and presents the contents of Articles 1, 2, 3, and 4, which make up the main body of the dissertation text. The chapter "Theoretical Departures" accounts for the way I read literature leaning on feminism and cultural studies, briefly discusses mobility not only in relation to gender but also race and subjectivity, and introduces the frame of reference within which the thesis moves. Opening with the wider field of travel, I go on to the discussion of mobility, then to travel literature in general, and finally to the road narrative specifically. Since the framework of travel is extremely broad, and my focus does not lie on defining travel per se but on the regendering of narratives of mobility and the formation of subjectivity that comes with it, I have kept the section on travel fairly general, transferring relevant references that can be of interest to the reader to the footnotes. The section on mobility, however, contains more explanations and more specific examples. The section on travel literature contains a few more detailed accounts of travel research, and centers on women's travel narratives. Finally, in the section on the road narrative, I account for a number of attempts at describing the road narrative, and give my own assessment of the genre.

Articles 1, 2, 3, and 4, which follow upon "Theoretical Departures," analyze fictional as well as non-fictional texts. Each of the articles deals with the question of women on the road from a different angle. All focus on the regendering of a number of narratives of mobility. Each was written separately for a different audience over an extended period of

[7] Because of the compilation format, the reader will encounter certain repetitions in the body of the dissertation; as each article contains an introduction to the topic of women on the road, the reader will come across some of the same material in more than one place. Also, let the reader at this time be alerted to the shifting voice of my critical enterprise. Although distinctly my own, it is not the unified style of expression one may expect from a monographic exposition.

time; the first article was completed as early as the fall of 1997, the last one as recently as June 2003. Articles 1, 2, and 4 address cross-disciplinary audiences with connections to social sciences, whereas article 3 is written foremost with a literary audience in mind. The articles have been reformatted to accord with the style sheet of the dissertation and errors detected in the published versions have been corrected.

I have written this thesis in alignment with the tradition of feminist criticism that focuses on investigating narratives of female development in the service of literary interpretation that emphasizes its feminist designs.[8] I also ally myself with sociological/cultural criticism concerned with gendering theoretical discourse.[9] For the purpose of renewing the understanding of women in conjunction with mobility I have proposed a range of terms, that is, metaphors and concepts, which can be used to discuss "women on the road" from a feminist point of view. In the article presentations below I very briefly state what these metaphors and concepts are, leaving the work of conceptualizing them in detail to the articles themselves.

Article 1, "Men and Women On the Move: Dramas of the Road," published in *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (2000), comments on three post-World War II-novels: *On the Road* (1957) by Jack Kerouac , *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (1976) by Tom Robbins, and *Highways and Dancehalls* (1995) by Diana Atkinson. It sets up the gendered literary stage of departure for the study by conceptualizing the Kerouacian narrative of the road as a masculinist identity project depending on the "othering" of

[8] For examples of such studies, see: *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983) by Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland; *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and social Change* (1989) by Rita Felski, and *Old Wives' Tales, and Other Women's Stories* (1998) by Tania Modleski.

[9] See Janet Wolff, "On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism" (1993); Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola, "The Disoriented Tourist: The Figuration of the Tourist in Contemporary Cultural Critique" (1997); and Elsbeth Probyn, *Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies* (1993).

women. Against this masculinist genre pattern, the article investigates the attempts at putting women behind the wheel in two other novels (named above). Building on Janet Woolf's famous essay which points out the gender-biased use of the terminology of "travel," in cultural criticism, I try to find gendered positions for Robbins' and Atkinson's road heroines that emphasize their movement without trapping them in the masculinist narrative of mobility. I take the cue from Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola, two Finnish sociologists, who extend Woolf's criticism of the use of seemingly gender-neutral concepts. They dismantle Walter Benjamin's articulation of the modern subject, the flâneur, and Zygmunt Bauman's postmodern subjectivities (the vagabond, stroller, tourist, and player) in order to show that they are highly gendered. Jokinen and Veijola suggest coining new signifiers, for example, the au-pair to denote alternatives to the subject epitomizing postmodern man. Following their admonition to make up new subject-signifiers, I advocate the *stripper* and the *model* as alternative terms for "on-the-road subjects" in order to escape the masculinism inherent in the concept of the traveler.

Article 2, "The Motherhood of the Road: From *Paradise Lost* to *Paradise*," published in *Interpreting the Maternal Organisation* (2002) edited by Heather Höpfl and Monika Kostera, investigates the connection between the trope of travel, the topos of the road, and women's mobility through a number of pit stops at various literary historical moments combined with more in-depth interpretations. *Housekeeping* (1980) by Marilynne Robinson, and *Paradise* (1997) by Toni Morrison are examined in detail, whereas *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton, *Moll Flanders* (1776) by Daniel Defoe, and *Daisy Miller* (1878) by Henry James are visited in brief to exemplify what I in this article term "the maternal conditioning" of mobility. This entails that women in the discourses of travel and mobility constantly are associated with motherhood, and that motherhood and mobility are understood to be discordant. The discourse of

domesticity and procreation can be upheld only if women stay put. Moving women, women departing from the house, are a peril to the perpetuation of the patriarchal system, which requires their wombs for breeding and housekeeping. To describe the complex mental, material, and maternally imprinted topography resulting from women's conditional mobility in reality and representation, I here suggest two cartographic neologisms, *materotopia* and *materotopology*.

Article 3, "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road," accepted for publication in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* edited by Kristi Siegel (forthcoming a), first examines the roadmovie *Thelma & Louise* bringing into focus they way its protagonists "hit the road," thus breaking into the heretofore very masculinist road narrative. The article argues that their intrusion—an *appropriative* and *re-scripting* intrusion of women into the male space of the road—represents the first serious step towards a *regendering* of the road narrative and the narrative of mobility. Then the second step, a *de-scripting* and *metafictional* turn represented (enacted) by a "new generation" of authors and their fictionalized travelers is analyzed (foremost the essays "Can't Beat it" by Emily Perkins, "Tofino" by Jill Dawson, and "Leaving" by Bidisha) from the collection *Wild Ways: New Stories of Women on the Road* (1998) edited by Margo Daly and Jill Dawson, and the novel *Flaming Iguanas: An All-Girl Road Novel Thing* (1997) by Erika Lopez. [10] In simple terms, re-scripting entails substituting women for men and making possible a reversal of binaries. This is, nevertheless, not a simple reversal; women do not take on the role of men and pass up that of women; rather, feminine/masculine characteristics are both embraced. Re-scripting only

[10] The argument that I present in the article is nevertheless supported by more of the stories in *Wild Ways*, for example, "Monterrey Sun" by Jean McNeil, and "Big Things" by Margo Daly.

constitutes a first move towards regendering, As the road text is de-scripted, regendering may take place to a full extent; women can inhabit the road and stay comfortably on it, discoursing meta-fictively about it and their own activities, the masculinist heritage can be pushed aside and women can pursue their own identity projects in relation to one another rather than in relation to or against men.

Article 4, "The Women's Road: Regendered Narratives of Mobility," accepted for publication in the Danish sociological journal *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* (forthcoming b), looks closer at two books: the short story collection *Drive: Women's True Stories of the Road* (2002) edited by Jennifer Goode, and the road-trip handbook *The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road* (1999) by Cameron Tuttle. These recent narratives of mobility, I argue, carry on the "clicking" legacy of the road stories analyzed in article 3, "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road" – stories that, as I have claimed, presented two varieties of *regendering* of the road narrative, the type of narrative of mobility focused on in my thesis. "Clicking" here refers to what, in the seventies, Jane O'Reilly explained as "feminist consciousness," the realization that "women can and should be whole human beings, not measured in relationship to male supremacy" (Baumgardner and Richards 11). This realization served as a "'click,' as in women 'clicking–things-into-place-angry'" (11). The article demonstrates how the regendering that has been accomplished by previous women's narratives of mobility is figured in the books *Drive* and *The Bad Girl's Guide.* These narratives have not only embraced the feat of Thelma and Louise and their "daughters" as described in Article 3, but also moved forward, incorporating in their treatment of women's narratives of mobility the kind of feminist consciousness that can be sorted under the term Third Wave feminism, employing in the process the narrative strategies of re-scripting and de-scripting as defined in Article 3.

After the four articles, I bid farewell to this research project (for the

time being) in a brief Conclusion that summarizes its contents and restates my findings.

THEORETICAL DEPARTURES

> I took out the jack, a mysterious implement needing a man's abilities. I dropped it back into the car—another generation of women might be able to change tires [. . .] but I was born too late for that new liberty. I needed help.
>
> ----*Long Division* (1972)
> Anne Roiphe

> It's not there for us [. . .]. The streets are all about power, Annie, and the closest we can get is the back of the motorcycle and what they offer us in exchange for spreading our legs.
>
> ----*On Other Days When Going Home* (1987)
> Michelle Carter

Reading Literature in the Age of Feminism and Cultural Studies

There is a caution often administered in literary studies—supposedly a legacy from the days of the New Critics—not to mix up reality and representations, or rather, to focus on representation. Since new historicism, feminist and postcolonial criticism, and cultural anthropology (notably Clifford Geertz' *The Interpretation of Culture* 1972) have entered the arena of literary interpretation—extending it to cultural interpretation and opening the field to view the world as a text that can be read —this is less common. However, literary scholars maintain a prudent attitude to the word "reality." Most likely this depends on the larger discourses on objectivity and truth that the term evokes.

I have no intention of entering the debate on realism or realist fiction. I merely wish to deflate some of the anxiety surrounding the word "reality" by here giving some very simple explanations.

Reality refers to very different things depending on who is using the term. The New Critical caution stemmed from the view that the work of art should be judged separately from its context; the text itself should yield interpretations and the interpreter must not fall prey to various fallacies that would impose certain meanings on the text. "Reality," in this context, denotes the socio-historical and psychological context of production—the name and status of the author and her/his pronounced intentions. In post-structuralist modes of thinking, the objectivist view of "reality" (the assumption that a reality, or *the* reality, exists independent of its viewer) is discarded. Poststructuralism assumes that the only reality that we can communicate about is constituted through language. The word "reality" in my dissertation most often translates into "social practice" or is based on the constructivist view of reality as something that can be referred to as "commonly shared versions of experience," for example, the existence of sexism or violence. I argue for the possibility to speak about literary representations as anchored in shared lived experiences—what non-scholars regularly refer to as "real" life, in order to be able to take a feminist political stance. Embedded in feminist criticism is a concern for the political dimension of the text under scrutiny, a political dimension that is anchored in everyday life, that is, our constructions of the world and our interactions with it, what we perceive as our reality.[1]

[1] I do not espouse the correspondence theory of truth, that is, the possibility of a one-to-one correspondence between "reality" and "representation." I support the view that reality is made out in various processes of social construction. People continuously produce new versions of reality. Certain versions are widely shared because they seem to fulfill a function—aesthetic, practical, legal. It is pragmatic to assume that there exists a world beyond human cognition (realist ontology), but this does not justify a belief that one version of reality has a privileged connection to that world (see Rorty). Although

A feminist reading is intrinsically political. Political criticism entails reading texts to discern other components than the beauty or internal coherence of a work of literature, not primarily evaluating its merits as (good or bad) literature. This does not mean that this type of criticism is not evaluative. Literature partakes in the creation of political/ideological representations of the world, its inhabitants, its norms, and more. Attending to the socio-historical content, dialogues and representations of women or men, etc. of a cultural artifact reveals information about a text's ideology, gender politics, etc., that from a feminist critic's point of view may be objectionable, and should in an analysis be pointed out as such to the consuming audience and critical community.

Politics, ultimately, is a "reality" for people outside of the world of books: being paid less for being a woman, being barred from the U.S. border because of one's Mexican nationality, or being hired for a position as a female, male, or Native American because of Affirmative Action. Literature and other cultural artifacts (for example, films, paintings, songs, postcards, or TV-shows) disseminate representations that are anchored in such versions of reality. Thus, to use a feminist approach is almost always to take on both "reality" and representation, and to constantly slip back and forth between the two, or rather, to connect them. Consequently, in my study literature is generally approached as a source of information about society at the same time as it is seen to work to constitute the social. My selected literary texts are (mainly) fictional, but in my reading of them I am able to discern a common version of socio-historical reality that they seem to share. This is in spite of a few additions of magic realism-devices, such as the reawakening of the dead in Morrison's *Paradise*, or unusual

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there is no real point in contrasting different versions to establish which one is true, people agree upon some of them, and act or articulate upon them their beliefs or opinions. These various constructs, including novels, newspaper articles, films, or the argument with a friend yesterday, are elements used in the on-going construction of social reality. Such constructs may or may not employ a realistic style.

anatomy, such as Sissy's enormous thumbs in Robbins' *Even Cowgirls*. If anything, these elements intensify the realist effect of descriptions of such recognizable elements of socio-historical reality as the backdrop of the segregated and patriarchal U.S. in *Paradise*, or eighteenth-century London in *Moll Flanders*. Kerouac's *On the Road* can with benefit be read as a textual product of historically contingent gender relations that produce a masculine-gendered narrative of mobility. Such narratives of mobility exist as realities as well as representations.

Another way of explaining the perspective taken in my thesis is to say that I have chosen to study literature from a perspective that could be categorized as that of a sociology of literature. As Johan Svedjedal has pointed out, sociology of literature is often performed under the heading of other disciplines, such as cultural studies. Cultural studies, writes Svedjedal, can be understood as a widened field or "direction" in sociology of literature-research originally inspired by the British literary researchers Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams.[2] This sociologically inflected field of study, cultural studies, today embraces an approach to literary studies that mixes social and humanistic sciences—a hybrid science, as it were.[3]

To unite society and literature, to speak of women on the road as both realities and representations, is not a matter of "slippage" but of "connectivity." It is not by chance that the word "con-text" alludes to a plurality of connected texts. My approach to literature in this thesis is in alignment with researchers who claim the value of literature for drawing

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[2] An introduction to Cultural Studies, its historical beginnings in Birmingham, and its theoretical underpinnings can be found in *The Cultural Studies Reader* (1993) edited by Simon During. For an account of how traditional literary studies relates to, has been incorporated in, and also transformed into cultural studies, see Anthony Easthope's *Literary into Cultural Studies* (1991).

[3] If we look at sociology, it too may be seen as a hybrid of the literary and scientific traditions, an end-result of the conflicts between literary and scientific intellectuals in Europe in the early nineteenth century. See Wolf Lepenies' *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology* (1988).

conclusions about society, something that even such avowed formalists as René Wellek and Austin Warren admitted, however reluctantly, already in 1942 in their *Theory of Literature*. These two critics would nevertheless object to certain evaluative criticism that I would consider to have a place. Although it is not my aim here to be what Wellek and Warren call a "prophet of the future" who prescribes what "the social relations and implications of an author's work [. . .] should have been or ought to be," I do however feel that it is the role of the critic sometimes to take the stance of "monitor" and "propagandist" (95).

The sociological work of critics like Janet Wolff, Rita Felski, and Tania Modleski who operate within the field of cultural studies has been an important influence on my writing through the way that these critics emphasize fiction by or about women as a vital source for discussing social contexts and as a hot-bed for counter-hegemonic arguments and the cultivation of feminist ideas for changing or overturning patriarchal ideas and practices. On this view, interpretations of literature provide both reconstructive academic textual critique and food for thought for more direct grass-roots feminist action. In other words, feminist theory is useful for action and vice versa, a view that in political theory is termed praxis feminism.[4]

Obliquely or directly, women-on-the-road narratives debate and churn insurgent ideas about women and femininity circulating in society, decreasing the distance between the reality and representations of women's mobility. Reading women's narratives of mobility, from my perspective, is to make a picture of the *mobilization* of the female subject over time, that is, her change from an initial "sedentary" position as

[4] On the issue of praxis feminism, see, for example: Kathy Ferguson's *The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in Feminist Theory* (1993); Liz Stanley's *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory, and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology* (1990); or Ulla Holm's "Community, Autonomy, or Both: Feminist Ethics Between Universalism and Contextualism" (1997).

"other" in a patriarchal system based on male movement, to a "new" more obviously dynamic twenty-first century role as "actor" in a changing world and political climate. From a feminist critical perspective, female subjectivity is a major issue at stake in fiction as well as reality. In my view, the road narrative is a fertile ground in which the female subject may evolve (as a more or less deliberate result of her authors' efforts). It is a fruitful "text" to study in order to understand, if not all, at least fractions of the women's movement(s).

Subjectivity

I keep referring to the female mobile "subject," so a word of explanation is in place. My understanding of subjectivity comes out of feminism and feminist theory, which is in turn an amalgam of a number of theoretical propositions put forward by poststructuralism, Marxism, discourse theory etc.

But, to begin with the simplest explanation, "subject" as I use it can be understood quite plainly as that which is opposite to or superordinate to the "object." This is the way that, for example, Simone de Beauvoir in *La Deuxième Sexe* (1949) refers to the patriarchal positioning of the male versus the female human being. Man is the active agent and woman the passive object. Her secondary position confirms his primary position.

In a more developed formulation, a subject could be understood as the number of subject-positions, or series of positions "into which a person is called momentarily by the discourses and the world s/he inhabits" (P. Smith xxxv). Subjectivity means continual positioning; it is not fixed once and for all. It is "an ongoing process of engagement in social and discursive practices, not some immanent kernel of identity that is expressed through that engagement" (S. Robinson 11). The subject "in the widest catchment of feminist discourse, has been formulated both in terms of its experience as dominated 'subject' and also as an active and

contestatory social agent" (P. Smith 152). Feminism speaks both "for women as a heterogeneous grouping but also against the homogenizing logic of masculinist domination" (153). An "*effect*" of feminism is thus a paradoxical articulation of subjectivity; the subject is not merely interpellated by patriarchal ideology, but that interpellation also creates resistance, a subject with agency that may counter oppressive ideological and material realities (153, italics in original).

This understanding of the feminist subject as a paradoxical subject seems to have much in common with my conception of how a female traveling subject is constituted. For example, in Marilyn C. Wesley's study, *The Secret Journey: The Trope of Women's Travel in American Literature,* women's travel appears as an "innovative, contradictive, and dynamic response to the recurring tension between imposed ideological stasis and gendered freedoms" (xiv). Women travelers become "contradictive" or paradoxical subjects emerging within that tension. Let me give another example of how this could work. There is potential for the female mobile subject to emerge in the interstices between patriarchal ideology interpellating woman as stasis, and at the same time, expecting her to be mobile to go shopping, and take the children to school and after-school activities. This creates an opportunity for resistance.

The female mobile subject that emerges with and participates in the regendering of mobility over time is a subject interpellated by patriarchal ideology come an agent. She has taken on a kind of subjectivity that allows for "resistance to ideological pressure" (P. Smith xxxv). In a travel narrative, such ideological pressure can consist, for example, of "masterplots of imperial conquest and domestic stasis" (Wesley xviii). In her contestatory position moving against the traditional paradigms of gendered mobility/sessility, the female mobile subject embodies the characteristics of the paradoxical feminist subject.

Race, Gender, and Mobility

So far I have been equating "the other" of the road or, even more broadly, of mobility, with woman. This is also a strategy adhered to throughout the thesis. I do not give much attention to the identification of the road narrative and its travelers in terms of race and class.[5] The reader of my thesis will notice that gender has been the guiding concept throughout my investigations at the expense of these other aspects, which are only marginally present despite the fact that I open my study with an anecdote mixing Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas with *Thelma & Louise*, an epigraph that speaks of huge Latina breasts, and the inclusion of a novel by Toni Morrison about the destiny of a number of black women. Let me partially remedy the lack produced by this choice.

There is no doubt about the essential role that race played in the Hill/Thomas hearings, as has been illuminated in *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (1993), a collection of essays edited by Toni Morrison. When I refer to the hearings, however, my aim is to highlight an interesting affinity between the Hill/Thomas hearings and the roadmovie *Thelma & Louise*. In her introduction, Morrison writes of the sensational "effect" the hearings had on people; the "black people" who were in favor of Thomas's nomination, prayed "in front of the White House for the Lord not to abandon them, to intervene and crush the forces that would prevent a black nominee to the Supreme Court from assuming the seat felt by them to be reserved for a member of the race"; others were "revolted by the president's nomination of the one candidate they believed obviously unfit to adjudicate legal and policy matters concerning them" (viii). But Morrison, as I read her, goes on to include non-blacks as the receivers and respondents to this event which so quickly turned media-iconic:

[5] I would like to thank Liz Kella for alerting my attention to this problem, and for suggesting a number of sources by which to improve the thesis on this point.

"everyone interested in the outcome of this nomination, regardless of race, class, gender, religion, or profession, [turned] to as many forms of media as [were] available" (viii). The hearings made people "grapple for meaning" on a large social scale (ix).

Now, *Thelma & Louise* should perhaps not be accorded the magnitude and importance of the Hill/Thomas case, but it too made people talk, act, and discuss. It too was turned into an icon—an icon of resistance. When the two phenomena crossed each other's paths, as at UNM, their common denominator became one of social injustice, foremost in terms of gender. That is, in its local translation, gender rather than race was foregrounded.

A few more words should be added about race and class in relation to mobility. Throughout my thesis, I argue that mobility and movement in public space have been reserved for men, mainly white, affluent men.[6] Below I refer to the Hill/Thomas hearings as a case where a woman's public presence was questioned through sexual harassment in the work place, that is, her position as "other" (a permissible sex object) was taken for granted. Again, I refer to the case in terms of gender rather than race. It is, of course a reduction of a complex issue. Similarly, when I speak of the "other of travel/mobility" as the woman who is supposed to stand for domesticity, stasis, the departure and, possibly, arrival point of the male traveler, I abridge the story. The power inequality of mobility is not only distributed along the lines of gender but also race, class, nationality, and

[6] Women's mobility has been, as Doreen Massey has expressed it, "restricted—in a thousand different ways, from physical violence to being ogled at or made to feel quite simply 'out of place'" ("A Global Sense of Place" 148). The point made in this particular quote, the end of which I left out in order not to confuse the reader, is that women's mobility is affected not only by "capital" but a great number of other factors, including men; "a simple resort to explanation in terms of 'money' or 'capital' alone could not begin to get to grips with the issue" of how our experiences of time and space are conditioned. Quoting Dea Birkett, Massey gives the reason why traveling for women is very demanding (now more than ever), as a "complex mix of colonialism, ex-colonialism, racism, changing gender relations and relative wealth" (148).

other aspects of identities. Mobility is not distributed according to any principles of justice; the mobility of one is exercised at the expense of another. Mobility is conditioned and the ability to move conditions one's life, life-style, and one's choices of subject-positions. As Doreen Massey phrases it "mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power" ("A Global Sense of Place" 150).

Although Massey speaks of mobility in a much wider sense than I do in this thesis, her argument is valid for the type of mobility (primarily) focused in my study, namely physical mobility. There is, Massey argues,

> a power geometry of time-space compression. For different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relations to [. . .] flows and interconnections. The point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this differentiated mobility; some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving–end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.[7] (149)

Massey states that movers who are greatly or somewhat in charge may include jet-setters and western academics and journalists, whereas movers without much control of the process are, for example, refugees

[7] The expression "Time-space compression" is used by geographer David Harvey in *The Conditions of Postmodernity* (1989). Pal Nyíri and Joana Breidenbach explain it as "a process in which time is reorganized in such a way as to reduce the constraints of space, and vice versa. Time-space compression involves a shortening of time and a 'shrinking' of space. We might argue that if people in Manila can experience the same thing at the same time as others in Copenhagen, say a business transaction or a media event, then they live in effect in the same place; space has been annihilated by time compression. Harvey illustrates the process with maps of the world that shrink over time proportionately to the increasing speed of transportation. The world of the 1960s then is about one-fiftieth the size of the world of the sixteenth century because jet aircraft can travel at about fifty times the speed of a sailing ship" (n. pag.).

from El Salvador, migrants from Mexico, or emigrants from Bangladesh or the Caribbean. As I have already mentioned, the politics of mobility has a dichotomous logic to it that entails that the movement of some people is always performed if not at the expense of, then depending on, someone or something "other" that remains or cannot move.

My reduction of the other of mobility/travel to mean "woman" must be seen as a strategic theoretical choice made to enable me to speak in a very concentrated way of *women* on the road, even if such a research focus may be challenged as imperfect and problematic in its de-racing. But it is difficult to argue against the fact that women are (and traditionally have been) the ones who have been most held back from movement. The state of affairs is further aggravated if the moving woman is of color. Add thereto that she is poor and uneducated, and her movements are immediately further restricted.

By merely focusing on gender, I may be accused of practicing what Adrienne Rich in the article "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, and Gynephobia," has called "white solipsism," that is, making sporadic references to race without holding any conscious belief that the white race is inherently superior by overlooking issues of race, thereby whitening the text. I do hope, however, that my thesis will not be read as a race-, class- and ethnicity-blind venture but rather as *strategically* focusing on women.

In what follows I continue to pursue the topic of mobility, but to extend the context within which mobility figures and to give an idea of the variety and vastness of this field, I here insert a section on "travel." I do not however go so far as to sort out the various types of movement that fall in under voluntary and involuntary travel such as exile, migration, diaspora, displacement, charter tourism, back-packing, job-commuting, etc. Rather, the following section functions as a very general orientation of the field of travel research to acquaint the reader with the type of discourses related to my specialization on regendering narratives of

mobility.

Travel

To trace the female subject in the road narrative is to delve into concerns that are constituted by a range of very large discourses or topics, impossible to exhaust but nevertheless important to tap. One such topic is "travel."[8] Travel is in many ways a highly rewarding phenomenon to investigate; it is familiar to large audiences—most people have experienced travel in one form or other, be it in the form of tedious or even catastrophic movement, or exciting and intriguing adventure. It has a wide and versatile linguistic (semantic; metaphoric[9]) and literary scope. It has many complex ideological implications as it occupies the center stage in socio-historical contexts; modern and postmodern cultures have come to legitimize travel and the traveler as the epitomizing subject and activity of modern and postmodern times.[10] Travel, however, is a concept with significant encumbrances. The modern road is not an innocent space and the traveler is not a universal being just moving through the world. Travel is complicitous with, for example, imperialism, colonialism, tourism (understood as a post-colonial imperial venture), eurocentrism, and masculinism to mention a few travel/ideology *nexi*.

Of course these *nexi* have inspired a range of researchers to investigate travel, and have sparked something of a "travel trend" in social (mainly theoretical) discourse. This interest began sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, and picked up in the 1990s. That is, about a

[8] A good introduction to travel, *Defining Travel: Diverse Visions,* has recently been edited by Susan Robertson (2001). Travel crosses a number of disciplines and the anthology provides a good selection of critical texts from a variety of fields.

[9] See for example, George Van den Abbelee's *Travel as Metaphor* (1992). See also John Urry's *Sociology Beyond Societies* (2000), particularly the chapters on metaphors of mobility "Metaphors," and travel "Travellings."

[10] See Zygmunt Baumann's *Life in Fragments* (1995).

decade ago the study of travel, tourism and its theories caught a very strong tailwind; a number of disciplines, actors, and institutions realized its potential for articulating currents of social change and sketching paradigms of thought and political climates felt to have emerged as the result of a general acceleration of contemporary life and globalization. Travel had, of course, always been present in various studies of culture; travelers and their histories, picaresques, pilgrimages, and geographical expeditions, for example, have always been subjects among others in, for example, philosophy, classical and comparative literature, and history. Yet, before the 1980s, these subjects had not been pulled into the kind of interdisciplinary discussions that recently have employed travel as a critical engine for analytical thought and politically progressive claims.

One impression and common explanation of the high currency of travel as term and topic is that technological advances at this point have sped up the mobility of information, goods, and people to the extent that the "world" is being experienced as excessively heterogeneous, and thus, as always, demanding a homogenizing label to bring it back into controllable intellectual grasp. More and more critics have seen the relevance of the images of travel, space, and mobility for social theory and these, consequently, have become topics on the cutting edge of cultural studies.

In the 1980s, space, place, and travel began to attract considerable interest from anthropologists, geographers, and sociologists,[11] some of whom focused on tourism as a relatively new sub-discipline of social study.[12] From there on, travel as a viable theoretical concept has

[11] Geographers (Barnes and Gregory; Blunt and Rose; Duncan and Gregory; Harvey; Soja, (*Postmodern Geographies*) and anthropologists (Clifford, "Notes"; Lévi-Strauss) have since this upsurge of interest in space and travel in the 1980s provided many studies combining investigations of spatial concepts such as the limits, inclusions, and exclusion of borders, territories, and maps, with explorations of diasporas, migration, travel, and tourism.

[12] For a historical background to tourism scholarship, see Nelson H.H. Graburn

proliferated and has come to be embraced by an array of different research ventures. Political scientists, organizational theorists, students of media and technology, ethnologists, and literary scholars all seem to find travel and the traveler useful subjects to investigate.[13]

To generalize and simplify, the pre-1980 interest in travel writing differed from the present trends of analyses, as this earlier interest mainly involved travel in ways of historical inventory and mapping of geographical movements, as well as with travel as providing parables of human behavior for classical philosophical argumentation, whereas more recent studies use travel in particular to characterize the main features of modernism and postmodernism, and the supposedly increased mobility of its subjects—ubiquitous in their everyday behavior as well as in their polydirectional outlooks on life.

The subject of modernity that had, in the 1920s, been pinned down by Walter Benjamin (drawing on Baudelaire) as the flâneur, is in social theory now accompanied, if not replaced, by the subject of postmodernity, a new version of the pilgrim moving around the world as stroller, tourist, vagabond, and player (Baumann). This generalized, and partially abstract, view of travel as the comings and goings of a "universal" subject, eventually gives rise to studies protesting its implied white, imperial, middle-class, masculine nature. Travel thus becomes an object of investigation for postcolonial studies, dealing with societies, cultures, and literatures originating in a condition touched by travel in a very tangible way. It also comes under the scrutiny of feminist scholars who, as the

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and Jafar Jafari's "Introduction: Tourism as Social Science" (1991) For another excellent overview of tourism/travel study (the emphasis is on tourism) see *Native Tours* (2000) by Erve Chambers. For a study of sociology and tourism, see Graham Dann and Eric Cohen's "Sociology and Tourism" (1991).

[13] Literary scholars, sociologists, and historians (Buzard; Clavier, "Mobilizing Identities"; Lawrence; Mills; D. Porter; Pratt; Rojek and Urry; Warneke) have offered valuable analyses of the interplay of social and textual practices, ideologies, and cultures in the encounters and conflicts which travel undoubtedly invokes and provokes.

"travel trend" is growing, are faced with the increased usage of purportedly gender-neutral metaphors of travel to describe cultural phenomena, globalization, post-industrial capitalism, and the information society.

Literary critic Janet Wolff has offered the probably most notable and cited criticism against the inherent masculinism of travel- and traveler metaphors ("On the Road Again"). She points out that theory should not uncritically adopt the metaphors of travel because of their heavily gendered connotation and consequent risk of excluding important identity markers. For example, diasporic experiences, as James Clifford writes in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, are always gendered. But, there is a tendency for "theoretical accounts of diaspora cultures to hide this fact, to talk of travel and displacement in unmarked ways, thus normalizing male experiences" (258). It is necessary to account for the fact that "at the level of everyday social practice, cultural differences are persistently racialized, classed, and gendered" (258). Theory needs to account for these "concrete, cross-cutting structures" and pay attention to specific histories that would otherwise be hidden behind generalized discourses, "abstract nomadologies" (258-59).

In the article "The Disoriented Tourist: The Figuration of the Tourist in Contemporary Cultural Critique," sociologists Jokinen and Veijola have also ingeniously criticized the terminology of the modern/postmodern travel/tourism discourse, for example, the flâneur, the vagabond, and the stroller. The definitions of these subjects, they argue, rely heavily on a "female imaginary" (m)-other. By substituting the "sextourist," the "prostitute," and "the babysitter" for the voyeuristic figure of the flâneur, they bring, on the one hand, the body back into the discourse of travel and tourism whose sexualized nature is otherwise obscured, and, on the other, they critique the common presumption of the critic to see him/herself as disembodied and detached social theorist.

These and other influential studies have brought the trope of travel and its exclusionary effects to the forefront of cultural criticism as a seriously problematic, but also productive, topic of research. My study relies on critics such as Wolff and Jokinen and Veijola, in its attempt to remedy the neglected issue of gender, and the lack of a nuanced report on the gendered variations of the representations taken to reflect presumably global, universal, socio-historical movements.

Mobility Definitions, Automobility, and Women's Movements

"Movement" and "mobility" are key components of travel; they are essential to discussions of the traveler, the moving man, *homo viator*. These two terms are often treated just like travel is, in a wide metaphoric sense of change, or potential for change. Wolfgang Bonss and Sven Kesselring give an excellent overview of mobility from the perspective of social theory. Mobility, they say, can be divided into

> spatial, temporal, social, cultural and/or generational patterns of movement which, in the relevant literature, are usually concentrated on (and sometimes reduced to) two perspectives: on the one hand, mobility is seen as physical movement in space; on the other hand it is seen as social change and a shifting of social coordinate systems. (n. pag.)

Mobility, they write, "at least in modern societies, is a kind of cross-sectional phenomenon" (n. pag.). This, needless to say, is a description that also suits "travel" very well. Movement, and mobility, and, as mentioned in the previous section, travel appear in a variety of disciplines although they are also often treated under common (but broad) headings. One such heading is tourism.[14] For example, Dean MacCannell's classic, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), brings up the

[14] See the previous section for footnoted references to tourism studies.

importance of (increased global) mobility in the emergence of a new international class of travelers/tourists.

Mobility has also changed the field of sociology, claims John Urry, whose *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Next Twenty-first Century* emphasizes the necessity, in the twenty-first century, to finally "abandon" traditional sociology in favor of analyzing the world and its societies in terms of the "social as mobility," that is, the social as constituted by the movement of people, goods and communication, rather than "the social as society," that is, as fixed, bounded entities (2).[15]

Mobility is also approached as a vital factor in research on traffic, automobility, traffic sociology, and physical/spatial planning.[16] As can be suspected, *automobility* is important in road narratives as it is related to the car, the driver, the highway, and its "transport issues." Research on automobility often treats mobility as a highly tangible social phenomenon—sometimes with ample statistics, like, for example, *The Ecology of the Automobile*, which gives numbers of tons of waste, polluting emissions, traffic accidents, etc. related to car use in the western world (Freund and Martin).

Others frame mobility in more socio-cultural terms like *The Automobile and American Culture*, a collection of essays and longer papers that includes an array of reports on the connection between the car and American culture, from personal stories of elated car purchases, or the car as a media symbol, to professional assessments of the car's impact on daily life (Lewis and Goldstein). A study of women's mobility in terms of their

[15] Urry's list of references to critics who in some way or other are concerned with the issue of "fluidities" is long (38), and includes among others Deleuze and Guattari, Lefebvre, and Kaplan (*Questions of Travel*).

[16] Since 1999 I have had the pleasure of being a member of the inter-disciplinary research group MACS (Man, Automobile, Culture, Society) at Göteborg University. Researchers from this group and its network have produced studies on mobility and automobility from a variety of perspectives, for example Polk, Hagman, Beckmann, Nehls; and Thynell.

automobility is provided by the study of the first female drivers in America *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* done by Virginia Scharff. The question of mobility is also included in studies on space, geography, or ethnography—and then often paired with travel as a producer of space or the "opposite" of place.[17]

Many studies tend to end up with a very broad metaphoric sense of mobility.[18] In my study, mobility is for the most part simply conceived as the processes and result of physical movement of the human body (with or without a vehicle of transportation), such as is undertaken in most kinds of travel, for example road tripping. I regard mobility as something very real and material. To be more specific, in this thesis, I most often use "mobility" as signifying a means of change, in the sense that as the human (female) body has the possibility to move through space, by feet or powered by horses, cars, trains or other means of transportation, this body is doubly *mobilized*, that is, a physically mobile female body has the capacity to, or has already become, empowered and enabled to change socially, and culturally. My emphasis lies on the *moving body*, which should be seen in contrast to the more general take on mobility as socio-economic movement, although physical and social mobility are, of course, as I emphasize below, intrinsically linked. My analysis is not a historical study; I neither intend nor find myself able to determine the causal link or direction of flow between physical and social mobility. However, what I can assume is that feminist political work, in conjunction with historical

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[17] For example: James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997); Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993); Brian Jarvis's *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture* (1998), and Johannes Fabian's *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (2000). See also Berndt Clavier's dissertation *John Barth and Postmodernism: Travel, Spatiality, Montage* (2002).

[18] Including, for example: John Urry's *Sociology Beyond Societies* (2000); Lindsey Tucker's *Textual Escap(e)ades: Mobility, Maternity, and Textuality in Contemporary Fiction by Women* (1994), and Barbara Waxman Frey's *From the Hearth to the Open Road: A Feminist Study of Aging in Contemporary Literature* (1990).

technological developments, temporarily precedes women's physical mobilization, which, in turn, becomes an enabling condition for further feminist liberation. To repeat, I do not shun wider, more metaphoric, applications of the term mobility. I acknowledge the close affiliation between physical mobility and political mobilization. But, I *center* on women's *physical* mobility.

Consequently, I have bracketed feminist theory which engages mobility in the sense of intellectual movement, such as Rosi Braidotti's theory of the nomadic subject (*Nomadic Subjects*), or, bell hooks' "feminist movement," which nevertheless is closer to my point, and entails "constant mobility—thinking as action, movement, and flux of the critical subject, which take movement as a basis" (qtd. in Wilding n. pag.). These theories blur social and physical mobility, and use mobility to signify the multiplicity of subject-positions possible for the female subject. Although sympathetic moves to liberate the female subject from the straightjacket of a fixed gender identity, these formulations exceed the narrower conceptualization used here of a female mobile subject whose political vitality depends on a very physical and tangible mobility. I have chosen to stay very close to the female body in situations of actual movement, and from there proceed to talk of the potential of political mobilization.

The moving female body is a highly controversial body. Women's mobility has historically, by and large, been controversial. Scharff's book *Taking the Wheel* gives an illustrative account of society's skeptical attitude towards women's mobility with special emphasis on their relation to the road as a new group of automobilists whose driving was considered highly unfeminine and therefore inappropriate. In her article "Lighting out for the Territory: Women, Mobility, and Western Place" (1999) Scharff outlines how mobility is gendered in "at least three ways. The first has to do with freedom of bodily movement. The second entails access to places. The third involves personal safety" (285). About bodily movement she

writes:

> As feminist critics have long pointed out, nothing in American history better symbolizes the impetus to contain women's actions in space than female fashions from nineteenth-century whalebone corsets […] to the footbinding spike heels and liposuction-inspiring spandex miniskirts in last month's *Vogue*. (285)

She also discusses women's limited access to space in terms of "de jure segregation," that is, legal exclusion, that, although perhaps executed "more often along racial than sexual lines," is a historical truth (286). She gives the example of the Kansas City local ordinance prohibiting women from parading the streets unattended, to walk around the streets at night time, etc. (286).

Another way of excluding women from public space that Scharff brings up in her article is the non-regulated but existent "threat of bodily harm [. . .], women who walk alone at night on the streets of Berkeley or Seattle or El Paso contest presumptions about who ought to be allowed free access to the city, and they do so at substantial personal peril" (287). I find the three ways in which Scharff describes mobility to be gendered to surface in most every context where women and travel figure together—as my literary analyses will show, all of the three facets of gendered mobility that she brings up work (simultaneously) to complicate women's access to the road.

Mobility (and travel) is also gendered in terms of masculinity, and abides by a "masculine logic." In the introductory chapter of her book, *Moving Lives: 20th-Century Women's Travel Writing* (2001), Sidonie Smith gives a good overview of the history of this masculine logic. Smith, like many other critics, cites Eric Leed's study *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (1991), which gives an account of the historical male travel dominance and the traditional assumption of men's mobility,

and women's sessility. The so often quoted "Man hunts—Woman waits" from Roland Barthe's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1972), illustrates this man-mobility/woman-stillness-logic and dichotomy. It is also brought to the fore by Karen Lawrence in *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition* (1994), which in detail introduces how theoretical writing involving journey plots or motifs conceptualizes man as the traveler (Odysseus) adventuring away from the house and woman as the waiting wife (Penelope) occupying herself with domestic chores.[19] In my thesis I claim that the masculine logic of travel and mobility is breaking up—narratives of mobility are becoming regendered—and the female subject is becoming increasingly mobile.

As I stated above, the affiliation between physical and social mobility is a close one. What I would like to emphasize next, then, is that the mobilization of the female subject relies heavily on the work of the women's movement to loosen up gendered constraints on *physical* mobility. As said, I do not wish to refer to women's mobility as women's social mobility in general, but rather focus on women's actual moving around in physical spaces, although the general and this particular aspect of movement do overlap in important ways. My main point here is that the significance of the political work of the women's movement to enable women's physical mobility cannot be overrated. Consequently, initiators of the process of mobilization of the female subject must be located within the germinating women's movement of the late nineteenth century, including the suffragettes demonstrating in the streets for women's right to vote. Mobilization also took a big and important leap forward with women's taking of the wheel in the 1920s, a historical moment that has been illustratively researched in the aforementioned *Taking the Wheel* by Scharff. As Jack Simmons has pointed out, mobilization also increased

[19] These conceptualizations are addressed at greater length in Articles 1 and 2.

with the opening of the railways. Further acceleration of the female subject was sparked by the modern women's movement from the 1960s and onwards. This has been well documented—taking note of instances of backlash—by Ruth Rosen in her 2000 study *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*.

In *The Feminization of Quest-Romance: Radical Departures* (1990) Dana A. Heller studies female questers in literature. She writes that the "feminization of quest romance" bears witness to a gradual "awakening" of women over time "to selfhood, *mobility*, and influence in the world" (15, my emphasis). An important point that Heller makes about that process of change, the "awakening" to mobility, is that it must be seen as parallel to the enfolding of "women's social realities" (17).[20] Heller quotes Lee R. Edwards's *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form* in which he argues that "the feminization of quest-romance, like contemporary woman herself, cannot be understood without some awareness of such matters as divorce laws, suffrage legislation, [and] industrial developments" (16-17). To this should be added many other regulations, inventions, and policies such as property rights, laws on labor, abortion and maternity leave, the development of contraceptive methods and child care facilities. Struggles for and negotiations of such laws and amenities are far from concluded in most parts of the world. The right of a woman not to have her body tampered with in public space, for example, the workplace, was one of the issues at stake in the aforementioned Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings. Women's mobility in the physical world is thus in many ways, and on many levels, a controversial topic very much on the agenda of the women's movement throughout time, although not signposted as such. In my articles I have emphasized the physical, tangible

[20] Awakening is a word I am not particularly fond of as it to me implies a general dormancy in women's awareness that has a ring of all women being sleeping beauties. I would prefer to see this "awakening", and I promote the concept here in my thesis, as an acceleration of the feminist project, a mobilization of the female subject.

aspect of women's mobility. To make my point common-sensically clear: perhaps it is because women's mobility is such a visible product of women's liberation from patriarchal traditions that it has met with such resistance throughout history through a range of norms and regulations—women should not move outdoors without an escort, or after dark, they should not make too large gestures, should not make hasty movements, they should keep their knees together, etc. If they do not, they will be judged as belonging to the objects of the public realm that may be consumed by a predominantly male audience, like the can-can ballet girls whose status is sexually dubious. Movement make women suspect because "good girls" do not run around, they are not "fast" or unruly. Patriarchy has a word for those women/girls—bad. Most women travelers have faced this time-honored gendering of mobility and travel, and I dare say, still do, albeit the times and attitudes have changed, and are continuously changing. As my articles (predominantly 3 and 4) show, women have reappropriated both movement and sexuality alongside the right to be "bad."

In what follows I endeavor, with a quick inventory, to place the road narrative in the larger context of travel literature, focusing specifically on its gender biases. I also take further stock of some of the scholarly work on men's and women's travel literature.

Travel Literature and Literature on Men's and Women's Travel

As I have already pointed out, travel is entangled in a web of ideological positions and cultural history.[21] Travel literature consequently becomes an interesting showplace where people meet, cooperate, or collide, acting out their political unconscious in voluntary and involuntary

[21] For a survey of the cultural history of travel from the sixteenth century to the present day, see *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, edited by Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (1999).

encounters with many Others—of many ages, races, nationalities, and religious and sexual affiliations. The road narrative can be seen as a modern travel genre that plays out the socio-political constellations of its time in a space laid out by the technologies of modernity, including the car, a highly ideologically complex artifact itself.

As I have emphasized, the road movie *Thelma & Louise* had a great impact on its critics as well as its proponents. The film made a forceful and influential break into the road narrative model once established by stories such as *On the Road* and Hopper's 1969 road movie *Easy Rider*. The irruption of *Thelma & Louise* is even more momentous as these road model narratives are seen as descendants of a long ancestry of male-centered travel writing including, for example, the Spanish picaresque, Greek and Roman history writing, the epic poetry of Homer, reports from the European Grand Tour, or if we pick examples closer in time, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, or John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*.

Although a few heroines do turn up in the course of their development, travel genres (fictional as well as non-fictional) have mainly been inhabited and written by men. Etheria, the pilgrim of 385, and Justina, the 1605 picara, have few "road sisters," and their appearances are usually considered oddities or exceptions; for example, Moll Flanders, Mary Kingsley, Fredrika Bremer, and Mary Woollstonecraft, to name a few. [22] We most often think of travelers, explorers, and pilgrims as male, for example, Moses, Odysseus, Columbus, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver, Tom Jones, Huckleberry Finn, or Neil Armstrong.

The "male-centered quest has long dominated the literature and scholarship on the genre [of travel]," write Susan H. McLeod and Bonnie Frederick:

> Joseph Campbell in his widely influential study' Hero With a

[22] For an account of Etheria, see Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (1988).

> Thousand Faces (1949), assumes that an initiation archetype—of a traveler seeking a life-validating boon—is available to both women and men, but this traveler's most typical activity is "the winning of a bride" and his success is figured in terms of "going to the father"—that is, gaining his own maturity as a man and negotiating his peace with his fathers and their society. (xxiv)

Campbell's suppositions are based on the theories of Jung and Freud that include hypotheses of the mind's "'journeys' or forays into unconscious experience" (xxv). Dana Heller, who also collects material from Campbell, writes in her study of quest-romances of how the female is "subordinate to the masculine libido" (4).[23] A woman in this patriarchal (psychoanalytically inspired) standard model does not generally achieve traveler status. As Heller proposes (quoting Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957, which builds on similar models of the psyche), a woman is the "kind of being who makes a quest possible" by staying home, or meeting at the point of arrival (232). She is fulfilling the role of the other of mobility. Travel understood this way is, per definition, a masculine activity.

A majority of travel books focus on male travelers' journeys, for example, Percy G. Adams's *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (1983), which analyzes the relationship between the "récit de voyage" and the novel; Paul Fussell's, *Abroad* '(1980), which focuses on British travel between the two world wars, or Sara Warneke's *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (1995), which treats the medieval history of English travel abroad, the public debate over educational travel, and images of the educational traveler such as the "Catholic traveller," the

[23] The road model of my study, Kerouac's *On the Road*, clearly displays this female/male polarization.

"Italianated traveller" or the "atheistical traveller."[24] A work that focuses on male travelers but directly addresses this bias is, for example, Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (1991). Porter investigates travel journals by male writers from the grand tour of the eighteenth century to the modern period, including works by Boswell, Stendhal, Freud, D. H. Lawrence, and Lévi-Strauss, showing how travel appears as a transgressive activity involving the seeking of pleasure, a search that nevertheless is haunted by various forms of guilt.

Some studies include sections on women's travel writing, for example, Primeau's *Romance of the Road: The Literature of the American Highway* (1996), Kris Lackey's *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative* (1997), and Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan's *Tourists With Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (1998). Still their main focus remains on male travelers. Janis Stout admits in her second book on American literary journeys, *Through the Window Out the Door* (1998), which centers on female travel experiences, that the focus in her first book, *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures* (1983), was "overwhelmingly masculine in focus" (ix).

The lack (or rather invisibility) of women's travel writing and theoretical writing on the subject has albeit begun to be remedied. The number of publications of women's travel fiction and travelogues has increased, although, as Holland and Huggan point out, they often appear in the form of literary anthologies.[25] Several of these anthology editors

[24] See also Percy G Adams's *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1600-1800* (1962); Horace Sutton's *Travelers: The American Tourist from Stage Coach to Space Shuttle* (1980); James Buzard's *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918*; (1993), Zweder von Martels's *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing* (1994).

[25] Leo Hamalian's *Ladies on the Loose: Women Travellers of the 18th and 19th Centuries,* (1981); Lisa St Aubin de Terán's *Indiscreet Journeys: Stories of Women on the Road* (1989); Jane Robinson's *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (1990); Jane Robinson's *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers* (1994); Dea Birkett and

have written their own books on female travel writers, or narratives of their own travels.[26] The circle has so far been fairly small and the output modest, but as searches on MLA and, for example, the FEMDOK Database at Göteborg University show, the number of publications on women and travel has increased steadily since around 1995.

If we look at the anthologies of women's travel literature, there is a marked tendency in the earlier books to indicate the impropriety of a woman traveling. Their titles announce stories of "ladies on the loose," of "indiscreet journeys," of "wayward women," and of travel as "unsuitable for ladies" (see footnote 25 for full titles). Although a celebratory tone can be noted in these formulations, they imply a gendered history of travel and the aforementioned sexualized notions of women moving around in public. Later anthologies have different or no such connotations. For example, Birkett and Wheeler's *Amazonian: The Penguin Book of Women's New Travel Writing* from 1998 indicates that women are amazonian, that is, strong or aggressive, whereas Foster and Mills' *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing* from 2002 displays a very neutral title. These different types of titles may indicate that a change of attitude, or shift, in the gendered paradigm of mobility is accomplished or underway.

Most of the studies done (and mentioned) so far are historical and concern actual rather than fictional travelers. The tendency has been to focus on European travelers, and especially nineteenth-century travel. Research on the female traveler in literature (fiction), especially contemporary literature, has been sparse. Below I discuss in some detail

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Sara Wheeler's *Amazonian: The Penguin Book of Women's New Travel Writing* (1998), and Shirley Foster and Sara Mills' *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing* (2002).

[26] Dea Birkett's *Spinsters Abroad : Victorian Lady Explorers* (1989); Dea Birkett's *Mary Kingsley : Imperial Adventuress* (1992); Sara Mills *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991); Anne K. Kaler's *The Picara from Hera to Fantasy Heroine*, (1991); Mary Morris and Larry O'Connor's *Maiden Voyages: Writings of Women Travelers* (1993); Sarah Wheeler's *An Island Apart: Travels in Evia* (1993) and her *Terra Incognita: the Human Culture of Antarctica* (1996), and Mary Morris's *Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone* (1999).

the studies that have most inspired my own research, and whose work I see myself continue in this thesis.

I have already at some length cited from Dana Heller's *Feminization of Quest-Romance* that treats Jean Stafford's *The Mountain Lion* (1947), Mary McCarthy's *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* (1957), Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968), Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1981), and Mona Simpson´s *Anywhere But Here* (1987). I have also already mentioned Karen Lawrence's *Penelope Voyages*, a study of the female traveler in the British literary tradition. *Penelope Voyages* served (next to Ron Eyerman and Orvar Löfgren's article on the influence of the road genre in Sweden, *Romancing the Road*: *Road Movies and Images of Mobility*, 1995) as the initial source and inspiration for my own study. My departure points have been very similar to those of Lawrence who emphasizes the manifested "dominance of man as subject and woman as object [. . .] in the theoretical and critical discourse about travel and the plot of the journey as well as in the stories and myths themselves" (1). She points out the elision of the female subject and the mapping of the female as geography, and how "theories of travel and those of narrative in which travel serves as a central trope most vividly betray their politics of location through a certain blindness to the role of gender in topographies" (11). Questions that Lawrence poses are for example: what happens when Penelope voyages? What discourse, what figures, what maps does she use? Can Penelope, the weaver and teller of the story of male absence, trace her own itinerary instead? She finds that what differentiates women's travel narratives from men's seems to be that "women writers of travel have tended to mistrust the rhetoric of mastery, conquest, and quest that has funded a good deal of male fictional and nonfictional travel" (20). In my investigation of attempts at regendering the road narrative I have been guided by her question as to whether women can rewrite the various types of travel narratives, and replace "the static mapping of women as space (which we

have seen in the male configurations of the map of travel) with a more dynamic model of woman as agent, as self-mover" (18). Lawrence also brings up a basic anxiety in travel writing to make it "new" that is also tackled in my study (more of this below). Her study traces "the way travel literature by women engages this fundamental sense of belatedness and the question of literary appropriation" (25). Returning to Lawrence's analysis after having completed my own research I find that many of the questions that I have come to pose in reading my selected texts coincide with hers. Of course, Lawrence's study is much longer, more extensive and more detailed than my own, and the fiction she has selected is more diverse; she includes travelogues as well as postmodern experimental novels. She analyzes, for example, Mary Kingsley's African travelogue, Margaret Cavendish's *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (1656), Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Orlando* (1928), and Brigid Brophy's *In Transit* (1969). Her focus is also strictly on British literature. My focus, to remind the reader, lies on women's mobility and its use for feminism, rather than on the trope of travel and mobility as primarily textual tools for liberation.

Other scholars whose center of attention involves the "discursive" rather than the "actuality" of women's journeys are Lindsey Tucker and Marilyn C. Wesley. Tucker's *Textual Escap(e)ades: Mobility, Maternity, and Textuality in Contemporary Fiction by Women* (1994) analyzes a number of American women's narratives from a psychoanalytic perspective (Lacanian and Freudian), focusing on how female subjects are endowed with mobility through the female writer's "escapades" (that is, unusual moves not regularly associated with women) by which the author achieves an escape from patriarchally derived literary models. She includes, for example, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), Toni Morrison's *Sula (*1973) and *Beloved (*1987). Marilyn C. Wesley explores the trope of women's travel in terms of women's "secret journeys" in American

literature from the seventeenth century up to the 1970s. The trope of travel, she writes, has been "readily available for the representation of the masculine experience. It provides the central organizing structure for all of Melville; for Whitman's 'Song of Myself'; [. . .] Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* and *Huckleberry Finn*" (3). She discusses how American women writers have used the trope of travel in ways not previously attended to. She claims that the mere strategy of writing woman into a narrative as traveler is subversive in itself; that it provides "a means of thinking against the grain" (xviii). Wesley, like Tucker, has chosen texts that "illustrate the imaginative construction of woman's travel as discursive metaphor rather than the actualities of journeys" (xvi-xvii). Wesley investigates, for example, Mary Rowlandson's, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Edith Wharton's *Summer* (1917), and Elizabeth Bishop's poetry (1927-1979).

Lawrence, Tucker, and Wesley thus all slide back and forth between focusing on the concept of the travel as metaphoric and actual mobility. This is perhaps most evident in sections such as Lawrence's analysis of postmodern experimental fiction that presents both "narratives *of* and narratives *as* journeys severed from origin and *telos*" (207, italics in original). The way in which women's travel linguistically breaks with masculine "master plots" by, for example, breaking up sequential plots and constructing "informational and semantic gaps" that "disrupt the logic of narrative continuity" has never been a particular concern in my thesis (209). In its emphasis on physical mobility my study has more affinity with an analysis like Sidonie Smith's *Moving Lives* (2001) that maintains a focus on women's travel as tangible physical movement. Similar to Smith I want to attend to "real" roads rather than textual escapes, to physical rather than metaphoric mobility. Smith, who includes for analysis, for example, Alexandra David-Neel's *Magic and Mystery in*

Tibet (1932), Beryl Markham's *West with the Night* (1942), and Irma Kurtz's *The Great American Bus Ride* (1993), stresses the importance of the technology of mobility—cars, planes, boats, and trains—in the service of mobilizing women. Like mine, Smith's study (which came to my attention very late in the research process) emphasizes the connection between "the success of first-wave feminism" and "the increasing mobility of women" (ix).

Smith's book is the only one so far which makes use of the term "narrative of mobility" but with less specificity than I do, since her focus is how a particular technology is chosen by a female traveler, how the traveler uses this specific kind of mobility, and how her choice affects the way she narrates her story. She states, for example, that the "powerful technologies of modernity have made new kinds of identities possible in the last century. Energizing new relationships to identity, they generate new *narratives of mobility*" (xiii, my emphasis). Smith's focus is on technology and how women's travel narratives are shaped by this modern mobility.

All of the studies mentioned above include wide ranges of narratives classified as women's travel writing. Women's road narratives are thus subsumed under the umbrella term of travel writing. There are not, as yet, any published studies that center exclusively on women's road narratives. Heller's analysis comes close. But she categorizes her narratives under the heading of "quest-romances" and these are basically selected for being "women-coming-of-age"-stories. Mobility has a secondary role to the theme of heroism and the *bildung*-motif. The car, which is important in the road narrative, has no prominent place in her analysis. None of the works thus approaches the road narrative specifically. My original intention was to attempt to contribute such a focused study of women's road narratives. Mobility, however, caught my interest and, making for a more interesting thesis, the subject led me in

research directions that forced me to let go of the *strict* focus on the road narrative à la Kerouac, expanding my literary and theoretical scope to embrace the "narrative of mobility." Still, the road narrative remains the core to which my arguments are tied and from which they have departed, and a majority of the works that I have analyzed could be categorized as typical road narratives—stories of people hitting the road in cars. In what follows, to give the reader a better sense of what the road narrative is before s/he proceeds to the articles themselves, I present a more thorough conceptualization of how the road narrative has been defined, how I conceive it, and how it has become a typically male American story. To conclude I account for how I have selected the texts included for study.

The Road: Road Narrative Studies and their Genre Definitions

The generally respected model for the twentieth-century road narrative that I use as the point of departure for my study is Kerouac's *On the Road*. It is often considered as a story of America, a story with strong influences of Whitmanesque praise of the American Self.[27] Considering, as has often been done, the impact of *On the Road* as the next greatest thing to change the twentieth century after the Lost Generation and their unforgettable imprint on the century[28] the traditional conception of the typical American road story can confidently be identified with this, by now, cult narrative of a few men hitting the highways of America. The road narrative has come to represent a uniquely American modern genre making use of the car, the great symbol of technology, freedom, and progress, to move the protagonist and his story forward.

[27] Walt Whitman's influence is significant in the context of the Beat movement that Kerouac belonged to. For example, Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956) is an echo of Whitman's "Song of Myself" (1855).

[28] For example, Gilbert Millstein made this comment already in 1957 in his review of *On the Road* "Books of The Times by Gilbert Millstein." A Beat-documentary on Swedish television recently argued the same ("*Beat-kulturens källa*").

By using the concept "narrative of mobility" to describe the road narrative I have wanted to make visible its gendered socio-political underpinnings. As Sidonie Smith has pointed out, mobility engenders identity. From the perspective of its status as a "narrative of mobility," the road narrative is a gender-identity generating genre. Taking this point of view, I emphasize the need to regard new road narratives, in which women are present and in charge of the wheel, first of all from the perspective of gender. I do this in order to counter a tendency in the studies of travel literature to merely include stories of women travelers as an appendix to the canon, rather than as something truly "new."[29] I will shortly return to this important issue.

Before dealing with the question of "the new," I will survey a number of attempts at defining works of travel literature that have affinities with, or include, the Kerouacian road narrative, namely: Primeau's *Romance of the Road: The Literature of the American Highway* (1996), Kris Lackey's *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative*, (1997), and Rowland A. Sherrill's *Road-Book America: Contemporary Culture and the New Picaresque* (2000). As is evident from their titles, each study employs its own definition of its object of study. All three studies include texts that could be classed under the heading American road narrative (among other possible headings). How then do these critics tackle the question of defining this type of narrative? Primeau and Lackey both proceed by providing accounts of the history and literary traditions influencing the road narrative. To understand the road genre Primeau wants to stress "cultural analysis, genre memory, and a reader-response view of audience" (1). To understand the road genre he uses, for example, the theories of Michail Bakhtin (genre memory), Raymond Williams (the dominant, residual and emergent element of cultural values), and

[29] The question of regendering the road genre is above all addressed in Article 3.

Wolfgang Iser (implied reader). Lackey, on the other hand, emphasizes that his investigation is "mostly an extended meditation on the shadow texts of American road books written between 1903 and 1994" and is more "thematic and ruminant" than "exhaustive and completely systematic," and, as we will see, resigns itself to the multiplicity of possible definitions (x). Lackey places the road genre in the tradition of the pastoral and the picaresque, but, seemingly impatient with the issue of genre definition, urges the reader familiar with these to proceed to the narratives themselves. He acknowledges that a "taxonomy of twentieth-century highway books about America will be troubled by a surfeit of grounds for comparing them" (24). He points out that there are a number of possible rubrics under which they could be grouped:

> literary mode (naturalism, pastoral, picaresque, satire); theme (self-discovery, escape from bourgeois confinement, racial identity); literary genre (autobiography, fiction, nonfiction, travelogue); persona (picaro, curmudgeon, social critic, troubadour); and tone (nostalgic, bitter, beat, euphoric). (24)

This liberal scope of possible grounds for taxonomy seems to appeal also to Sherrill who is very inclusive in his study. He admits from page one the "confusing" issue of genre as some "road books […] pose themselves as works in the genres of autobiographical writing" (William Least-Heat Moon's *Blue Highways*), others as "pure fiction" (Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees*), yet others "have the presentation of documentary-style portraits of the land and the people" (Charles Kuralt's *On the Road with Charles Kuralt*) (1). He alternatively calls these books journey narratives, journey literature, or journey stories, eventually to arrive at the denomination "the new American picaresque," the focus of his study. He goes on to account for the literary history of this "road book" going back to what are commonly viewed as the classic

picaresques, for example, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), Alain-René Le Sage's *Gil Blas* (1715–35), and Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1776). These narratives, he writes, are predecessors to the "new picaresque," and supply a form that is "apparently especially equipped for grappling with American life in the second half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium (3). So far so good.

A book which focuses less on "the literature of the American highway" than on a large body of American literature all of which, according to its introduction, is more or less based on the pattern of the journey narrative is Janis Stout's *The Journey Narrative in American Literature* (1983). Stout includes for analysis the Kerouacian road narrative as one journey narrative among others. Like the previous three researchers, she too acknowledges the difficulties in defining a literary form. She finds that

> categories that ring true in their mapping of the literary territory as it is actually experienced may not be mutually exclusive, simply because they are not set up according to a single set of criteria but several overlapping sets, drawing on both form and content. So it is with the pattern of the journey narrative that I have identified. (x).

Stout bases her definitions more on content than form, "on such matters as direction of journey, motivation of journeying and reference to actual historic precedents," but, she adds, these patterns also display recurring elements "such as characteristic incidents, images and tone" (x). Stout's analysis is consistent with her argument that a mapping of a genre is nearly impossible to keep exclusive and coherent. Consequently, her use of the concept "road narrative" becomes very wide and metaphoric. For example, she includes the broad motifs of "the quest" and "the homecoming" (12). That is, she accounts for the origins of the American

journey narrative in the eighteenth century as being expressions of a "new consciousness," the experience of social creation which authors interpreted by appropriating old forms; "[t]he patterns of *road narrative* already familiar in world literature and mythology—the quest, the migration, the homecoming, the wandering—were reshaped into distinctive yet familiar patterns of American narrative" (12, my emphasis). The road narrative or "simple journey," or "the traveller's tale or lie," she goes on, quoting Scholes and Kellogg's *The Nature of Narrative*, "a persistent oral form in all cultures" (12-13). As pointed out before, the road narrative in this definition includes basically all kinds of travel. However, in footnote 22, which comments on the statement "[the] patterns of journey narrative that we observe in American literature are not unique, but traditional and distinctively adapted" (12), she becomes more specific and refers the reader to Joseph Addison Davis' definition of the "'road novel' as a distinct American form related to the picaresque and other traditional journey forms but 'different from them' largely because of the shaping effect of the American westward journey of history" (24). We are also informed that the road narrative is linear and episodic (78), and that as a "principle of organization, it is inherently disjunctive; it provides a serial pattern of this, then that, then something else" (160). The novel that is analyzed in this particular section is Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930), whence she proceeds to Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939). But she does not make the connection between the two in terms of them being road narratives; what links them is that they are "family journeys" (161). The question is: where does she place the road novel that I have chosen as the model road narrative for my study? In one place, she refers to *On the Road* as "a book that can in some ways be seen as a modern parody of the Western" (22, n.10). She treats it in greater detail, under the chapter heading "Lost and Wandering," as a narrative of futility and goal-less traveling. She calls it "probably the quintessential novel of compulsive

wandering" (109), a novel in which "unconventional heroes signal their defection from society and assert their freedom by taking to the open road" (230). *On the Road* and novels like Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* (1955) and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), she claims, "have set the pattern of development for American fiction at mid-century" (230). Although slightly "depressive" in character, they have "a sizable capacity for the comic and the zestfully odd, qualities that sign real affinities with the picaresque" (230-31).

Primeau's, Lackey's, and Stout's observations all ring true, but lack the, in my view, vital perspective of gender. Of course, definitions like "unconventional heroes signal their defection from society and assert their freedom by taking to the open road," and having a "sizable capacity for the comic and the zestfully odd, qualities that sign real affinities with the picaresque," could very well be used to characterize a narrative such as *Thelma & Louise*. But contenting oneself with such characterizations, one would lose sight of the gendered perspective, the gender-identity-generating function of the genre. As I have pointed out earlier, I have, in my study, chosen to view the (Kerouacian) road narrative primarily in terms of its gender polarization, its masculinist identity-project that depends on "others," mostly women, for its fulfillment. I would like to add my view to the understandings of Stout, Sherrill, Primeau, and Lackey of the road narrative, by focusing specifically on the road topos.

To summarize Stout, Sherrill, Primeau, and Lackey, the road narrative could be derived from many times, under many themes, and from various literary sources. In their different approaches to the road/highway narrative, there are shared deductions, for example, that it is related to the picaresque, the Western, and the *Bildungsroman*, and that it is very important in the American literary tradition.[30] But, yet another

[30] What was a slightly shocking fact was that Sherrill has chosen to exclude *the* road narrative, as I see it, *On the Road*, from analysis!

uniting element can be discerned, which almost all of the authors seem to take for granted—the *road* itself. I believe that the most feasible and simple way to understand the road genre is by starting with the highway, the road itself—to consider the road as its primary structuring element, or *topos*.

The Road as Topos, Contact Zone, and Generator of Identity

In his essay "Travel Writing in British Metafiction: A Proposal for Analysis" Fernando Galván brings up the importance of the topos in his attempt at drawing up a literary typology that will "illustrate the development of literary 'types' or genres, associated with travel writing" (78):

> If we want to study the development of a *genre* or of a *type* or *mode of discourse* [. . .], we should start with the *initial thematic trait* or *thematic text base* that characterizes all the individual products of that type. That basic structure has a *semantic nucleus* which roughly coincides with the classical concept of the *topos*. (78)

Topos is Greek for "place," and is the equivalent of the Latin word *locus*, as in location. As a literary term it is regularly defined as a theme, motif, a literary convention, or a commonplace element. Galván equates topos with "the literary form(s) given for a certain kind of content." The rehearsal of a form over and over again in a certain literary tradition becomes a topos or "microgenre" (79). The recognition of such *topoi* can thus serve to identify certain works as belonging to a certain literary tradition. Galván endeavors to trace typical travel *topoi* in order to identify a number of British postmodern novels as descendants of a travel literature tradition. The element of quest, for example, could be a structuring theme, or the recurrence of a particular location such as a railroad station, as a stage for certain events such as departures and

arrivals, or a road, as a place for encounters with strangers, etc.

A reader would inevitably find the topos of the road to reoccur and figure prominently in the road narrative of the 1930s as well as that of the 1990s. A road may appear in several generations of texts, various times and geographic locations, be it a mud, dirt, wood or asphalt road, in works of literature ranging from Homer, Chaucer, Bunyan, Fredrika Bremer, to Hunter S. Thompson. The repetition of the road topos makes the genre recognizable as belonging to an old, wide, and long tradition of travel literature. Here, it should perhaps be pointed out that the topos of the road is to be thought of as a road that can or is meant to be traveled. Thus, in a narrative in which someone notes the red color of the houses along the boulevard, or crosses the street to get a carton of milk, the road is not primarily a topos that signals the text's belonging to a travel tradition, but a topos in the very strict sense of a place. Until it is situated and populated, its defining function remains negligible, at least for the purposes of my study. I want to supplement Galván's understanding of the road topos with another type of perspective which entails asking more questions: what does the road that can be traveled connote, and for whom? Common connotations of the road are, for example, freedom, progress, individualism, and change, and to this I would add: mobility. These are, at a first glance, very universal notions. It would be helpful then to add a defining term to the road as topos; if the road is seen as a *contact zone*, the notions of freedom and mobility lose their universality and become more specific and, hence, more interesting.

"Contact zones" are, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), defined by Mary Louise Pratt as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination-like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today" (4). The use of the term has however proliferated and stands

for other encounters than merely colonial ones. It can potentially be used for any meeting in which subjects are seen as constituted by one another and the situation they find themselves in. When the topos of the road also invokes the concept of contact, not merely calling up images associated with road travel, like mobility and freedom, in a neutral fashion, it becomes a more productive tool with which to deal with the road narrative.

The road can be regarded as a contact zone between young and old, men and women, rich and poor, subjects of different race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality and more. The topos of the road conceptualized as a contact zone can be thought of as a topos that *generates identity*, and more specifically in my study: gender identity. I understand men and women on the road as subjects behaving and being treated differently because of their gender, and because they are *on the road*. As was highlighted earlier, mobility engenders identity.

My particular focus, then, is the gendering function of the road and how gender can pattern the road narrative. I thus begin my analysis, in Article 1, with accounting for the gender pattern of the road narrative, which I see as its primary defining features. The subsequent articles are also preoccupied with sorting out how gender is figured in and figures the road narrative.

The Road as Story of (Male) America

My selected road narratives represent, as mentioned, more than just American experiences of road travel, yet the concept of the road as an American phenomenon/cultural theme dominates these narratives.[31] This

[31] This excepts, of course, *Paradise Lost* and *Moll Flanders*. It should be noted, however, that Moll is sent to the American colony and in a sense takes a "Westward journey." The novel, then, touches upon a version of the successful emigration-to-America-story.

nationalistic pitch exists parallel to the tendency to appreciate the hitting of the road as the great symbol of freedom associated with automobility. As Primeau writes:

> New and distinctive in the twentieth century were the power, speed, status, and romance of the automobile, which quickly took on what B.A. Botkin has called the "super icon of the road to freedom of activity movement, to opportunity and success."[32] (5)

Of course, the automobile, freedom and speed are by tradition strongly associated with American culture. I need to add, then, to the understanding of "the road" as a socio-historically, culturally contingent, gender-identity producing topos, a few words on the concept of the road as "story of America."

If, as a critic, one did not focus on the gender, class or race-issues figuring in a novel such as Kerouac's *On the Road*, it would be tempting to succumb to the compelling romanticism of the road and appreciate it as a timeless, faceless, and endless symbol of possibility and hope that is available to everyone. There is an alluring universality of the road topos, and the road will undoubtedly, at least for its more privileged travelers, always retain some of this expansive, limitless quality. It can be difficult to resist equating accounts of the American land with love songs of the American road, and many introductions to American studies begin in rather celebratory tones with the stories of immigration and settling into the country—the moving West.[33] The road is frequently interpreted as an American trope signaling the "becoming" of America. This conflation of road stories and stories of America is compatible with a view of American

[32] Primeau refers to Marshall Fishwick and Ray B. Browne's 1970 study *Icon's of Popular Culture* (48).

[33] For example, Mick Gidley's *Modern American Culture: An Introduction* (1993). More substance to this claim is given in Article 3.

history that embraces the grand narrative of the self-made man as the prime historical subject, and emphasizes the discourses of emigration and difference. Stephen Fender, for example, argues that America throughout history has been perceived as exceptional, or different: different from Europe in its political, cultural, and economic organization (1-22). As a result, a logic of difference marks *the American*. But, Fender asks, are Americans really different? He observes that the question is complicated for a number of reasons; one of them being that America is a state of mind. American is something you "become" by making yourself one. Similarly, and simultaneously, *America* is "made" into something—something different. In addition, America, Fender argues, is deeply affected by the rhetoric of emigration, which follows the conviction that you have to leave your "here" to go "there" in order to find something *different* than what you have. To rephrase Fender, one could say that, to make yourself American, you pursue a transformative itinerary, a process of identity formation, which bears both material and symbolic markers of movements, of journeying. The *traditionally visible*, historical subject of these practices (the *male* immigrant, the *male* Western pioneer, *male* settler, rebel, cowboy, etc) has, over time, become *the* American, a mythical hero on the road to build America, someone becoming American.[34] All stories of the road thus become stories of America and vice versa.[35] Paradoxically enough, America becomes past and future, all in one, a universalizing tendency that runs throughout Fender's argument. Fender's idea that—to use two "awkward" terms of my own—*not-yet-Americans* as well as *already-Americans* constitute themselves as Americans, and together make up America creates complications. It becomes problematic because it relies

[34] A simple, perhaps unnecessary *caveat* that I would nevertheless like to issue is, that by calling the hero a mythical creature I do not automatically exclude all those men of flesh and blood that belong to the groups mentioned in the parenthesis above.

[35] See Krista Comer for a critique of seeing *the West* as America.

on the concept of *the one*; despite its emphasis on difference it actually neglects the difference between individual and collective, male and female, people and country, states of mind and actual geographic and temporal locations—although these may at times coincide. The story of America in its traditional interpretation thus means the story of the *male* American. As will be evident from the following articles, the prototypical American (and non-American for that matter) storyteller was always a man, and the prototypical traveler was always a man, and has remained so until the 1990s! From this issue the questions that I have already posed elsewhere in this introduction: what happens as this changes? What if the driver and storyteller is a woman? What happens to the road narrative? As I try to show in my thesis, based on an understanding of the road narrative as an identity-generating genre founded on male-female polarization, women-on-the-road-narratives do more than just add another element to the genres of travel literature, than just supplement another perspective on America, more than just merge with previous road narratives.

The Road: Making it "New"

The previously mentioned studies of road narratives tend to obscure the effect women's presence has on the regendering of travel and travel narratives. Sherrill's lengthy study does not dedicate any significant amount of space to explaining fundamental differences between picara and picaro experiences. Actually, road narratives of the type that I find vital to analyze in this thesis (*On the Road* and *Thelma & Louise*) are beyond the scope of Sherrill's book. The new American picaresque, he writes, is more about leisurely traveling the road, "slowed by sights and scenes," exploring "what can be made of the more palpable stuff of American life" (275n 1). Lackey and Primeau devote a few pages to female road travelers, but although they acknowledge the different conditions existing for

women, for poor people and people of color who travel the road, they do not consider them in terms of their potential to change the genre.

I want to argue that women on the road regender the road narrative, and the newness they create must be taken as a serious change; gender must be seen as a transformative category, rather than a complement or supplement. I thus suggest an alternative way to think about changes in the road narrative. I do this for two reasons: 1) as part of the overall thesis-project to contribute to the gendering of theoretical discourse; and 2) in order to counter an important general tendency in travel research to deny the potential for travel writing to create something "new."

Among the skeptics about the possibility of the new are, for example, Umberto Eco, Paul Fussell, and Jean Baudrillard, who all believe that travel writers now can merely repeat what previous writers have done. More recent skeptics are Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, who cite, from the past, disillusioned travelers like Jonathan Swift and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Leaning on Harold Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence, and (as I read their argument) a belief in the usurpation of travel writing by a general wave of postmodernist aestheticization, Holland and Huggan claim that contemporary travel writing has a mark of belatedness, and as a result becomes repetitive, self-conscious, and ironic. I would say that this is in accord with my perception of it. But, they then ask the question whether it is "possible in a genre [travel writing] much given to repetition, to come up with something new?" (x), and their answer is basically "no." Synthesizing my readings of women's pre-1991-road narratives (carried out in Articles 1 and 2) with my discussion of some of their late twentieth-century counterparts (executed mainly in Article 3 and 4), I claim that it *is* possible.

A crucial move that I make in order to demonstrate the arrival of something new that transforms the road genre is disallowing "genre"

from piloting the analysis. This is actually accomplished as soon as I propose that genre is conditioned by a gendered and gendering road topos. Gender is then lifted from its position as assistant and promoted to director, that is, to inhabiting the (previously forbidden) cardinal robe of authoritative critical concept. In other words, rather than letting it pass by or including it as a complementary term, I reroute the investigation by way of gender which consequently is claimed to be a radically transformative and leading category. This inversion of the hierarchy of terms frees up the narrative and authorizes it to become truly "new." I thereby contest the theory of belatedness appealed to by more conservative theorists, and alert the reader to the gendered "new aesthetic" employed by the writers and their protagonists in these recent fictions. This new aesthetic comes about in two phases of regendering of the road narrative that I call 1) *rescripting* and 2) *descripting*. These are thoroughly explained and exemplified in Articles 3 and 4.

My Selection of Road Narratives

As has been indicated above, the road tends to signify more than a geographic location or "infrastructure"; it is also widely employed as metaphor for life, for the journey from birth to death. This "versatility" of the road could give cause for alarm, since with a too generous definition the selection of narratives would be very difficult. The supply of possible stories to include for analysis could become close to endless. Thus, I have partially had to shy away from a proposition such as de Certeau puts forward in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), that all narratives of life are, in one sense or another, travel narratives. I nevertheless want to make clear that I realize the productivity and feasibility of the proposition. Still, I want to keep a strong focus on a few physical literary roads rather than a multitude of metaphorical pathways. If I bring up (as I do in Article 2) the potential of the road narrative to signify numerous life stories, I do this to

illustrate how this construction of "the road" in its all-encompassing abstract sense universalizes the travel experience—a danger that I brought up above—at the same time as it marginalizes the female traveler as well as those staying home, traditionally women, without the license to travel.[36] Moreover, as pointed out in the section on mobility, my main interest has been to follow women's movements on "real" (for example, literary or cinematic) roads that may be traveled rather than purely allegorical ones, paying attention to the reactions the female body stirs up moving around in space rather than merely accounting for females' life adventures in general.[37] By adhering to this main interest—the "real road"—the amount of available source material is somewhat reduced, if still abundant.

In the Introduction I stated that my readings would include a number of narratives collected from novels and short stories as well as film. The narratives that I chose had to include physical movement—travel or transportation on some kind of (real) road—not merely indications of change, maturation or *Bildung*, along an indefinite path. The main body of literature that I looked at was North American, since *On the Road* staged travels on the roads of North America, (crossing and re-crossing at some point the U.S.-border). If there was an explicit connection to *On the Road* and Kerouac as a kind of literary forefather, or if the narrative was announced as a road narrative related to the type of *On the Road*-travel, the choice became quite easy, as in the case of Tom Robbins' *Even Cowgirls get the Blues* (1976). Natural choices were also the obvious remakes on the masculinist road theme *Thelma & Louise* (1991), and

[36] On the issue of the gendered access to travel Cynthia Enloe writes in her 1989 study *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*: "Feminist geographers and ethnographers have been amassing evidence revealing that a principal difference between women and men in countless societies has been the license to travel away from a place thought of as 'home'" (qtd. in Sidonie Smith *1*).

[37] A mainly metaphorical use of the road as development and growth is employed in Barbara Frey Waxman's *From the Hearth to the Open Road: A Feminist Study of Aging in Contemporary Literature* (1990), although the heroines in a few of Waxman's selected narratives do also hit the road as a result of their "maturation."

Flaming Iguanas: An All-Girl Novel Kind of Thing (1998), Erika Lopez.

Furthermore, the car or some kind of motorized vehicle was deemed important but not necessary—the protagonist did not need to possess a car. What was important was the association of the road with motorized traffic—as long as the narratives were from an era when the car existed. In Article 2, I decided to make an excursion back in time to find the connections between women and the road/women's mobility—a connection that came to be expressed as the motherhood of the road. The narratives included in this article move over different types of roads: the eighteenth-century dirt roads traveled by coaches drawn by horses, as in Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1776); the unspecified road traveled by Adam and Eve as they are commanded to walk out of Paradise into the world, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the nineteenth-century gravel roads of Italy on which we find Daisy Miller to be transported or escorted in James's novel *Daisy Miller* (1878); and finally a variety of twentieth-century roads—highways, dirt paths—that lead to and from the town of Ruby in Oklahoma in Morrison's *Paradise* (1997).[38] I have thus chosen narratives where the car did not figure as the primary means of transportation, in which case hitchhiking, riding freight-trains, or walking were accepted as means of mobility, when the intention of the protagonist could be interpreted as movement of her body outside, in public space—as in Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1980), which is included.

From some of the narratives that I have read for the study I have merely excerpted epigraphs placed at the head of the chapters. They serve as abbreviated accounts of certain moments in the history of the road narrative in terms of the subject position of the woman on the road. Works that were excluded but which could support my assumptions about the stereotypical polarization of men and women in relation to the road (to

[38] It should be noted that Toni Morrison's narrative stretches further back in time than the twentieth century.

travel and mobility) are: Aritha van Herk's *No Fixed Address: An Amorous Journey* (1986)— a story of an odd road traveler, the undergarment- sales-woman Arachne that is a very good example of the play on the sexualized notions of women's mobility; Michelle Carter's *On Other Days While Going Home* (1987), which is about Annie, whose cross country trip from San Francisco over Wyoming to Cape Cod in search of herself displays many of the stereotyped notions of masculine mobility and its subordination of the female; Anne Roiphe's *Long Division* (1972), which is a novel about a mother who is driving to Mexico with her daughter to get a divorce and start a new life, and Mona Simpson's *Anywhere But Here* (1992), which is about a mother, Adele, traveling with her daughter, Anne to California looking for film and photo-shoot options for Anne. These novels all tend to underscore the vulnerability of women on the road. Finally, Jaimy Gordon's *She Drove Without Stopping* (1996), about Jane Turner raging across the U.S. from Ohio to L.A. in a Buick, and Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees* (1997), which is about Marietta who leaves her home in Kentucky, drives aimlessly in her VW-bug, receives a baby from a desperate Cherokee woman in Oklahoma, and eventually settles in Arizona, were not included, quite simply because they were not brought to my attention until very recently.[39]

In my study, I have taken samples from a relatively small output of women's road stories, in order to at least hint at *one* possible development of the road narrative in terms of what happens as women enter into the picture in other ways than as the damsel in distress, the prostitute, the diner waitress, or the wife waiting at home. This development is thus seen as my version of what constitutes the regendering of the narrative of mobility.

[39] I would like to thank Minna Pavulans for bringing these novels to my attention and welcoming me in her home in Oregon, when I was on the road (WA-NM) 2002.

ARTICLE I

Men and Women on the Move: Dramas of the Road

> How am I ever going to get out of here?
>
> ----*Curse of the Starving Class* (1985)
> Sam Shepard

> I can only answer the question "What am I to do?" if I can answer the prior question "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?"
>
> ----*After Virtue* (1981)
> Alasdair MacIntyre

> Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing. .[. . .] Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement.
>
> ----"The Laugh of the Medusa" (1975)
> Hélène Cixous

> [O]ccupy subject positions in discourse [. . .] coin the signifier instead of borrowing it.
>
> ----"The Disoriented Tourist" (1997)
> Eeva Jokinen and Soile Vejola

Introduction

The last two decades of the twentieth century saw an enormous interest in travel in its various guises and forms. Fictional travel stories, non-fictional travelogues, and factual cartographic media, travel magazines and guidebooks have veritably flooded the market. The number of critical texts matches the outpouring of travel "fictions" and travel "facts."[1] Geographers and anthropologists have

[1] "Travel writing" is commonly defined as that kind of writing, for example,

provided intriguing spatial investigations exploring the limits, exclusions and inclusions of borders and territories, diasporas and migration, mobility and maps—mental and material. Together with literary scholars, sociologists and historians they have offered valuable analyses of the interplay of social and textual practices, ideologies, and cultures in the encounters and conflicts which travel undoubtedly invokes and provokes.[2]

Most studies have until recently been focused on European, particularly British, (imperial) nineteenth-century travel writing.[3] Much of the research has not taken the importance of gender into account and paid one-sided attention to male travelers. Indeed, criticism has been waged against the lack of analysis of the gendered significations of travel.[4] Studies of the female traveler in literature (fiction) have heretofore been sparse. Now, however, they are on the increase. Karen Lawrence, for example, has studied the female traveler in the British literary tradition; Lindsay Tucker has analyzed a number of American women's narratives focusing on mobility, maternity and "textual escap(e)ades"; Marilyn Wesley has explored the trope of women's travel in terms of their "secret

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anthropological or journalistic, which aspires to an objective stance of reporting the experience of traveling. "Travel stories", on the other hand, may be defined as fictional accounts of travel, where travel may either be the main topic or a background structure for helping the story along. In criticism it is regularly assumed that no guidebook or journey reported in, for example, a guidebook or travel magazine may be objective or "innocent" due to the cultural expectations and intentions of every tourist or traveler that ever sat down in front of a "typewriter" to relate his/her experience (see e.g. Holland and Huggan). Not even maps can be considered completely objective although this type of geographical guide may be that which comes closest to an attempt at objectively depicting reality. Thus the present division of the various genres of travel into facts and fictions must be seen as a coarse and conditional one.

[2] For accounts and criticisms by geographers, see Barnes and Gregory; Blunt and Rose; Duncan and Gregory; Harvey; Soja (*Postmodern Geographies*), by anthropologists, see Clifford ("Traveling Cultures"; *Routes*); Lévi-Strauss. For literary, sociological and historical accounts and analyses, see Buzard; Clavier; Lawrence; Mills; D. Porter; Pratt; Rojek and Urry; and Warneke.

[3] Birkett (*Spinsters Abroad*); Blunt; Buzard; Duncan and Gregory; and Mills.

[4] By, for example, Blunt and Rose; Lawrence; Mills; Swain; and Veijola and Jokinen.

journeys" in American literature from the seventeenth century up to the 1970s.

However, none of these books has explored what I want to term the "Woman on the Road," the female of that characteristic *road experience* which is prototypically represented by later versions of the cowboy—the "Marlboro Man"—and road movies, typically *Easy Rider* from 1969 (Hopper). I regard the "road genre" as the *modern* travel genre *par excellence*. The technological inventions of modernity such as the locomotive, the automobile, airplane, etc, which were becoming accessible for a larger (mainly salaried, white) American and European public during the first half of the twentieth century, have in social thought often been analyzed more in terms of static background structures constituting private and public realm, rather than as actively increasing human physical mobility (Urry, "Global Publics"). In the road genre, this mobility plays a vital part. Mobilized bodies and artefacts collide and problems of class, gender, race, and identity are inevitably unleashed. An inexhaustible and imperishable genre emerges in which writers and directors may dramatically explore violence and desire, freedom and dependence.

When two common objects of desire—women and cars—are combined in such a genre exciting things are bound to happen. Yet, the Woman on the Road—whether hitchhiking, or steering her own motorized vehicle—has been a fairly invisible twentieth-century post-war traveler, seldom or never spotted in critical discourse. The exception is *The Road Movie Book* which provides valuable material and a few examples of women in the road narrative (Cohan and Hark). This anthology, however, focuses on movies, whereas I would like to draw attention to literature—which in a sense has both preceded and followed up on the cinematic success of the narratives of the road.

Within the perimeter of the multifaceted question of what is

involved in creating a twentieth-century traveler identity,[5] I first conceptualize the road in terms of how it emerged as a primarily male territory in which the travel experience becomes a male identity project which engages in a culturally dependent spatial othering of women and minorities. Drawing upon mythologically and psychoanalytically inspired theories, I comment on how we can view the sex-dependent boundaries girdling women's and men's spatial movement.

I examine three road narratives beginning with the stage-setting novel by Jack Kerouac *On the Road* (1957). This novel illustrates the road narrative's gendered past and pattern which mobilizes men and makes women stationary. I then juxtapose this supposedly stationary situation of women with the performance of two women travelers, the protagonists of Tom Robbins' *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (1976) and Diana Atkinson's *Highways and Dance Halls* (1995). My choice of authors was prompted, on the one hand, by my intention to highlight the question of how representations of gender are linked to gendered authorship; on the other, I wanted to trace the development chronologically (1957-1975-1995). The novels were also selected, I should hasten to add, from a very small stock of this particular kind of road narrative. My special interest here lies in Robbins' and Atkinson's attempts at re-gendering the figure of the road traveler.

By examining these stories as "dramas" of the road I wish to draw attention to the sometimes violent "politics of location" issuing forth as

[5] This essay does not claim to give justice to the complexity of male or female travelers, and acknowledges that its area of analysis is one of a (mostly) white Western experience, and that each gendered subject is also a "product" of multifarious processes and factors. I believe that whoever wishes to call her/himself a woman or man should have the right to do so. I also believe "woman" and "man' most likely will continue to be basic interpretative categories for yet some time, since people in general seem very reluctant to refrain from gendered pronouning. Acknowledging the constructed nature of gender whatever the "building material," I would still claim the existence of institutionalized constructs on which "we" act and make sense out of, whatever that sense may turn out to be.

men and women collide and collude in the same congested plot. To conclude I ask and discuss the question if the authors were successful in their attempts and whether a regendering of the road traveler is at all possible, given the weight of the genre's heavily gendered narrative past.

Setting the Stage: Road Travel as "Male" Identity Project

One way of understanding the popularity of the road narrative is to see it as an effect of a more or less hidden *angst* emerging as the world increasingly is imaged as shrinking to the beat of technology; a feeling that the "global village" is closing in upon the individual human being and his or her mind by way of the Internet highways. If "virtual" travels are seen as a postmodern, anxiety-ridden, fragmented journeying, then modern traveling, automobility in particular, may be interpreted as an "old" technology acting the role of the therapist. The reinvigorated mythological value of car-travel is reflected in the nostalgic expansion of the road genre, and, in fact, enabling a return to a more coherent, "linear" and deliberate identity-building living, that is, a "life [seen] as a pilgrimage" (Bauman 82-103). If indeed such a return to a linear identity construction is sought, it should be scrutinized, because with this apparently straight-forward pilgrim road which promises "postmodern man" salvation comes also a historical burden, a past of gendered signifying practices.

The great majority of tales and traditions of travel ranging from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey*, Exodus, the travel writing of Herodotus and Pliny, the crusades, the fifteenth and sixteenth century pilgrimages to sacred sites in Europe and the Holy Land, the Grand Tour, and other kinds or differently routed journeys—all the roads into the 1960s—were adventures embarked upon predominantly by men. As a rule, the various projects of travel have been "reserved" for men:

> Women [in the modern construction of life], together with other categories not thought of as capable of self-creation [. .

> .] were consigned to the background, to the landscape through which the itinerary of the pilgrim is plotted, were cast in a perpetual "here and now"; in a space without distance and time without future. (Bauman 87)

Women have been constituted in immobile place-bound domesticity and symbolic geography. Following the same logic, public spaces have been closed off or minimally accessible to women, a socio-cultural practice of gendering space and traveler which is reflected in the discourse of travel—and vice versa. Women have been represented as *a*typical travelers; an early example in travel literature of such an "off track" female is Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. The many different travel genres are consequently filled with male protagonists and female walk-ons in dramas a majority of which have been written by and for men, thus making both travel canon and road into "masculine" territories—spaces in which men have moved and women seldom broken into.

A quick look at the history of the United States—the origin of the road genre focused in this article—provides ample proof of how a gendered discourse grew out of the geographical imagination of its "forefathers" from Columbus to F. J. Turner. In this imagination the New World was viewed alternately as "Paradise," "Land of Plenty," and as "Wilderness" (Jarvis 2), the conquering of which was generally referred to as a "laying of the land" (Kolodny). Far from being purely metaphorical, the "laying" and appropriation of the new "Mother country" was part of a large wave of mobility initiated by the first settlers who moved in and gradually pushed the Native Americans out and the "Frontier" West. The frontier ethos and the "obsession with mobility," which signifies not only acts of geographical traversing but also socio-economic migration, room for independence and individual movement, have since become landmarks of American culture and ideology (West 5). Typically, the (ideological) journey of the self-made American is a picaresque, in which a

white male uses his mobility to expand his territory. The American (literary) adventurer of the post-war period may be illustrated as an "evolution" of what Leslie Fiedler termed "the Good Bad Boy" of Huckleberry Finn, "America's vision of itself," testing his limits (270). This picaro of the 1950s, however, begins his revolution "by playing hooky [. . .] not from grade school but from prep school or college" (290). The picaresque Fiedler has in mind is, of course, *On the Road*.

Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) had a tremendous impact from the very beginning. Millstein, a *New York Times* critic, accurately predicted it the testament of the Beat Generation. The novel initiated an enormous cult of the road. It sold "a trillion levis and a million espresso machines" (William Burroughs, qtd. in Charters xxviii). *Route 66*, with a Kerouac look-alike in the lead, became one of the most popular TV-series in the early 1960s.

On the Road consists of a series of road adventures of two young men, Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, who, in order to experience kicks, get high on women and alcohol. Sal, the narrator, is a student. He adventures with his buddy Dean in between, and sometimes during, school semesters. He hitchhikes, rides the bus, or drives, depending on the availability of cars and money. When broke and tired of his "kick," Sal returns home after calling his Aunt to wire him the bus fare home. Sal's friend Dean Moriarty is more criminally inclined. Cast off by his father, he is a reckless whirlwind, a man who sexually and emotionally engages women but never hesitates to leave them behind in favor of the road.

This road novel's degrading attitude towards women and racial minorities prevails may be quite shocking to the contemporary reader. The reader is faced with the processes of othering from start to finish. Characterizations such as "Lee Ann was a fetching hunk," "her ambition was to marry a rich man" (62); and "[Sal] saw the cutest little Mexican girl, her breasts stuck out straight and true; her little flanks looked delicious"

(81); but when he talked to her he realized he "was pleading with a dumb little Mexican wench" (84), are repeated throughout. We find here a stereotypical sexualized objectification and infantilization of women. We also encounter a precision of the national origin of "the wench," as if in an effort to separate her from the white, American (female) home-community. Women are often portrayed as whores: '"And where's MaryLou?' I asked, and Dean said she'd apparently whored a few dollars together and went back to Denver—'the whore!'" (5-6).

That prostitutes play a vital part in the narrative is evidenced, not only by this wholesale address of women whether this be their profession or not, but also by its grand finale.

The novel's "final" road adventure takes Sal, Dean (and a third character, Stan) across the Mexican border to the city of Gregoria where they seek out the whorehouse with its "great girls" (287). Dean disappears with "the wildest one [who] was half Indian, half white, and came from Venezuela, and only eighteen" (287); Sal "was set upon by a fat and uninteresting girl" but tried to "break loose to get at a sixteen-year-old colored girl" (288), and "Stan had a fifteen-year-old girl with an almond colored skin" (288). The whole experience "was like a long spectral Arabian dream in the afternoon in another life—Ali Baba and the alleys and the courtesans" (289). Again, the specificity of skin color, nationality and ethnicity of the girls are objects of much attention which intensifies the othering of them as non-white, non-U.S. women.

After their bonding and "exotic" brothel tour, Sal comes down with dysentery. Dean leaves Sal in Mexico sick and unconscious in his "sorrowful fever" (303). He heads back home to sort out his relationships with Camille in L.A. and Inez in New York. He had to "get on with his wives and woes" (303). In the very last lines of the novel Sal sits watching the skies over New Jersey deploring the fact that "nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old, I

think of Dean Moriarty, I even think of Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found, I think of Dean Moriarty" (310).

On the Road with Odysseus and his Others

On the Road begs several questions of which only two, interlocking ones, are addressed here: the "othering" of women and the ambiguous quest for the father. The parentage of the twentieth-century traveler proves particularly paradoxical if—as often—analyzed with the help of psychoanalytically inflected myth semiotics. In this context it is productive to think of the myth of Odysseus (the journeying Father) and Oedipus (the questing Son).

Mads Thranholm has studied European literary works which implicitly or explicitly are structured on the Odyssean journey. In this journey Odysseus symbolizes the Father and Capitalist in a mythical establishment of patriarchy and private ownership. The literary Oedipal journeys of "traveling sons," symbolizing the effort at overthrowing the patriarch, have until now failed, Thranholm claims, because the Odysseus myth has been too strong and kept men within a specific conservative role of masculinity. Not until now, Thranholm claims, are the myths reworked in an emancipatory direction, that is, the "sons" are liberating themselves from the repressive structures of the constraining symbolic order (dominant ideology) of the father/state.

This emancipatory intention may be found also in *On the Road*. This twentieth-century anti-odyssey belongs to the journeys described as quests for "freedom" and "pleasure" (Leed). In addition to the traumatic Oedipal liberation strategy, redemption is mediated through genital sexuality, that is, by an element of satyriasis, and even the Don Juan myth. Sons thus break the boundaries drawn by the father and experience a pleasurable escape, but they do so at the expense of an eternal displacement of the Other. A new line is drawn; a new border is erected.

Where it is drawn is quite obvious in *On the Road*. The borders of father Odysseus surround his property, women and slaves. The sons who desire to set themselves free as independent individuals confer the status of patriarch on themselves without turning over the filial status to the daughters whose bodies are still trapped within and supporting the borders of the male self/father—now also the son. The masculinist road project could then be described as a structure which dispels the *anima* via favoring the bond between males by way of passing along a cultural legacy of knowledge from "father" to "son." The patriarchal world scheme is held in place and reproduced, and "knowledge" passed from buddy to buddy. *On the Road* thus appropriates the road narrative as a male buddy genre which presupposes that women are othered. Let me give another example of how this othering is executed.

When Sal and Dean go to Mexico, they perform an othering which may be compared to an "orientalist" gesture (Said, *Orientalism*; Gregory). This orientalizing is perhaps most explicitly put in the analogy Sal makes between their visit to the whorehouse and an "Arabian dream"—a fairytale adventure with "courtesans." The social significations bestowed on the women depend on their own as well as the women's spatial dislocation—away from home, from the U.S., from the girls' "proper" homes. These women become public property rather than private individuals and circumscribed as "goods" contained by masculine borders. Belonging to an exoticized space, they are "spatially othered" (cf. Massey and Jess 215-39), disinherited in a patriarchal order, as it were, and locked into a marginal *object* position.

The quest for the father is, then, in this explanation model, simultaneously the traveler's rejection of and quest for patriarchal power. However, the journey can also be read as an equally paradoxical quest for the mother. The traveler is, nevertheless, still theorized as male. In what follows I will briefly discuss how this domination has been explained and

theorized in relation to the female.

The Mother Road and the Spermatic Traveler

A lot has been written about Kerouac's writing and career,[6] but few critics have addressed the issue of the beat writer's perspective on women. One who has is Kerouac's ex-wife Joyce Johnson, who recounts that every time she raised the question of joining Jack on his travels he would stop her by saying that what she really wanted was babies. This practice of evoking the maternal in order to ensure male dominion of the road and its (presumed) outsidership seems to be a long-standing tradition. The mother image is closely connected to the road narrative in a number of ways (see Enevold, "Motherhood of the Road"). Route 66, the cult road of modern nomads, was early made famous as a mighty symbol of movement and freedom. It was also known under the name "The Mother Road"—a name unequivocally appropriate for a path along which hope of a new life was begotten. The road or "ground" as mother or female space is a constantly recurring image in accounts of travel and geographical exploration. Space is sexualized, feminized—the examples are many, noticeably

> [. . .] in relation to the "bounded" spatial entities which are seen as the context of, and for, human habitation: the world, the nation, the regions, the cities and the home [. . .] contours of countries [. . .] are frequently drawn by using the concepts of motherland and mother tongue, [. . .] cities are personified as women, New York has an active libido—unlike Oedipalized, vaginal Paris [. . .] she has [. . .] "a clitoral appendage" as Rem Koolhaas refers to Coney Island. (Best 181-82)

[6] For example by Charters (*The Portable Beat Reader*), J. C. Holmes, and Hunt.

The female body seems to "secure the idea of space as a bounded entity," as a passive space, a receptacle (184). This passive space, Luce Irigaray claims, is part of the unequal sexual hierarchies of opposites, whereby "the subordinated terms associated with woman—space, nature, etc—are rendered as the support, the complement and the malleable matter for man" (Best 187). The metaphor of woman as malleable body-matter supporting man fits snugly into those accounts of subjectivity which "encode the traveler as a male who crosses boundaries and penetrates spaces" (Lawrence 6). Lawrence, just like Rose, makes extensive use of the works of Teresa De Lauretis to show how male subjectivity is linked to narratives of travel, adventure, and discovery:

> [T]he female is mapped as a place on the itinerary of the male journey. Teresa de Lauretis demonstrates that this sexual mapping of the journey has great persistence in mythic and narrative structures as well as in the theoretical discourse on narrative. Both in narratives and their structural analyses, woman's body is itself spatialized. In this "mythical-textual mechanics," as de Lauretis calls it, the traveler penetrates spaces that are "morphologically female" (*Alice Doesn't*). Summarizing an essay on plot typology [. . .] [she] finds that the "hero, the mythical subject, is constructed as human being and as male" (119). [. . .] De Lauretis maintains that myth, psychoanalysis, and semiotics all exemplify this coding of the journey. (Lawrence 2)

For example, in Norman O' Brown's psychoanalytic model the male traveler who tries to leave behind his maternal roots, finds that "the body of the mother returns as the world: Geography is the Geography of the mother's body" (36). Freud seems to reverse our understanding of the search for origins, which at times is the purported motive for a journey, "by implying that love of 'place' is prior to love for a human object, that is,

in fact, homesickness for the lost world of prenatality" (D. Porter 12), the womb, the mother's body. Dennis Porter and Lawrence both quote Freud's "The Uncanny":

> Love is home-sickness; and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself while he is still dreaming: this place is familiar to me, I've been here before, one may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body. (D. Porter 245)

According to such theories the road rambling of Kerouac's characters may be interpreted as a quest for their mothers, their origin or home, which they tried to leave behind in the "first" place—the first place of the womb.

Men's travel has along similar uterine itineraries been theorized as movement stimulated by a male reproductive motive, a "search for temporal extensions of self in children, only achievable through the agency of women"—something Leed calls the "spermatic journey" (114). We can for example read that the educational Continental Tour became "an opportunity [for the young gentleman] to gain sexual experience and confidence, to sow wild oats, through easy, non-binding liaisons with women abroad" (Buzard 131). This "extra-domestic" cultivation of the male seems to go against the grain once extracted by feminist anthropologists who claimed that "women's identification with place is the result of reproductive necessities that require stability and protection by men" (Wolff, "On the Road Again" 230). If we were to believe these two propositions, that is, that women are tied to place as wombs and men to the road as wandering sperms, *male stability*, paradoxically enough, seems to be oscillating between home and away. The Western male traveling subject appears to have nothing else to do but to scurry from womb to womb to provide stability and spread his seed, and, at the same time, fulfill an Oedipal quest for his symbolic (and virtual) mother and

father, whom he also wants to escape/overthrow. Women, on the other hand constitute stable stations of sexual deposition and repose.

On the Road shows how male traveler subjectivity is constituted by at least two Others—the private domestic M/Other and the foreign, public, "frontier Other." The wife or mother at home represents *female* pre- and post-traveling stability, which often is described as a *negative* stability in terms of institutionalized commitment, dependence, and conditions, from which "evolving men" should attempt to escape (see Kimmel 43-78) to a "frontier," "a paradise of male camaraderie where sexuality can be aggressive, forbidden commerce with nonwhite women" (Lander qtd. in Jonathan Culler 45).

On the Road confirms that this imagined erotic Arcadia, awaiting the traveler in the peripheral end of the road, does indeed lie there, in Mexico, as a land to be had. The "frontier ethos" and the "orientalist" gesture work through bodily (sexual) as well as geographical exploration. The borders are outlined, the land is claimed, the limits are supposedly set by the male conquering subject. What then if the land will not lay still? What if the "Other" moves?

Women on the Road: Comedians or Tragedians?

We have seen that women have been expected to be the fixed center to depart from, around which a restless man can make his revolutions like the "foot" of the compass in the well-known John Donne conceit (*A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*). Female travelers and drivers, women occupying public spaces have been (and are still) identified as "fallen," "loose," or suspected of promiscuity. The improbability of a female traveler is so strongly built into the discourse of travel that if she is materialized, she easily turns into a comical character, as is the case in Tom Robbins' novel *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (1976). The protagonist Sissy Hankshaw is endowed with a farcical combination of beauty, big

bosom, and giant thumbs.

Sissy starts hitchhiking at a fairly early age, and is always encouraged by those around her to give it up, to settle down, marry and have babies. The "single thing about her life that people had deemed worthy" was her "modest modeling career" for a female hygiene spray manufacturer as their "Yoni Yum/Dew Girl" (162). But she keeps going. Robbins makes Sissy confirm the aforementioned suspicion that traveling women behave improperly. Everyone knows that good girls don't hitch. Sissy lets drivers feel her up as long as they keep one hand on the wheel and steer the vehicle forward. Robbins has remembered to take into his story the norm of categorizing women on the road as permissible sex objects and the rights some men appropriate according to the silent norm that women on the move are "asking for it." Sissy, nonetheless, manages well. One day, though, she has bad luck and is picked up by a man in a blue van who, as soon as she gets in, starts

> unzipping his pants. I'm going to give it to you like you've never had it before [. . .] You're gonna cry and cry. Do you like to cry? Do you like it when it hurts a little bit? [. . .] In the rear of the vehicle was a soiled mattress. By then the driver had his organ out in the late afternoon sunlight. It was erect and of Kentucky Derby proportions. (314)

Similar to Thelma and Louise who own a gun and a car, Sissy is equipped with a traditionally masculine trait. But instead of a gun she has huge thumbs. Her oversized digital strength smashes the sexual threat: "With a swift swoosh that gave the June air bad memories of winter, Sissy's thumb came down hard on the penis top, nearly cleaving it to the root" (314-15).

Thanks to her giant thumbs Sissy need not give up hitchhiking. She "escapes" domestication. She insists on her own narrative, as it were, despite the dangers and the protests. Her goal is freedom and an identity

different from the one she was assigned as a child: useless, old maid-to-be, freak. With her large thumbs plugging up vital openings in danger, she conquers the road and keeps rapists at bay. After twenty years on the road she settles down in the counter-discursive sphere of the lesbian cowgirls of the Rubber Rose Ranch in the Dakotas. She has appropriated the experience of the road, she has intimidated Kerouac: "I hitchhiked over one hundred and twenty-seven hours without stopping [. . .] I removed the freeway from its temporal context. [. . .] When poor Jack Kerouac heard about this, he got drunk for a week," and she is pregnant by the guru in the cave above the ranch, supposedly carrying in her belly a big-thumbed baby (54-55).

A different tone and voice when regendering the figure of the traveler characterizes Diana Atkinson's autobiographical novel *Highways and Dancehalls* (1995). Sarah's adventure seems more problematic, even tragic. In journal form the reader is offered a version of road life from the perspective of one of those "supporting" characters which according to the masculinist genre pattern assist in constructing the subjectivity of male travelers such as Sal and Dean.

Sarah, Atkinson's *alter ego*, works the Canadian strip route. She is on the road from one mining town to another along the Canadian West Coast. She is contracted by a striptease agency to stay anywhere from one day to a few weeks at each road house. In front of an audience of mostly men, under the stage name Tabitha, she performs six different strip "sets," including "nymphomaniacal underpaid service worker (French Maid) or oversexed zoo animal or gymnastically inclined schoolteacher or enthusiastic bride" (50). Atkinson's drama abruptly tarnishes the road gloss coating Sal's and Sissy's road narratives. Similar to *On the Road, Highways* is lined with drugs, alcohol, and expeditious, non-committal, sexual liaisons. The tragic mood of the novel is emphasized by the fact that it is practically inundated with dead women: women strippers or women

escorts, murdered by unknown bar tenants or boyfriends (high on drugs), casualties of their own substance abuse, or victims of self-proclaimed vigilantes of morality. It is a dangerous world, and Sarah is vulnerable in it:

> At Champagne Harry's you had to walk through the boiler room to get to the stage. I thought sure to God some creep was going to rise out of the concrete and smash my skull against one of the pipes. So much for vulnerability as a defense. The truth is I am a walking potential rape victim. Oh well. Aren't we all? (92)

But, why the additional exposure of a questionable public stage? Sarah is "working as a stripper in order to escape the severe pain of a childhood illness," ulcerial colitis, requiring numerous operations and pharmaceutical treatment (Halpenny n.pag). Her drama does not approach comedy. She is the *embodiment* of the Other. She gets up on stage and acts, distinctly and visibly, as objectified body. Eventually, Sarah's life as a road attraction draws closer to an end as she gets "fired [. . .] from the Metrotown [. . .] because management wants girls with bigger breasts," promising to bring her back after Christmas (Atkinson 229). Sarah, however, rejects the offer of re-employment. She has begun to see the woman beneath the surface, beneath her abdominal scar. After a show she walks through the locker rooms and realizes that

> I am gorgeous, scar or not. (Unlike Darla Dubbledee, I didn't pay to be mutilated; my scar is a mark of my survival.) My face, throat, chest are radiant with sweat. I look great in my white kneesocks and black spike heels, my white stretch lace undershirt rolled around my waist, my sparkling necklace. But it's me, not the costume. (231)

Her emotional breakthrough is backed up by her taking her first correspondence course. She is excited to read the returned assignments

which are commented on by "a professor who's never seen me dressed, never mind naked, who praises my 'insight,' who feels I'm 'astute'" (233). Towards the end of the term she takes a week off the circuit and stays in a motel "stringing paragraphs together on the manual Olivetti" she got at a thrift shop. One day, feeling free and gracious, she writes herself out of the novel—her exit from the road by way of a last stage entrance: "I am taking the creaky, wooden back stairs two at a time to the Number 5 Orange dressing rooms, so that when my music starts I will be ready to descend the brass ladder" (235).

Sarah's performances may be interpreted as acts of art, acts which she records in her journal—a narrative running parallel to that of the masculinist road story. The road, despite its detrimental nature, revitalizes her. It assists her in breaking free from her restraining past and finding a way out. Sissy *moves* her way into a subject position. Sarah literally *writes* herself into one. Getting out "through her text," she regains strength. Atkinson claims that her writing became a subversive activity. "Subversiveness is what any kind of art is based on. Don't you tell me who I am, or how I see. I will tell you" (Halpenny n. pag). As she points out, subversion comes afterwards, in print, not on stage where, I claim, her subversiveness does not show. That text/self has had no readers. But when Diana writes her novel, when Sarah's stripping turns into journals and the journals become public, the subversiveness becomes visible. Then Sarah enters a public space where female subjectivity may be textually constructed.

A Hermetic State of Affairs—Moving In or Out of "This Place"?

The question that needs to be addressed is: how successful are Robbins' and Atkinson's narratives in re-gendering the figure of the road traveler? Do they rescue their heroines from the metaphors and practices of travel which their precursor, Kerouac's *On the Road*, has gendered as

profoundly masculine?

The two novels may at first glance seem to rupture the convention by the very fact that they cast a woman in the role of the road traveler. At a closer look, however, they reveal a rather traditional version of the road narrative as far as masculine and feminine subjectivity goes. The protagonists' respective identity project is conditioned by their gender and the factual-fictional status of the novel. Only *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues,* which is predominantly fictional, presents a possibility of female bodily presence on the road. It is as if only in fiction woman can be truly mobile. Moreover, just as in *On the Road*, the two novels freely grant space to the male subject and seem to be dictated by the male gaze. A male gaze mediates the road impressions of Sissy. Sarah is also mediated as object of the male gaze, although now the object speaks for itself. Sarah, as stripper, is doubly objectified, and must disembody her subjectivity out of an embodied objectified performance and appearance. She has to leave the road and "author" her own life to become a visible and audible individual subject. It is easier for Sissy who, fictionalized and fortified, succeeds in staying in the gender charged arena of the road. With her big-thumbed baby on the way she might even be interpreted as the matriarch of a new tribe of fortified feminists—although Robbins prefers to think of them as a race of pacifists (their large thumbs obstruct their use of weapons).

An even broader question that needs to be asked is: can a woman be inscribed into a masculine trope? I am much less optimistic than Lawrence, Tucker, and Wesley about the liberating potential of the trope of travel. "An alternative epistemology"' that Wesley (228) claims as a possible outcome of the woman's travel narrative requires perhaps a *perverse*, woman-centered, perspective. The burdened trope of travel may have to cleanse its favorite subjects; the "traveler," the "pilgrim," and others may have to be abandoned in favor of some new metaphors or images. Jokinen and Veijola have invented a brilliant new metaphor for

the postmodern subject and suggest to replace Bauman's male gendered "stroller," "tourist," "vagabond," and "player" with the figure of the au-pair. "Women," they write,

> need to be able to occupy subject positions in discourse. [. . .] Writing the baby sitter/au pair into a metaphorical and concrete being is one way of bringing the maternal-feminine into discourse, of giving symbolic form to the feminine, trying to coin the signifier instead of borrowing it. (50)

In analogy with Jokinen and Veijola let me propose the metaphor of the "model" and the "stripper." The word "stripper" would make most people automatically think of a woman taking her clothes off; the figure of the "model" evokes the image of a woman displaying clothes or posing nude. Both figures represent, be they clothed or undressed, gazed-at bodies. I am, however, *not* looking for a liberation of the traveling woman by way of metaphorizing her as model or stripper. The goal is to focus on her activity rather than her passivity. I advocate an appropriation of the term mobility in its widest implication: physical, social, political, economic, intellectual, etc. It is time for women to become citizens of the world.[7]

To return to the fictions discussed here: modeling and stripping keep Sissy and Sarah on the move. Unless I stress these fictional women's active participation in an economy of movement—however troubled and questionable this postulation may be—I will find myself repeating the inscription of women on the road as receptacles, as marginalized and usurped.

I do have great faith in the road narratives recently published to

[7] The privilege of mobility may be regarded as a "cultural citizenship," a concept used by Hermes in "Cultural Citizenship and Popular Fiction." I relate my view of mobility to Martha Nussbaum's "thick vague theory of the good" which contains a promotion of a number of "human capabilities and virtues" which could be used as the basis for claiming a number of universal human rights in a democratic state. "Mobility" is one of the capabilities Nussbaum enumerates.

rearticulate the road narrative, agitate it and make it a more dynamic, multifaceted discourse.[8] This rearticulation will lead to the formulation of new identity processes which will adjust the generic account, and make more room and road for the female mobile subject.

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[8] Ever since the release of the road movie *Thelma & Louise* (Scott), a space has been created which gives room for critical and fictional accounts of women on the road in public discourse. New road movies, for example: the Danish TV-series *Charlot og Charlotte* (Bornedal); the Swedish movies: *Ha ett underbart liv* [Have a Wonderful Life] (Malmros); *Selma och Johanna* (Magner), and *Det sjunde skottet* [The Seventh Shot] (Aldevinge); the Finnish movie *Sand Bride* (Tikka) and road stories (Lopez; Daly and Dawson) testify to a mobilization of the female 'other' in road narratives, which has bearing on the deconstruction of the supposedly static generic polarization of men and women. This genre development is the topic of my article "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road" (forthcoming a).

ARTICLE 2

The Motherhood of the Road: From *Paradise Lost* to *Paradise*

> In the newness of the world God had perhaps not Himself realized the ramifications of certain of His laws, for example, that shock will spend itself in waves; that our images will mimic every gesture, and that shattered they will multiply and mimic every gesture ten, a hundred, or a thousand times.
>
> ----*Housekeeping* (1980)
> Marilynne Robinson,

> Yet, language can only live on and renew itself by hybridizing shamelessly and changing its rules as it migrates in time and space.
>
> ----Other than myself/my other self" (1994)
> Trinh T. Minh-ha

Genesis

The Judeo-Christian tradition is a common cultural womb for many Westerners; in its literary registers travel replicates, metaphorically as well as metonymically, the story of creation: birth, living, death, or: Genesis, Exodus, the Final Judgment. Life—the exilic wandering forced upon Adam and Eve after the Fall—is an oft cited "first journey" of humankind which transports a compelling ancestry from generation to generation. "Our" parents' inchoate adventure patterned travel as a pilgrimage which, on the one hand, figures in literature as a search for "the desired country." This is the destination of, for example, Christian of the popular allegory and devout

journey of spirituality *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (1678). The pilgrimage may, on the other hand, provide a framework for the telling of lascivious, ungodly tales such as the parodic *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (1386), a veritable antithesis of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Whether coded as prophetic or profane, the story of the birth and proliferation of the world, from its inception (the departure from the forfeited Eden), its progression and projected destination (the search and desire to arrive at a new paradise), is a heritage which has been documented as sacrament and gospel, as belle lettrist fable, rhyme, and proverb, as a fact sheet, poem, and novel. The edenic exile, a merger between man and woman which soon dissolved into an individual enterprise, spawned numerous tales of the wandering "I." The voyage of the self, whether promoted by reason, providence, sentiment or economics, has become the central subject of our literary narratives of modernity. The trope of travel serves as one of our most important literary devices; it is used as structure, subject, plot. It has even been regarded as *the* most cardinal of plots: "The late John Gardner once said that there are only two plots in all of literature. You go on a journey or a stranger comes to town" (Morris and O'Connor xv).

However, in travel stories and travel writing—a difference should be noted between the two—travel becomes more than plot. It always occupies a double or triple position: as a real or imagined topic of the writer and reader, and an activity of progression that goes into reading as well as writing. Eyes, hand and pen travel over the page and journey across the mind, and always the act of creation is connected to our being. In its most general sense the movement from one place to another signifies traveling, departure, and destination. Travel, in all of these senses, deeply embedded in the biblical tradition, makes its imprints in writing and thus draws up a testament (in the twofold meaning of inherited lore and codes of diasporic movement) and testimony (the witnessing of a series of events

and their inscriptions and re-inscriptions).

Generic testaments provide not a little problem for those either completely left out of the will, or included in it as receivers of less favourable agreements. The Paradisal contract has resonated through Western history as a discriminating harmony of androcentric tunes. On the literary scene Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) reinvigorated the myth of creation (in a time of European crises and spiritual wars) and played out the Old Testament subordination of woman to man in full scale and ever so beautiful lines. The "Miltonic bogey," as Virginia Woolf later would term it, did not only reanimate Christianity, it also revived and reinscribed the Aristotelian misogynist constructions of female subordination which had been upheld by "Old Testament restrictions on women and their exclusion from the covenant community" and "the misogynist teachings of the Church Fathers" (Lerner 7). *Paradise Lost* reinforced the emphasis on charging Eve (and all women) with moral guilt for the Fall of humankind, guilt which she would repent by mothering a world of men. Displaced, she would carry the burden of humanity, of sexuality and giving birth in pain.

Thus Eve is placed in a tradition in which women will function, as Griselda Pollock points out in her reading of the Book of Ruth, in a "patrilineal system which effectively exclude them at the level of the signifieds but uses their female bodies at the level of its signifiers," a fact which leaves us with two "incompatible yet coexisting equations: phallus as property; nativity as connection" (73-74). The commanded first journey is the end of God's creation, and an initiation of male-led wandering, but also of procreation depending on Eve. The latter movement was, nevertheless, to be incorporated into language as a metaphor of male writing and artistic production.

From the very biblical beginning human movement is inscribed as a form of diasporic travel, as a quest for a "place of rest." "Rest-less" Adams

and Eves walked pre-modern earth, but somewhere on the way their hands lost touch of one another. Henceforth only man walked all alone "his solitary way." The pilgrim transformed into modern, then postmodern subject. Of a wanderer, a flâneur was made (Walter Benjamin building on Baudelaire), a stroller, player, vagabond, and tourist (Bauman). However, these traveler metaphors are, as Janet Wolff ("On the Road Again"), Jokinen and Veijola, and other critics have shown, male-gendered. These metaphors fail to account for the female mobile subject who consequently is marginalized in theory as well as in literature, trapped "in a male economy of movement" (Trinh 15). Bauman footnotes indeed that the pilgrim subject is, in the modern construction of life, a *man*, whereas

> [w]omen, together with other categories not thought of as capable of self-creation [. . .] were consigned to the background, to the landscape through which the itinerary of the pilgrim is plotted, [and] were cast in a perpetual 'here and now'; in a space without distance and time without future. (87)

Women's destiny becomes one of expectancy. Fictional (and actual) women were for many years denied the journey,

> [t]hey were left only one plot in their life: to await the stranger. [. . .] there is essentially no picaresque tradition among women novelists. While the latter part of the twentieth century has seen a seen a change of tendency, women's literature from Austen to Woolf is by and large a literature about waiting, usually for love. (Morris and O'Connor xv)

Situated as receivers, women were immobilized in a "here and now," a world further divided into spheres of private and public. Bound in private place, women were "domesticated," and public space was

closed off or made minimally accessible to them (us!). Home and away, as well as actions within these two realms, were consequently spatially gendered.

Before returning to Milton and my discussion of fiction, I wish here to make a more explicit connection between the tradition, the past of which I am attempting to unfold, and its present-day extensions into the realms of management and organization the research of which has motivated the collection that you are now reading. The gendered spatial division, as laid out above, has by Calás and Smircich been pointed to as being faithfully reproduced in contemporary work organizations ("Dangerous Liaisons" 71-81). The "triumphant entry of women into corporations" could alternatively be read as a widening of the "home" and the "household." The female secretary at the office was easily transformed into a second wife, maternally managing the corporate "kitchen" and the executives' errands. Kanter was the first one (1977) to demonstrate the uncanny similarity between the wife and the female secretary. And, say Calás and Smircich with the entry of women into the managerial positions the trend did no only *not* abate, but accelerated. Far from joining their colleagues on business trips, corporate women were left "at home" to take care of the company "household" while their male counterpart left the domestic business in quest for new "global markets." The widening definition of the home has thus not shown that "life" conquers "the system." On the contrary, the private sphere has been consumed by the system, by worklife (for a convincing account see Hochschild), that consequently proves to require deconstructive strategies similar to those potentially applied to overturn the traditional "home-" and "away-" division.

With these contemporary connections between the maternal, travel, and work in mind, I shall now return to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with the hope of connecting my readings of fiction to the concerns of organization

scholars.

Exodus: *Paradise Lost*

In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

(Milton 12.637-49)

When Milton had his pair walk hand in hand out of Paradise, it was already quite obvious to him and to his readers who was the follower, who was the leader: the act of iniating mobility was reserved for men. "So spake our Mother Eve, and Adam heard well pleased" (*PL* 12. 624–25):

[…] now lead on; in me is no delay; with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under heaven, all places thou
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence: though all by me is lost
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed,
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore. (12. 614–23)

In these beautiful Miltonic phrases, Eve becomes the Mother of the World receiving the heavy gift and burden of pregnancy, the weight of and responsibility for a future genealogy of mankind which will right all wrongs. Forgiveness and punishment is forged into one cumbersome present. The prize for seeking the wisdom and knowledge of the tree is the reproach and reward of motherhood and of love.

Fig. 1. Jessica drives.

Beginning with Eve, the human movements of sexuality had become confluent with a disciplinary action, that of a nomadic life, a nomadic life which centered fathers and peripheralized the indispensable reproductive powers of women. Efforts have been made ever since to naturalize and homogenize the image of women as "guardians of tradition, keepers of home and bearers of Language" (Trinh 15).

A closer look at the etymology of the word "travel" reveals a striking, although not surprising, connection of travel and the heavy *elementa*: birth, copulation, death. It shows elements of female gestating components which later have been suppressed, metaphorized, and transposed onto the male traveling subject whose activity paradoxically enough becomes an act of abstract deliverance. "Travel" originates from

the Old French word *travailler*, "to travail" which means (a) work especially of a painful and laborious nature; (b) childbirth. Both translations are derived from Latin *tripalis* "having three stakes" and *tripalium* "to torture." This is connected to (d) labor (a-d found in *Webster*), which equals that of (e) travail = "the pains of giving birth to a child" (*Longman Dictionary*). Travel may then be spoken of as a heavy load, both in terms of torturously hard work, and the load you carry as you are "gravid" (Lat. *gravis*, "heavy"), "impregnated" with child or an unborn thought. The "gravity" of a child, a "weighty" thought—both need to be delivered. Travel, then, is not only placed on a par with birth. It *is* birth, deliverance, redemption; in androcentric philosophy a masculine instrument of Maieutic(s).[1] Travel, thus interpreted, signifies a spiritual midwife, a redeeming *rite de passage*.

The biblical tale and the travel canon were written as narratives of male voyagers. Traditional travel and travel narratives have become (pro)creative acts for men: males deliver themselves via travel, and later give birth to a travel narrative, through a sublimated Mother who is engraved in geography, or expelled to the home, inscribed in the ontology of space. Banished to the black hole.

Accordingly, women, rather than participate in the exchange of language, carry the burden of language without harvesting its fruition. They are assigned situations of nameless breeding. The voyage of the self thus becomes a journey which eradicates the female pilgrim from the subjectization process. We are told of *Noah,* the helmsman of the arc, not Wayla; of Moses, not Tzipporah. We have inherited the legends of men.

[1] Socrates' mother, Phaenarete, was acting as a midwife, which might be the origin of Socrates' use of so-called maieutic methods, i.e., the philosophical correspondence of obstetrics, which he used to elicit new ideas from others, or, so to speak, assist his students in giving birth to their unborn ideas. "Maieutic" derives from the Greek *maieutikos* "of midwifery."

Exodus: An Alternative

Travel conceptualized as a midwife and deliverer becomes the adventurer's paradoxical mother—a trope of transforming yet immobile femininity; the *mater*, the stasis, the center, the black hole; the abyss, the *no place,* the desert, the non-I, the feminine dimension; the *matrix*. Manifold are the exclusive constructions of feminine space. Sparse are reconstructive, inclusive, efforts such as those of Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger who sets up a differently, maternally imprinted linguistic dimension.

Lichtenberg-Ettinger has proposed the concepts of *matrix*, and *metramorphosis* to conceptualize "femininity in representation, in subjectivity and on the symbolic level" (40). She sees the Exodus as a "symbolic ceremony" which "delineates transitional states":

> Mythological travellers' tales are analogous to psychological experiences, to identity transformation, to artistic processes and works, to aesthetic experiences, and to patterns of cognition. It is through their power to evoke all of these that such tales are constituted as mythologies. (38)

In her linguistic exploration of Moses' meeting with God, she wishes to reinsert into the mythological text a feminine dimension which, she claims, is forcluded from the symbolic network as it now stands, that is, it is *mis*-translated. In the meeting behind the desert between Moses and God, God's Name is articulated in Hebrew as *EHIE ASHER EHIE*. Lichtenberg-Ettinger concludes that English, French, and Latin translations regularly interpret these words as "*I am that I am* or *I am that is*." This, then, manifests

> an a priori subject, a tautological identity, a congruence of signifier and signified, of an identifying I and an identified I, a conjunction of centre, origin and identity, in present time and space. Such a name of God seals the unity of God and

> Father: *I am that I am* is the name of the Father [. . .]. (39)

Lichtenberg asks how such an "anti-difference God" could "portend the Exodus"? Because, she answers, God had no such name. She explains:

> EHIE means in Hebrew: *I will be* or *I will become*. [. . .] EHIE signifies absence of identity, future without content. It reflects, expresses or invokes different aspects of wandering: movements from place to place from one time to another, [. . .] to a future without prescribed content. (39)

Through the abolition of the future element (via translation) in the Name of the Father, she claims, the feminine is expelled—whether the feminine *exists* or not, whether connected to women or not, whether a cultural and historical fiction or not, whether we believe in God or not. She defines the feminine by, as she says, "leaning on" Piera Aulagnier and Emmanuel Lévinas (in the psychoanalytical and philosophical traditions) for whom "time is structured by relationships to the Other" (52). She uses Lévinas' reformulation of his (earlier) concept of woman as the origin of Otherness: "The feminine is that incredible thing in the human by which it is affirmed that *without me the world has a meaning*" (Lévinas, *Time is the Breath of the Spirit* 17), a vantage point which enables the imagining of "a reality *without me*" (21). A temporal element of becoming is implied, which, she says, is interpreted as "a feminine relationship to the Other. [. . .] the access to a future without me" (Lichtenberg-Ettinger 52). Although notions of verbatim female corporeality are disbanded from this concept of the feminine becoming, Lichtenberg nevertheless invests in it a body-specific socio-political value. Thus Lichtenberg does not accept the expulsion of the feminine "futurity" from the symbolic network, nor does she abandon the mythological ground of Moses' encounter with God as a "lost" feminine space. Lichtenberg applies to the meeting her own matrixial network model which is based on the hypothesis that the

"borderspace shared with an intimate stranger" (by foetus and womb), "a joint co-emergence in difference" of the I and non-I, constitutes a feminine dimension in subjectivity (41). She takes the "intra-uterine meeting as a model for processes of change and exchange" (41). This *matrixial* model pays homage to that aspect of the symbolic which should not be defined, she says, either as "symbol minus phallus," or the opposite of the phallus which in Lacanian terms has been equaled to the symbolic. The phallic has "monopolized the whole symbolic network" (47) and certain "paradigmatical chages are in order" (48). The matrix should be regarded as a concept which represents "a supplementary symbolic perspective. It is a shift aside the phallus, a shift inside the symbolic" (49).

Lichtenberg-Ettinger's interpretation of the Exodus opens up the account of the wanderer to encompass the identity of a "double foreigner," potentially incorporating every subject imaginable regardless of title, genes or genitals. However, her revisionist metramorphic insertion of the feminine and maternal into a mythological travel event is a recent development in the texts of travel. The history of travel narratives is a history of fathers rather than mothers. Or, perhaps more correctly, the traveler is a potential father – a spermatic traveler, as Eric Leed has termed him, whereas women are always potential mothers, the womb of the seed, the flower to pluck, the land to besiege, the country to worship and the hearth to return to. Writing into the Exodus a space of complex and fluid subjectivity, Lichtenberg channels this inscription through a model of intra-uterine existence. That is, again what is focused as a key element of creation myth and "initiatic act of wandering," is the reproductive system of woman, the womb as a universal vessel of signs. The uterine logic has nevertheless developed into an imperative, always appealed to, that women remain at home while men take to the road. The womb, this cavity of human flesh, has been safeguarded as a threatened vault of human depositions. The womb and its associates woman, whore, wife, madonna,

bitch, and babe, directly or indirectly play the starring role where female inertia and male motion is to be affirmed. They are consequently incorporated into a verbal system which reverberates in the vocabularies of mobility and stillness, sexuality, and abstention. These vocabularies are deployed unconsciously in an obnoxiously internalized discursive register. This book of log-ins stretches its jaws all the way from Genesis to the literary journeys of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century where it gobbles up "the feminine" in the masculinist genres of travel and renders it an inappropriate existence in the public and mobile realms of life.

Female Exodus 1: Memento Mater—Remember That You Are A Mother...

When Moll Flanders, Daniel Defoe's 1776 picara, gave herself up to "a readiness of being ruined without the least concern, "she saw herself as "a fair *memento* to all young women whose vanity prevails over their virtue" (21). Referring to the poem "A Letter fancy'd from Artemisia in the Town, to Chloe in the Country" by Lord Rochester (1647-80) which tells the story of Corinna who is misused by her rake lover: "Now scorn'd of all, forsaken and opprest/ She's a *Memento Mori* to the rest," Moll Flanders acknowledges the social rules of the times, the norms of lady-like behavior and the deterring reminder her fortunes and misfortunes would be to those venturing to *extra-vagare*, to walk outside their boundaries; those daring to be *extravagant*, or *vagrant*. The first account, Moll Flanders reminisces, that she "can recollect or ever learn" of herself, was, that before coming into the town of Colchester, she "had wandered among a crew of those people they call *Gypsies*" (9). To live on the road like Moll Flanders, to be vagrant from the very beginning, is to make yourself unmentionable. Moll Flanders tells us:

> My true Name is so well known in the records, or Registers

> at *Newgate*, and in the *Old-Baily*, and there are some things of such Consequence still depending there, relating to my particular Conduct, that it is not to be expected that I set my name, or the Account of my family to this work. [. . .] It is enough to tell you that some of my worst Comrades [. . .] knew me by the name Moll Flanders. (9)

To lose face and shame one's name is to this day bad for both men and women, but for women it has always been even more detrimental. Women (of certain classes) had "only" their name and behavior to resort to, being dependents of their fathers and brothers, in the mission that was set before them—to get married and have bestowed upon them the husband's name. The "virginity" of the name was to be untouched in order for the matrimonial patronymic conversion to take place. Indeed, the ritual of patriarchal naming is enforced in a more or less closed system where the feminine is not allowed to enter; the Name of the Father has been inherited through centuries of Western tradition. To return to Lichtenberg-Ettinger's exploration of the "Name of the Father":

> The Name implies a postmodern discourse all by itself […] [which] revolves around the search for a space without presence, which inscribes traces of time without present, and the "ex-centring" of subjects and objects leading to the idea of endless nomadism. (39)

Nomadism is *by denomination* congenitally asymmetrical, unless interpreted, as Lichtenberg-Ettinger does, as inherently *matrixial*, fluid, double; masculine *and* feminine. This "pre-larval" symbolic maternal element is, however, traditionally rather unreflectively transposed from the imaginary or psychological onto a more bodily tangible arena of morality, and into a social discourse where, again, the uterine logic is implied and marital bonds privileged and imposed on women as well as men—albeit with different consequences.

Marriage, in the eighteenth century, came to signify human fulfillment in terms of a striving for individualization, private autonomy contra public collectivity. This spurred on the building of domestic spaces which allowed for more privacy—homes where affection and affinity would better flourish (Taylor 290-91). The intimacy of the house promoted the articulation of love and concern for the spouse as for the children. The maternal condition of women thus became emphasized. Women on the road are in this culture and discourse of modernity always potential Mothers. That is, they are mothers who either must have left their children, or they are wombs on the run from their breeding duties. They are women acting out a much too individual, anti-familial, therefore anti-social scandalous enterprise. Bad mothering nurtures vagrancy and splits up homes. Indelicacy mothers travel and advances waywardness. Moll Flanders "proves" (as will the novels analyzed in what follows, *Housekeeping* and *Paradise*) this case as 150 years later did Daisy of Henry James's portrait of the American Female, *Daisy Miller* (1878) *and* her heedless Mother. Unmarried women should stay at home lest they find themselves compromised and done for:

> It was impossible to regard her as a perfectly well-conducted young lady; she was wanting in a certain indispensable delicacy. [. . .] She had been walking some quarter of an hour attended by her two cavaliers [. . .] when a carriage that had detached itself from the revolving train drew up beside the path. [. . .] Mrs. Walker was flushed; she wore an excited air.
>
> "It is really too dreadful," she said. "That girl must not do this sort of thing. She must not walk here with you two men. Fifty people have noticed her." [. . .]
>
> "She is very innocent," said Winterbourne.
>
> 'She's very crazy!" cried Mrs Walker. [. . .]
>
> "What do you propose to do with us?" asked Winterbourne

> smiling. "To ask her to get in, to drive her about here for half an hour so that the world may see she is not running absolutely wild and to take her safely home." (James 90–91)

The home is of course a stead of variable meanings depending on the position of the home-maker or -breaker. Questioning the home as a taken-for-granted location of stability, Kaplan and Grewal "invite us to leave home, because home is often the site of sexism and racism—a site which we need to re-work politically, constructively, and collectively" (Braidotti, "Difference" n. pag). A whole range of positive and negative, actual as well as symbolic, notions have been coded into the concept of the home. In his essay on "the dwelling," Lévinas speaks of the dwelling and the home/house as associated with Woman, woman's otherness; the otherness which assures separation but also access to completion, intimacy, inwardness, *intimité* (*Totality and Infinity* 147). To exist is to dwell. The house opens up a (symbolic) utopia wherein the I is at home with itself, from where the I is invited to enjoy and take part of the world. The disappearance of woman from the home is a symbolic splitting up of the trellis of the I, of intimacy, of conception—a virtual *home wrecker*. This concept of the home as the capsule of the I must most likely be bust open—rather than made more encompassing (cf. the references to Calás and Smircich and Hochschild earlier in this article)—to allow a different interpretation of the home and motherhood to take place.

But Moll Flanders does appeal to the institution of the home. She attributes her deviation from the straight life course of the pious and the humble to the lack of such social contracts which would ensure everyone a *home* and the opportunity to learn a trade or occupation which would help your advancement in life:

> I have been told that in one of our Neighbour Nations [. . .] that when any Criminal is condemn'd, either to die, or to the Gallies, or to be transported, if they leave any Children, as

> such are generally unprovided for, by the poverty or Forfeiture of their Parents, so they are immediately taken into the Care of the Government, and put into an Hospital call'd the *House* of *Orphans*, where they are Bred up, Cloath'd, Fed, Taught, and when fit to go out, are plac'd out to Trades, or to Services, so as to be well able to provide for themselves by an honest industrious behaviour.
>
> Had this been the Custom in our Country, I had not been left a poor desolate Girl without Friends, without Cloaths, without help or Helper in the World, as was my Fate [. . .]. (7)

That Moll Flanders is far from helpless or paralyzed by the fact that her Mother was transported due to a "petty theft" or that she "scandalously" deprived her own children of her motherhood, merely aids Defoe's farcical enterprise and strengthens Moll as a comical rather than *enigmatic* character, as some would have it. However, as rigid stereotypes are reversed, comedy is the result, as is often the case where women travelers appear in literature (Enevold, "Men and Women"). This comical aspect of the female traveling character undermines, in certain respects, her mobility project and reduces her credibility. However, some would probably argue that comedy, specifically in the shape of irony, may function as a strategy of resistance to stereotypes (see, for example, Wahl *et al*). But, although Moll Flanders serves up an amusing "realist" account of a woman on the road, a fact which offers some comfort as to her imaginary and therefore potential existence, her situation is crafted as exceptional, deviant, and purposely improbable.

Female Exodus 2: The Inadequate Housekeeper

Moll Flanders must indeed be entitled *economic woman*; her main characteristic is her parsimonious angle on everything from child-rearing to marriage—she certainly keeps house (her own) in the interest of her

own success, survival, and happiness. In this respect she is not an inadequate but a non-traditional and ego-centric housekeeper, a deviant woman.

As Morris has noted, women's narratives have changed during the second half of the twentieth century. Women are to a greater extent on the move, but this does not mean their behavior is commended; it is merely not so obstructed or confined. It is not difficult to find examples of this in contemporary literature. Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1981) is the story of Ruthie, the novel's narrator, and her sister Lucille. One day the two girls are left by their mother Helen on their grandmother's porch for what will prove to be forever. After the grandmother dies, they are for a while tended by their great aunts who, "though maiden ladies, of a buxomly maternal appearance" (29), think of themselves as too old and unfit to handle children. They have lived in a hotel all their lives. They therefore try to contact the girls' aunt Sylvie, whom they refer to as an "itinerant, a "migrant worker," a "drifter" the one who "doesn't have any children" (31).

Sylvie has been away for sixteen years. She turns out to be a quaint housekeeper who serves crackers for lunch, collects cans and newspapers, wanders, and sleeps on benches during the day (and fully clothed on top of the bedspread at night). Her behavior is extremely aberrant in the small community of Fingerbone. Her extensive "hoboing" and odd manners prove offending to the community and threatening to the children who fear, for years, that the house will be empty in the morning when they wake up, or when they return home from school in the afternoon.

In *Housekeeping* attempts at motherly stability fail: Helen abandons the children, the grandmother dies, the Aunts flee, Sylvie's housekeeping deviates from the norm. We are in a world of reluctant mother-figures. Sylvie's abnormal motherhood eventually makes Lucille run away from the neglecting caretaker to seek comfort at another, "normal," house,

significantly that of the Home Economics teacher, Miss Royce. But Ruthie stays with Sylvie who becomes her substitute mother. Where Sylvie goes, Ruthie follows:

> Sylvie was in front of me, and I put my hands in my pockets, and tilted my head, and strode, as she did, and it was as if I were her shadow, and moved after her only because she moved and not because I willed this pace, this pocketing of the hands, this tilt of the head. Following her required neither will nor effort. I did it in my sleep.
>
> I walked after Sylvie down the shore, all at peace, and at ease, and I thought, We are the same. She could as well be my mother. I crouched and slept in her very shape like an unborn child. (144-45)

Sylvie fills the role of vagrant virgin mother and Ruthie her immaculate conception. This substitute motherhood thus constitutes a mobilized motherhood and as such it contradicts the traditional image of the stationary home-maker. The paradoxical concept of mobilized motherhood needs some further explanation part of which may be found in its intricate links to death and memory: the move away from her house which the girls' mother Helen had undertaken is a significant event. She had borrowed a car and taken the long road to Fingerbone. After leaving the girls at her mother's house she had got into the car again and *driven* off a cliff into the lake. Contrary to what may be expected, Ruthie's memory of her mobilized mother on the day she drove them to their grandmother's house is one of unruffled readiness and solidity:

> I remember looking at her from the back seat as we drove toward Fingerbone [. . .]. I was struck by her calm, by the elegant competence of her slightest gesture. Lucille and I had never seen her drive before, and we were very much impressed. (196)

Helen, as will later Ruthie and Sylvie although in a quite different mode of transgression, *mobilizes* herself, her mourning and losses. The mobilized mother thus engenders a number of complexities and paradoxes. The losses and gains of maternal mobility condition forever the girls' images, experiences, and notions of motherhood and about how to proceed in life. The memory of Helen remains for Ruthie one of peace and strength; had she "simply brought us home again to the high frame apartment building with the scaffolding of stairs, I would not remember her that way. Her eccentrities might have irked and embarrassed us when we grew older" (197). A mnemotopia is created which is deeply imprinted with the image of the safe haven of motherhood, an imagined motherhood, or what I would like to term a "materotopia," *projected into the future,* which maps out the itinerary of Ruthie and Lucille. That is, Robinson has inscribed the future existence as a feminine *futurité*, a levinasian concept of a "reality without me" (Lichtenberg-Ettinger 52).

Robinson also rehearses the quest for paradise as a return to the womb, again invoking the circulative bivalence of the tropes of motherhood (and travel), that is, the property to signify both origin and egress:

> The force behind the movement of time is a mourning that will not be comforted. That is why the first event is known to have been an expulsion, and the last is hoped to be a reconciliation and return. So memory pulls us forward, so prophecy is only brilliant memory—there will be a garden where all of us as one child will sleep in our mother Eve, hooped in her ribs and staved by her spine. (192)

Ruthie stays with her substitute mother and emulates her ways. Together they create a state of mobilized motherhood which contradicts the traditionally gendered spatialization of women's existence. In the eyes of Fingerbone a transient is a threat. A stranger on the road disturbs the

hard-won stability of a small community always at risk of being agitated by displacing elements: the lake, the blizzards, the "homemade liquor and dynamite. [. . .] There was not a soul there but knew how shallow-rooted the whole town was. [. . .] So a diaspora threatened always" (177). As a result Fingerbone both dreads and pities vagrants. And Ruthie is on the verge on transforming into one. One school day, Ruthie and Sylvie make

Fig. 2. A wet road in New Mexico.

an excursion to an abandoned valley which they reach by rowing across the lake in a "borrowed" boat. The following weeks the sheriff comes to visit twice:

> It was not the theft of the boat he came about, though that had been reported, nor my truancy [. . .] It was not that Sylvie had kept me out on the lake all night, because no one knew just where we had been. It was that we returned to Fingerbone in a freight car. Sylvie was an unredeemed transient, and she was making a transient of me. (177)

The town needs to believe that Ruthie needs to be rescued, because "the transients wandered through Fingerbone like ghosts, terrifying as ghosts are because they were not different from us" (178), thus insinuating

Fig. 3. Jessica Enevold's mother Madeleine.

the very physical instability of Fingerbone, the flooding of the houses, the abysmal lake which devoured the grandfather as well as the mother of Ruthie and Lucille. To sustain a society imperiled by natural catastrophes and transient subjects requires con-centric action. That sought-after "place of rest" cannot be built by the rest-less who search, perhaps even find, their redemption on the road.

Fingerbone, essentially an all-white community, thus fights to keep at bay the exodus which the black families of Toni Morrison's *Paradise* are forced to enter upon, having already lost their stability in a world of economic depression, surrounded by racism. Both communities, however, will assess and pass final judgment on their citizens and judge those

"unfortunate" ones (*Morrison* 178) who do not comply with norms and standards once it finds itself to be a centered unified community, those who will not be enfolded by its "paternal" embrace, or attracted by its ideal of paradise.

Female Exodus 3: *Paradise*

Toni Morrison's *Paradise* (1997) tells the story of an all-black Oklahoma community whose patriarchal structure has secured not only the survival of the group of freed slaves who first founded it, but also its racial purity. In 1934 the grandchildren of this group see it necessary to leave Haven, the town their Grandfathers had built in 1899, to start anew. In their search for a new place of rest they venture deeper into Oklahoma where they found a new town which they name Ruby. They strive to constitute this town as their final rest-stop; a place where no one is poor, women feel secure, and no one dies.

The settled routines of the community are, however, felt to be threatened by a group of women who live together "with no male mission to control them" in a nearby convent (233). The convent refugees are a heterogeneous group of women of various races, ages, temperaments, and beliefs. What they have in common is the experience of taking to the road to escape what they find oppressing. The convent in which they live is no ordinary convent, but an old mansion built by an embezzler in a gaudy architectural style lavished with garish pornographic details. After the embezzler had been arrested, the mansion had been taken over by a group of nuns who had chipped off and removed the most offensive marble and brass genitalia from its interior decoration to make it into a convent, and then, as their funds had run out, into a state-subsidized reformatory school for "wayward" Indian girls.

In the novel's present time, the convent is no longer a school. As one woman after the arrives at it, it is turned into a paradisal sanctuary

where pecans grow delicious, "melones" ripe full, and peppers—according to the Ruby villagers who come to buy the Convent produce—are hot as hell.

The women who come to live in the convent are all women mourning losses connected to children, mothers, breeding, nativity, nurturing—and, of course, love. All have they sought and found solace in Sister Connie, Consolata, their "Mother Superior," their consoling substitute Mother.

But the Convent "strays living out there where the entrance to hell is wide," as a Ruby man phrased it, do not comfort the Ruby men in their mission to establish a black paradise on earth (114). Ruby citizens are generally hostile to outsiders and their hostility has a long history of struggle. On Ruby's "Mount Calvary" they have reassembled a huge brick oven which they have hauled with them all the way from Haven, because it was by the Oven, at sunset, the old Fathers of Haven would sit and recite the stories of the journey of the 158 freedmen who had been "unwelcome on each grain of soil from Yazoo to Fort Smith" (13); who had been "turned away by rich Choctaw, and poor whites [. . .] unprepared for the aggressive discouragement they received from Negro Towns already being built" (13). These were stories that explained "why neither the founders of Haven nor their descendants could tolerate anybody but themselves" (13). The Oven memorializes their exodi and is a central symbol for their hard-won Paradise and hearth.

By the Oven, Deek and Steward, the Morgan twin brothers, who had led them out of Haven, as children would sit and listen to the stories of "the signs God gave to guide them" on their journey (9). It is here that the men of Ruby will gather to prepare their attack on the Convent women, because although there "were irreconcilable differences among the congregations in town, [. . .] members from all of them merged solidly on the necessity of this action: do what you have to. Neither the convent

nor the women in it can continue" (9-10).

Why must the convent women be destroyed? I would like to phrase the answer, as before, in the confluent terms of motherhood and mobility. The convent women represent a group of *mobilized* women. As Ruthie and Sylvie in *Housekeeping* they are putting at risk the stable patrilineal course of community life from birth to death, hazarding the planned extension and preservation of the 8-rock families (as Pat Best, who has secretly been recording their genealogies, has named the original, "coal black" families of Ruby). The convent women's uncontrolled mobility poses a threat because it attracts the Ruby women who, as will be exemplified below, endanger Ruby's essential maternal powers of reproduction.

A vital sign of the convent women's mobility is the big Cadillac (repainted magenta), which Mavis, the first one to arrive at the convent, has stolen from her husband to get away from his house after her twin babies have been smothered to death in the very same car; Pallas, on finding out that she is deceived by her mother (who has stolen her lover Carlos—"the mother-fucker" 312), drives her red Toyota in blind fury "on roads without destination," with "bumping, sideswiping trucks" until forced off the road and raped by a number of boys who leave her for dead in a lake (169). She is driven from Ruby, where she has ended up hitchhiking, to the convent in Billie Delia's car, "her hair full of algae," pregnant (169).

Not only are the convent women mobilizing themselves to the detriment of patriarchal society (they have fled their duties), they are also felt to be "luring" away the mothers of Ruby. Several of Ruby's women have walked the road to the convent to be released from their pains and burdens of motherhood and love. Lone, the Ruby midwife, tells:

> Out here in a red and gold land [. . .] where the wind handled you like a man, women dragged their sorrow up and down the road between Ruby and the convent. They

> were the only pedestrians. Sweetie Fleetwood had walked it, Billie Delia too. And the girl called Seneca. Another called Mavis. Arnette too, and more than once. And not just these days. They had walked this road from the very first. Soane Morgan for instance, and once, when she was young, Connie as well. (270)

Soane Morgan had come to Connie saying "brute, unmotherly things" (239) asking her to abort her baby. Although this is not her true errand—she has come to confront her husband's lover—Soane nevertheless loses Deek Morgan's third baby "between her legs in a swamp of red fluids and windblown sheets" walking the road back to Ruby (240). And no more children will come from Soane's loins, as she after having made fast friends with Connie, takes contraceptive herbs prepared from the convent garden flora to prevent it. Arnette, the Ruby girl who is to marry K.D. to save the "by then" perishing black Morgan line (Soane and Deek's two sons died in WW2) comes "revolted by the work of her womb" to the convent women to abort her baby (249). Arnette is persuaded to have the baby in the convent, but it arrives too soon. The "five- or six-month baby revolted," fleeing the blows to its skull, the damage done by "the mop handle inserted with a rapist's skill" by Arnette, "repeatedly—between her legs" (250). The "Morgan baby" dies.

"Many of the walkers Lone had seen; others she had heard about. But the men never walked the road; they drove it" (270). Sweetie, one night, walks out from her house and her sick babies and is found in distress and confusion on the road by Seneca who jumps out of the truck she is hitchhiking on as she spots her. The road Seneca leads Sweetie down took them to the convent, where Sweetie is nursed through a fever and Seneca ended up staying. The next day Sweetie's husband drives to the convent to pick her up—to reclaim the Mother of his children. One day, a long time ago, Connie is waiting for Deek on the road, when his

twin brother Steward shows up in his truck. Believing it is Deek she jumps in. But Steward knows her purpose for standing their. He drives her back to the convent, thus warning her from exchanging her light-brown blood with his 8-rock ancestry; it is his way of keeping in check "the who fucks who?" (217), his way to keep his part of the bargain the Morgans seem to have struck. Pat Best had figured out this bargain—the "deal":

> The generations had to be not only racially untampered with but free of adultery too. "God bless the pure and holy" indeed. That was their purity. That was their holiness. [. . .] Unadulterated and unadulteried 8-rock blood held its magic as long as it resided in Ruby. That was their recipe. That was their deal. For Immortality. [. . .] In that case, she thought, everything that worries them must come from women. (217)

As time goes by, the women become more and more mobile, and the blood rule becomes harder to protect. Women's automobility undermines the "one-way" patrilineality of the road. The patriarchs of Ruby have no way to go but " back," that is, to restore women to "their" order, so they can go forward as programmed, according to the "deal." But as we have seen, the women are hard to hold down and they are drawn to the convent as their closest point of rescue.

Billie Delia, "the bastard born daughter of the woman with sunlight-skin [Pat Best]" (203) has spent "two weeks and one day" (202) in the convent after running away from her furious mother who nearly kills her with an electric iron, throwing it at her with the rage she feels towards the 8-rock for despising her "lightish but not whiteish" daughter; for making her perceive her own daughter as an embarrassing liability. Billie Delia has left Ruby, "got a job in Demby, bought a car" (153) and has come back to Ruby only twice. Once for Arnette's wedding. She left the very "next day in her very own car" (203).

Morrison marks Billie Delia's departure in terms of mobilized

proprietorship, that is, in possession of *the* modern sign of mobility—the car. Cars (the Cadillac, the wrecked Toyota) play crucial roles, as Lone points out in the quote above. Before, the road and cars have signified men's potential machinations, but now, they also signal women's hard-won mobility. When the women take to the road, they block off or contaminate nativity. To return to Pollock's argument, they block off symbolic (but also real) power. Patriarchal property is in danger; the all-black blood-line is jeopardized. The community must not be bled anemic, pale and weak. A number of men thus "gathered at the Oven to decide and figure out how to run the Convent women off" (273), those "[b]itches;" "witches" (276).

It is by Lone, finally "truly auto mobile" at the age of 79, owning a car and knowing how to drive it, these men are overheard (270). But her mobility is not enough. Having tried to warn the convent women who will not listen to her words of a catastrophe drawing near (they have cleansed themselves spiritually and feel strong and free and invincible for the first time in years), she is now driving slowly in the heavy rainfall to get help from people whose family relations would not "cloud their minds" (282), "thinking if this mission was truly God's intention, nothing could stop her. Halfway to Aaron Poole's house the Oldsmobile halted in a roadside ditch" (282).

Finally out of the ditch Lone seeks out people who will be willing to stop the nine armed men. But too late. Although we learn of an ominous slide of the Oven, which "shifts, just slightly, on one side" (287) after the massive rain, the "obligation" to "stampede or kill" (3) the doomed women is carried out to its bitter end. "God at their side, the men take aim. For Ruby" (18). The five convent women are shot.

The Final Judgment

What is the Final Judgment on the Female Pilgrim then? How do the narratives end? What is the way of the wandering woman? Is there no room for the female pilgrim?

Moll Flanders is transported to the American Colony. She inherits money and property. She decides eventually (after her term of punishment is over) to return to England (where her husband always felt best at ease) where she dies a rich penitent. Daisy Miller dies from a disease she has contracted during an evening excursion undertaken in the company of Mr. Winterbourne alone. Ruthie and Sylvie escape Fingerbone. Before leaving the town, they set fire to the "house that was stashed like a brain" with the "relics" and memories, which made it difficult for them to leave it as it was (209). Ruthie imagines "the spirit of the house breaking out the windows and knocking down the doors" as it "burst its tomb, broke up its grave" (211). No headstone should be left behind. The house must burn. Ruthie and Sylvie then cross the long bridge over the lake, barely escaping the passing train. Fingerbone citizens assume they are lost, drowned, or consumed by the house fire. At this point in the narrative, their escape seems complete. But, Robinson then chooses to make the reader uncertain whether they have actually survived or not. She drifts Ruthie and Sylvie into a vaguely defined territory: she has Ruthie imagine walking to the Fingerbone house one night; "Since we are dead the house would be hers [Lucille's] now" (218). And later, Ruthie gives us other coordinates of their being: "We are nowhere in Boston [. . .]. My mother likewise is not there" (218). Sylvie and Ruthie have moved into a very ambiguous dimension of existence.

And what happened to those dancing "[b]odacious black Eves unredeemed by Mary" (Morrison 18) who leapt like does in the rain the night before they were murdered? Lone is going to stay with the dead bodies until Roger Best, the undertaker, arrives. Asked how she will get

back into town, Lone answers: "Well the dead don't move. And Roger's got a lot of work to do." As the last car pulls away, Lone looks back at the house. "A lot of work" (292). But she gets none.

Earlier in the story, we have learnt that Lone has the gift of "stepping in," a gift which Connie also has had and with which she literally revived Soane Morgan's son as he lay dying after a car crash on the road between Ruby and the convent and which she repeatedly ("selfishly") used to keep "Mother," Sister Mary Magna, alive when Connie and Mother were the only two nuns left at the convent. When Roger Best arrives, there is no work for him to do:

> Three women were down in the grass, he'd been told. One in the kitchen. Another across the hall. He searched everywhere. Every inch of grass, every patch of Scotch broom. The henhouse. [. . .] Every room: the chapel, the schoolroom. The game room was empty; the kitchen too—a sheet and a folded raincoat on the table the only sign that a body had been there. [. . .] He opened one door that revealed a coal bin. Behind another a small bed and a pair of shiny shoes on the dresser. No bodies. Nothing. Even the Cadillac was gone. (292)

We must draw our own conclusions. We do however get one last section of *Paradise* to guide us. Here we find that each of the women has made peace one way or the other with her close relations—if her relatives see ghosts or not, we can not really tell. Will the moments of resurrected pride and restored love which their reunions/settlements may be said to constitute represent their individual paradisal goal? One of the snapshots that we get is of Pallas, who after leaving her mother Dee Dee's house for the second time gets "into a beat-up car waiting on the road. Other people were in the car but the sun was setting so Dee Dee couldn't tell if they were men or women. They drove off into a violet so ultra it broke her

heart" (312). Who are waiting in the car? Is this the Cadillac and the convent women waiting for her so they can all now go to Heaven? Is Connie, as the very last paragraphs of the novel may suggest, with her beloved Piedade, the nun that used to sing to her as a child, by the ocean—here on earth or in a heavenly paradise?

The trajectories of the female subjects in the travel fictions investigated in this article, the way I read them, are laid out by way of two main rhetorical strategies. That is, two principal processes of resolving the predicament of women's maternally conditioned mobility can be discerned. The eighteenth- and nineteenth century narratives situate her course in physical reality: Defoe *solves* the reality of Moll Flanders by narrating her destiny as a journey from birth to death which, although comically, reflects potentially realistic *material* difficulties of a woman on the road. At the same time, he emphasizes her uniqueness and makes her case highly unrealistic and improbable. Remember also her repentance. Her road to heaven must be atoned for. Henry James solves the vexatious *physical* reality of Daisy Miller by writing her into death, a *de facto* fatal punishment for her venturing outside the house. In the two contemporary narratives, *Housekeeping* and *Paradise*, on the other hand, the women start out in a plainly physical realm but are then transferred to a metaphysical reality. Both narratives end on a kind of coda which suggests that a controversial transformation of the ontological status of women on the road is taking place. Before pursuing the argument further, I would like to ask the questions: Is there no incontestable successful way for the female pilgrim? May she not wander in the sunshine of God's grace? Will she, like Daisy Miller and the convent women unconditionally walk into the valley of death? To provide better answers to these questions and to improve my explanations of the fictional cases presented here (particularly *Housekeeping* and *Paradise*, which I will return to shortly), I will expand here my theory on women's maternally conditioned mobility in terms of

two new cartographic concepts.

Materotopology and Materotopia

I wish to conceptualize the contact zones, that is, the socio-historically mapped out physical places where women may and may not move, as a geography which I have called "materotopology." Embedded in this concept are thus socio-spatial practices conditioned by traditional notions of femininity-motherhood, which seriously impact women's mobility. Conceived in this manner, materotopology is a network of overlapping discourses on travel, motherhood, subjectivity, and space. Defoe "moved" in a historical and literary time-scape where the materotopological landscape was taken for granted. In Henry James's era, the eruption of women's movements was beginning to be felt. Daisy Miller is adventurous, different, the protagonist of the the novel, but she nevertheless has to be killed off, to put it bluntly.

In the twentieth-century narratives dealt with here, the stories, bearing with them seemingly unbendable traditions, turn essentially to metaphysical *dissolutions*. To explain the kind of alterity created by the authors here I propose the concept of "materotopia," which leans on three other concepts: first, that of mnemotope (Assmann), that is, a place or location which triggers or creates a memory; second, a utopian space projected into an unknown future or ending, a state of becoming; and third, the matrix as a state of process of "change and exchange" (Lichtenberg-Ettinger). Materotopia[2] consequently signifies a futurity

[2] Materotopia bears resemblance, and ought to do so, to the psychoanalytic theories of the goal of the yearning of the male traveler—the mother's body (see Lawrence; Enevold, "Men and Women"). But those theories focus the *male* subject's desires and developments. I have aimed towards a *female*-centered approach, while trying to avoid sentimentalizing or "romanticizing" my two spatial neologisms. Something which Caren Kaplan fears has been the case with the post-structuralist notions of deterritorialization and nomadic traveling ("Deterritorializations").

which may sort as a feminine dimension of existence. By aid of materotopia I wish to illustrate the abstract dimension—conditioned by maternal mobility—which seems to be the realm of female subjectivity to which Robinson and Morrison both transport their characters. In *Housekeeping*, we get another glimpse of what a materotopian dimension is modified by as Ruthie asks herself:

> When did I become so unlike other people? Either it was when I followed Sylvie across the bridge, and the lake claimed us, or it was when my mother left me waiting for her, and established in me the habit of waiting and expectation which makes any present moment most significant for what it does not contain.
>
> [. . .] [Mothers] walk ahead of us, and walk too fast, and forget us, they are so lost in thoughts of their own, and soon or late they disappear. The only mystery is that we expect it to be otherwise. (214-15)

Not even here does Robinson reveal the final phenomenological status of Ruthie and Sylvie ("the lake claimed us") but instead we get a memory of mobile mothers who walk ahead which moulds Ruthie's experience as a moving, deviant, subject.

The materotopia aside, are we to believe that Ruthie and Sylvie have transcended to another dimension of subjective presence? Is this as far as the writer can take them? Are they inhabiting a "matrixial borderspace"? Is this the fulfillment (or boundary?) of materotopian mobility, a feminine *futurité*?

To return to my argument above, Robinson's and Morrison's concluding narrative strategy seems to be a kind of *dissolution* of the female mobile subject: as if female mobility spun faster and faster until it orbits out of the tangible universe. The writers have resorted to a dissipation of their protagonists' positions. Must we then draw the

conclusion that this is the only available resolution of female subjectivity for the mother/woman as she has moved far out of the patriarchal and normative framework? Is there no imaginable destination, no viable paradise that may harbor her? Is the mobilized woman impossible as embodied physical and social subject? Let me here address a certain discomfort that some feminists (who feel the need to posit the female subject as stronger, wiser, more far-reaching, more successful, finally liberated, etc.) may experience reading about the "disappearance" of the female subject from the physical track. Firstly, no travel writers, traveler-writers, human beings, have ever been able to map the ulterior uncharted territory. Thus writers, male and female, tend to resort to the paradisal as metaphor for the ending, the arrival, the mystic conclusion. The paradise metaphor then becomes endless and can signify almost anything. Of course it has certain limitations, but, let me assume that both Robinson and Morrison have implemented a materotopological view of their subjects' worlds as they are still in it and in conflict with it, and to dissolve these conflicts, they resort to a materotopian vision of paradise. The "dissolution" of the female mobile subject emphasizes transgression, but avoids a straightforward beatific reunion. An insurrection may be sensed in *Housekeeping*. The break with societal norms signals a reinscription of subjectization processes. These, in Morrison's *Paradise,* become purposely matriarchal, resurrection rewritten.

Secondly, it may be that maternally imprinted utopias as any other utopia (including paradise) cannot be invented and thus never traveled to. They may be non-existent as Calás and Smircich find in their hunt for alternatives to masculinity-marked leadership discourses ("Voicing Silence"). But, in their mind, the alternatives find articulation in analytical adventures like their provocative text, a fiction voiced as a utopia. That utopia then stands for the necessity to question the metaphysical gendered bases, biases, and tendencies to closure that hover over organizations,

including the patriarchal institution with a big "P."

Calás and Smircich express their resistance to fixing themselves in their intellectual travels to stable spaces and solid grounds. They "prefer the imagery of a transient subject, never to be captured, always on the move" (598). The materotopia could perhaps be seen as a temporary, dissolvable, and rewritable abode for such a subject. A conceptual motel on the road.

However, I should admit that my search for female subjectivity contains an urge to see women mobile within the tangible realm of the physical world and graspable life span, something which the materotopia-destined travelers' narratives do not obviously promise. As evidenced by discussions throughout this chapter the mother/woman has insistently been focused and inserted into a network, a matrix, as it were, of significations wherever travel participates as passages, journeys, rites, and transgressions be it in plot typology, ethics, or psychoanalytics. Women may consequently, in more "material" term, be complicated characters to figure as traveling subjects of flesh and blood. We know that mythologies are constantly reproduced. Fortunately, they are also reworked, although the legacy of initiatory narratives such as the biblical ones keeps haunting their reconstructions.

For those who these texts, including Calás and Smircich's and my own, contribute insufficiently to the mobility of the thought and travel of women, I would like to reiterate the temporary and historically conditioned nature of the strategy of dis-solving female mobile subjectivity into materotopia. It is merely a step on the way. In "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road" I show that the subject that was posited by Calás and Smircich as transient and always on the move does indeed move on to new "real" worlds. She brings about a remapping of the materotopology of yore. The maternal organization of the world can no longer look the same. Trust me.

Coda

I see my project as a feminist undertaking of inscribing, figuring, metaphorizing, and interpreting in "woman-to-woman" terms the tales of travel, the tales of women on the road (Pollock). I align myself with theorists who are dedicated to breaking theoretical ground for female subjectivity. As Braidotti points out:

> In feminism, the struggle over the imaginary, especially about re-naming and positive re-signification has a long history. [. . .] The point is really quite simple: as the feminist movement put it, well before Deleuze philosophized it: we need to learn to think *differently* about our historical condition; we need to *re-invent* ourselves. ("Difference" n. pag.)

The mission to *invent*, rather than *re*-invent, is taken as adequate justification for my two neologisms, materotopology and materotopia, to denote concepts that, one could object, could have been described in existing theoretical terms. The maternal organization on the road has of course, in my view, been there along! These terms stretch, in my opinion, the theoretical realms of women's subjectiziation and offer spaces that will account for women's/mothers' experiences and difficulties without expelling them to the margin of the narrative. I could of course also repeat with Braidotti that my task, as well as Robinson's and Morrison's, is to *re*-invent, in the sense of regendering a tradition. Because the act of regendering has a certain relationship to the kind of investigation and innovation that T.S. Eliot, the great traditionalist, seems to write about: the repeated search for paradise which we have seen in the narratives analyzed in this article, that is, a paradise which "this time around" will be experienced anew, as new: "We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time." But this time around "we" means more than

"human being," especially more than "male human beings." "We" are all the Eves who have wandered through time and space under the subordinating laws of patriarchy. We, as I have argued, "know the place" in maternally organized terms. And now, let us move on.

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ARTICLE 3

The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road

> Fantastic scenery, fantastic motels, fantastic food. The only thing missing has been fantastic sex, and you can't have everything. [. . .] Perhaps we should pick up a hitch-hiker, like Thelma and Louise, what about it Nickie?
>
> ----"Tofino" (1998)
> Jill Dawson

> Magdalena and I are gonna cross America on two motorcycles. [. . .] We'll be riding the cheapest motorcycles we can find/ stopping every forty-five minutes for gas. [. . .] And we'll be spitting our mango pits like fucking bullets if anyone says anything about our huge Latin American breasts.
>
> ----*Flaming Iguanas* (1997)
> Erika Lopez

Introduction

In their critical analysis of twentieth-century travel narratives, *Tourists with Typewriters* (1999), Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan ask if it is "possible in a genre [travel writing] much given to repetition, to come up with something new?" (x). I agree with Holland and Huggan that in travel writing there exists a repetition of clichés, which cannot be overlooked. Nevertheless, I want to stress the importance of looking upon both travel writing and its clichés again from a slightly different, and consequently, strategically important perspective—that of gender.

Gender and genre are in this study thrust into a tight embrace. I see *genre* as constituted by a number of linguistic elements, constructed bodies of style, settings, ideologies, characters, and plots, and so forth. Its sibling word *gender* can be accounted for in much the same way. Their etymological kinship demonstrates an axiomatic association between the two: They are separated only by the "d," as Jacques Derrida writes in "The Law of Genre," where he also goes on to question the opposition between the two. Lidia Curti, taking the cue, states that "genre is traversed by the discourse of sexual difference as if the vicinity of the two English words—genre and gender, divided by 'd' (for difference?)—recalled coincidence and dislocation, obedience and transgression at one and the same time" (53). Considering their intimate and long-standing relationship, can these familiar associates breed into something unfamiliar, that is, new?

Attempting to answer this question, in what follows I focus on a certain subgenre of contemporary travel writing, which I refer to as the *road genre*. What I mean by the road genre is roughly what Ronald Primeau in *Romance of the Road* (1996) calls the "Literature of the American Highway" and Kris Lackey, in *RoadFrames* (1997), the "American Highway Narrative."

The critics I have mentioned both discuss travel writing under the auspices of *genre*, while—and here lies an important difference between their studies and my own project—the aegis of my investigation is *gender*. Gender is thus the *basis* for my analysis rather than another element hybridizing with another *royal* genre; gender becomes the *cardinal* critical category and diagnostic criteria rather than another chapter in another survey of travel literature.[1]

[1] Opacki has proposed a theory of genre evolution that emphasizes hybridization, that is, the cross-fertilization of a "royal" (or "dominant" in Russian Formalist terms) genre over time by other genres. "A literary genre entering, in the course of evolution, the field of a particular literary trend, will enter into a very close 'blood relationship' with the form of the royal genre that is particular to that current" (121). A royal genre attracts basically all other genres at a certain time but without fusing

To pay primary attention to gender entails considering the questions of gendered authorship. The last thirty years of critical activity have been favorable to a literary climate in which the significance of the author has been undermined and the text privileged. A simultaneous movement to resurrect the rejected writer has, however, existed. It has been sustained by *inter alia* feminist and postcolonial critics protesting against, for example, the "neutralization" of the author, that is, the implicit whitening, masculinizing, or even erasure of the author. As far as travel writing is concerned, I would definitely argue for raising the author from the dead for good. His or her role becomes particularly urgent to consider, as s/he, as writer and sometimes narrative subject, can be understood both metaphorically and literally as the navigator of the ship. Helmsmanship has been the key to journey narratives from the *Odyssey* to *On the Road*. Holland and Huggan *implicitly* draw the issue of helmsmanship (that is, subjectivity) into their analysis by singling out as a trademark of contemporary travel writing a feature that they label "specialization." One of their examples is "women's travel." In their example, "woman" becomes the determining agent for the definition of the travel narrative. They have thus focused on the agent of travel—the one who travels and who presents/writes the subsequent travel narrative. Their focus on the agent is nevertheless vague. Another example of specialization is "ecological tourism," in the account of which the traveler loses its specific gender, that is, "reverts" to a supposedly *neutral* status, and in which the analytical focus is redirected to observe instead the narrative determinants of, for example, "new" ideological (in this case

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them all into one single genre. While the literary trend lasts, a new form of the genre emerges. It could be argued, for example, that "metafiction" is now a literary current become royal genre that draws into it several other genres that nevertheless keep their distinguishing features. Metafiction may earlier have been a "feature" of another genre. As it is "promoted" to a royal genre, its features become "characteristic of the entire literary trend thereby ceasing to be something distinctive for that genre, becoming non-distinguishing features. They become features that make it similar to other genres" (123).

ecological) elements of travel. I would like to advocate an even closer pursuit of the traveler-navigator subjectivity, stalking in this process the implications of genre analysis as gender governs its perspective.

To conclude, in this chapter I follow a number of well-known feminist strategies: I focus on writing as a political act displaying representations as important cultural symbols, and I subsequently analyze the gendered meanings these cultural expressions carry, potentially transform, and add to current understandings of the world—the old and the new—and of literary genres.

Where Do We Find Ourselves?

In 1947, Simone de Beauvoir traveled across the United States from New York on the East Coast to Los Angeles on the West Coast, and back. She kept a detailed diary, which was published in French in 1948 as *L'Amerique au jour le jour,* and in English in 1952 as *America Day by Day.* In 1996, a new translation with a foreword by Douglas Brinkley was published. Brinkley concluded his praise of the book with the words: "For women, and men, who want to experience vicariously Jack Kerouac's open road with less macho romanticism and more existential savvy, *America Day by Day,* hidden from us for nearly fifty years, comes to the reader like a dusty bottle of vintage French cognac, asking only to be uncorked" (xvi). Brinkley also noted that in 1952 the book

> generated few sales and little notice. But with the passage of time, *America Day by Day* emerges as a supremely erudite American road book—that distinctive subgenre based on flight of fancy rather than flights from economic hardship, as in John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. In broader sociological terms, her critique outpaces William Least-Heat Moon's *Blue Highways: A Journey into America*. (xi–xii)

Brinkley's statement resonates with my triad of concepts: genre, gender, and "the new." First of all, Brinkley places de Beauvoir, the traveler/writer, in the "road book" genre.[2] He compares her account with Kerouac's *On the Road* and William Least-Heat Moon's *Blue Highways*. Both *On the Road* and *Blue Highways* have become "road classics"; both were published after *America Day by Day* by ten and forty years respectively. Interestingly enough, Brinkley canonizes, in 1997, a work written in 1948, into a road genre which can be said to have been defined as such first in 1958.[3] In other words: Brinkley has articulated "something new" by inserting something "old" into something else which is also "old." He has revised a very "male buddy genre" by bringing a woman straight into the core of its canon.[4] Gender and genre are here brought into a productive crisis, as it were, although in his review Brinkley does not reflect on this, and definitely not in these terms. In his short introduction to the book, the genre reveals no sign of being gendered, but is presented as an all-inclusive, all-neutral vehicle of story- and history telling.[5] He thus follows the traditional story (and theory)[6] that reserves no place for non-WASP travelers who are not male. One could conclude, then, that de Beauvoir, then, must be a man, because the prototypical American storyteller was always a man, and the prototypical traveler was always a

[2] He prefers to distinguish the "American road book" from Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939), but to me, this too is a road narrative.

[3] Of course he is not the first one to make this kind of anachronistic move. Placing Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) among the postmodern works of fiction is one of the better-known examples of retrospective genre categorization

[4] See Enevold ("Men and Women").

[5] At the same time he seems to make an ad-hoc differentiation between the road book and the road story of *Grapes of Wrath*, which to me becomes very paradoxical. I am somewhat surprised that Brinkley chooses to skip *Grapes of Wrath* to go straight to *On the Road*. His move to make *America Day By Day* into "an erudite American Road book" would have been slightly less anachronistic had he chosen to define *Grapes of Wrath*, from 1939, as an embryo of the road narrative of the 1950s.

[6] See Nina Baym's "Dramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women" (1981).

man, and has remained so until the present. Something must have happened. The essence of Brinkley's review, as I read it, is that it divulges that now, even a *French woman's diary entries* may pass for customized Xeroxes of American (male) culture in the making, and remaking.[7] This, indeed, is one way of making the travel genre "new." I find it, however, an extremely problematic and unproblematized one.

I wonder whether Brinkley is conscious of his "revision" of the road genre, or if his recommendation to infuse the road genre with Beauvoir's "savvy existentialism" is actually gender blind or ignorant of the gender-dependence[8] of the genre history.[9] And yet, this gender-dependence is

[7] By "pass for" I am of course sarcastically referring to what I deem to be a belated, avaricious transfer of what could be called symbolic cultural capital accumulated by de Beauvoir for more than half a century, by way of a gesture of charitable inclusion into the American genre of road literature.

[8] I have tried to set forth this gender-dependence in "Men and Women on the Move" where I outlined a development of the road genre from the perspective of gender, focusing on the centrality of the masculinity-*rite de passage* inherent in the road stories of the 1950s. I compared the trajectory of the male traveler with that of his female counterpart or lack thereof, noticing the high degree of gender-dependent spatialities constituting the genre. Judging by the arrant otherness of the female, and her passive rather than active role in the stories of my study, the road narrative seemed to promise no great expectations for female road travelers. The "female situation" was also determined by a traditional gender-dependent view of mobility permeating the narratives. Nevertheless, insisting on reframing the female traveler from a feminist take on mobility, I argued for an alternative concentration on women's physical mobility in public space, and for a completely different perspective than many critics, despite years of feminist critical activism, still use and seem unable to abandon. Feminist spectacles ought to be functional binoculars, rather than just a decorative *monocle***.** Yet, I wished for a road story that comfortably could place a woman behind the wheel, and upset the tradition of the male as sole (spermatic) conqueror and free mobile adventurer of the road. Indeed, two texts did appear after I had completed the manuscript, and they were added in a final footnote. I concluded my article by saying that the two literary works that I had encountered certainly promised—besides very entertaining reading—to "rearticulate the road narrative, agitate it and make it a more dynamic, multifaceted discourse [. . .] adjust the generic account, and make more room and road for the female mobile subject" (416).

[9] It is essential to note that Brinkley is an accomplished historian who has written his own book on the road, *The Majic Bus: An American Odyssey* (1993), as well as edited/written forewords to editions of the road books of others, for example, Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971) and *The Proud Highway* (1997), Theodore Dreiser's *A Hoosier Holiday (*1916), and Carl Thomas Rowan's *South of Freedom* (1952). I expect that he is well aware of the genre history. Nevertheless, acknowledging simultaneously the affirmative character of the genre of forewords and back-cover blurbs, I would advocate caution when speaking of the road book in order not to neglect its

evident since the very literary "inception" of the road genre. In a Judeo-Christian tradition, this inception can be placed as far back as in the biblical "Exodus."[10] Gender is ubiquitous in the genres of travel writing and must not be neglected, or cursorily treated by the cultural critic.

In what follows, I discuss first the groundbreaking road movie *Thelma & Louise* (1991), particularly its critical reception in terms of its associations and representations of women and with feminism. Then I proceed to discuss a selection of narratives by/about the "daughters" of Thelma and Louise: *Flaming Iguanas* (1997), a novel by Erika Lopez and *Wild Ways: New Stories of Women on the Road* (1998), a collection of short stories edited by Margo Daly and Jill Dawson. These stories reveal an essential connection to their "road mothers" and contribute to illustrate the most recent development of the road narrative, and again, its relation to the role and representation of women and feminism.

New Stories of Women on the Road

In 1998, the editors of the collection *Wild Ways: New Stories of Women on the Road,* Margo Daly and Jill Dawson, announced a change in what I want to call the traditionally gendered pattern of mobility. "Women these days are big on adventures," they wrote, "Thelma and Louise captured the Zeitgeist.

[. . .] Finally gals got a look in on the road trip" (x). As Daly and Dawson imply, the entrance of the traveling woman had been long in the making. Compensating for her extended absence, she crossed the threshold quite powerfully in the shape of *Thelma & Louise* in 1991. The movie's role as an efficient promoter of feminist values has been discussed.[11] Its impact on

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"genderedness."

[10] See, for example, Enevold "Men and Women".

[11] See Rapping; Sharrett; Morf; Carlson; Leo; Pochada; and Cooper.

the road genre is nevertheless unquestionable. *Thelma & Louise* broke into a "road narrative," which ever since the 1950s had been *the* masculine "buddy-genre," gendered as such by Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road,* and later reinscribed as such by Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda's road movie, *Easy Rider*.

By what could be called a simple reversal, *Thelma & Louise* laid bare the stereotypical gender-dependence of the road genre and exposed a vulnerability of women on the road, particularly when they are without guns or money. The mere substitution of two females for the customary male buddy protagonists, the appropriation of the road for two women, radically altered the genre's premises. These premises include male escape from societal constraints represented by women and what they stand for: domesticity, commitment, wed*lock*, in other words, immobilizing obligations. *Thelma & Louise* exposes the traditional stereotyping of male-female relationships where men "are" spermatic mobile men, and women waiting egg-bearing to-be-mothers in fixed locations, as if deviating from the stove automatically translated into "women on the loose" whose mere presence in public space announces that sex is up for grabs.[12]

In *Thelma & Louise,* the escape was transformed into an escape from patriarchal values and boundaries. Some critics emphasize the escape from heterosexuality; that is, they stress the friendship between Thelma and Louise as an evolving lesbian relationship.[13] I have chosen not to focus on this potentially fruitful aspect of the narrative. For me, just like for Barbara Johnson, the film "failed to deliver [. . .] a lesbian plot" ("Lesbian Spectacles" 161). Thus, to me, *Thelma & Louise* performs, within a long-

[12] See Enevold ("Men and Women"; "Motherhood").

[13] For example Cathy Griggers who writes about the "lesbian body [that] appeared masquerading as the latest American outlaw hero in *Thelma & Louise*" ("Lesbian Bodies in the Age of (Post)Mechanical Reproduction" and Lynda Hart, who in *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality And the Mark of Aggression* (1994) treats the "Female Buddy Film" (qtd. in Roach 1996). It is very interesting to note that *Lesbian News* downplays the lesbian theme in *Thelma & Louise*.

established heterosexual institution, an attack on conventional patterns of chauvinist male behavior toward females. Women strike back on sexual harassers and patriarchal guardians of law and marriage. The rapist is shot, Thelma's husband is cheated on and abandoned, the highway patrol officer is bereft of his gun and locked into the trunk of his car, and the truck driver is confronted, his cap confiscated, and his truck blown up. To put it tersely, there are a number of assaults on men and their machines.

Perhaps it is due to its violence that many reviews of *Thelma & Louise* have reported puzzled reception; the film has been surrounded by "furor" (Rapping 33) and said to be "phony feminism [that] fails on the silver screen" (Sharrett 57). It has been presented as an "acting out [of] a male fantasy of life on the road" that "can hardly be called a woman's movie or one with a feminist sensibility" (Carlson 57). The critic John Leo remarks on its "repeated paean to transformative violence" not to be found in any male-buddy movies, and with which, he claims, we leave "Dworkin [only to enter] a Mussolini speech. Here we have an explicit fascist theme, wedded to the bleakest form of feminism" (220). Leo criticizes the movie reviewers for their generally, in his mind, excessively positive reception, and goes on to refute the affirmative "pleasingly subversive" (Kennet Turan, *Los Angeles Times*) and "big-hearted movie" (Jack Knoll, *Newsweek*). In point of fact, Leo claims, this is a "morally and intellectually screwed up [. . .] small-hearted, toxic film." With what can interpreted as disgust, he notes that several of the female spectators appeared "to leave the theater in something of a daze" (20).

Violent feminism, some say; no feminism, say others. "Women cheer the movie," yet others say (Carlson 57). The connections made by the critics between the film and women, and between the film and feminism are noteworthy. The list of films starring violent or forceful males is endless, but whenever does male audience reception get reported in a similar manner? Not very often—one reason being that those movies

pass by the critical eye of the general observer, because a man in a role is, as always, not considered as a male, but as a protagonist.

The action of/in *Thelma & Louise*—as is implied by some reviewers—needs to be defended, or "protected" against certain viewers (or "viewings"). "I enjoyed this movie," Rapping writes, "so did my male companions" (31). She adds: "[A]nyone daring to go on the Oprah Winfrey show to defend the creep who attacked Thelma and was shot down by Louise had better be prepared to be yelled down by audience, crew members, and the loudmouthed hostess herself" (31). My personal experience confirms this Thelma and Louise-effect. Wherever (on the screen, as a home video, in the classroom) and whenever (in 1992, 1996, or now), I have seen the movie or taught it, the women's violent performances have been received by the audience with elated sanction. There is something about the movie that rouses its audiences. As Sarandon put it in an interview, "'[W]e all underestimated *Thelma & Louise*. I thought it was a Western, with two women, and you know, trucks. But the fact is, there was such a …'she pauses in a rare, rare loss of words, '[. . .] just a fanatic, deeply difficult something in that movie'" (DiClementi 31).

With *Thelma & Louise,* we seem to reach a disjunction between political correctness and feminist/emotional investment. A similar disjunction appears toward the end of the 1990s when Girl Power is, by some, experienced as a major back-lash on 1970s feminism and as solidifying traditional gender stereotypes into a feminist impasse, rather than as empowering female tactics.[14] But, I argue, when at these kinds of critical disjunction, it is crucial not to envision women as merely "fronting for Hugh Hefner," as one critic of *Thelma & Louise* wrote (Carlson 57). Each and every time feminism, or rather, representations of women (that invoke

[14] For a discussion of Girl Power, see Enevold "Girl Powers and Power Girls."

discourses of feminism), are perceived as facing a major crisis, feminism is forced into dialogue with its past, and our socio-cultural framework of understanding is challenged. We must try to understand the responses that *Thelma & Louise* elicits, but how can we do that? Which discourses does the film violate or infringe upon to cause such reactions? Let me attempt to clarify the confusion and "mess" *Thelma & Louise* creates by discussing the film as an example of a *regendering* of a genre through *rescripting*. Implementing this regendering through rescripting, *Thelma & Louise* represents what I have termed an *appropriative turn* in the evolution of the road narrative.

Rescripting the Road Narrative: The Appropriative Turn

The regendering of a genre can be understood in other ways than the mere substitution of women for men in the lead roles.[15] This substitution in *Thelma & Louise,* as I have suggested, could at first glance be called a simple reversal; it is in fact much more complex. I propose that *Thelma & Louise* unmistakably excites and upsets the professional critics as well as the general audience, because, in this movie, gender and genre are intersecting at a major cusp, intruding on each other's paths—*rescripting* one another, and in the process crossing culturally scripted, binary boundaries. What then is *scripting*, and what binary boundaries are crossed?

I use the term "scripting" loosely after Derek Gregory. Gregory understands scripting as "a developing series of steps and signals, part structured and part improvised, that produces a narrativized sequence of interactions through which roles are made and remade by soliciting responses and responding to cues" (116). Gregory admits that describing

[15] Or the substitution of men for women or any other sex/gender related alteration/replacement of the traditional main character/s.

the "cultural practices involved in travel and tourism" in the terms of scripting is not original. James Buzard, for example, has written on 'the scripted continent'; but he [has done so] in ways that constantly folds travel back into the text," that is, Buzard (as does Gregory) relates to a tradition of "guiding texts," which have influenced nineteenth-century travel writing. But, Gregory claims, whereas Buzard maintains a predominantly "textual" perspective on the territories and "boundaries mapped out by those prior texts," Gregory wishes to accentuate the "production (and consumption) of spaces that reach beyond the narrowly textual" and to "bring into view practices that take place on the ground" (116).[16] Then how is scripting important to travel writing? This is what Gregory says:

> In the first place, it directs our attention to the ways in which travel writing is intimately involved in the 'staging' of particular places: in the simultaneous production of 'sites' that are linked in a time-space itinerary and 'sights' that are organized into a hierarchy of cultural significance. Travel scripting produces a serialized space of constructed visibility that allows and sometimes even requires specific objects to be seen in specific ways by a specific audience. (116)

Not only Egypt that Gregory investigates, but also "the road" in general has been written down, mapped, and charted for its subsequent travelers. That is why road narratives (films and books) that have become "road classics" predispose authors and readers to stage and identify their

[16] Gregory's essay "Scripting Egypt" is published in an anthology that builds upon "Edward Said's oft-cited claim that Orientalists past and present have spun imaginative geographies where they sought ground truth [which] has launched a plethora of studies of fictive geographies" (Duncan and Gregory i). Gregory forwards an argument "triangulated by three ideas: the construction of the Orient as *theatre*; the representation of other places and landscapes as text; and the production of travel and tourism as a scripting" (115). Please consult the anthology for a more exhaustive and just account of Gregory's presentation of travel as "an intrinsically hermeneutical project" (115).

stories in certain pre-figured ways. In *Thelma & Louise* we find residues of the traditional road script concurrent with a violation of its "sites" and "sights" in terms of gender. *Thelma & Louise* wreaks havoc on the road genre's long-standing gender polarization, or in the familiar feminist terminology—on the hierarchy of binaries.

In her essay "What is A Woman?" Toril Moi does a "critical analysis of some of the presuppositions of poststructuralist thinking about sex, gender, and the body" (118). She exemplifies her analysis with a number of cases, one of which is treated in Mary Ann Case's essay "Disaggregating Gender from Sex and Sexual Orientation: The Effeminate Man in the Law and Feminist Jurisprudence." To illustrate her argument, Moi reproduces the list Case uses of attributes regularly categorized as either "masculine" or "feminine."[17] The qualities of the different genders (or, more correctly, sex-based stereotypes, as Moi points out) are grouped as follows:

MASCULINE	**FEMININE**
aggressive	affectionate
ambitious	cheerful
analytical	childlike
assertive	compassionate
athletic	flatterable
competitive	gentle
dominant	gullible
forceful	loyal
independent	sensitive
individualistic	shy
self-reliant	soft-spoken
self-sufficient	sympathetic

[17] Case draws on "the so-called Bem Sex-Role inventory (BSRI). [She] lists a number of adjectives that psychologists and other researchers regularly consider coded masculine and feminine in contemporary American culture" (Moi 103).

strong	tender
	understanding
	warm
	yielding

Moi critiques "the theoreticism of poststructuralist feminist theory," with the intention of freeing us "from a theoretical picture that tells us how things *must* be, and so blinds us to alternative ways of thinking" (118). She wants to show "that in the case of a question that truly matters to [her], namely 'What is a woman?' there are good reasons to consider alternatives to the sex/gender distinction." Still, she finds that the distinction may be useful, for example, "when it comes to opposing biological determinism à la Geddes and Thomson" (119).

Thelma & Louise provides no neat distinctions between the two columns of binaries; it does not stay safely on the female/femininity side of the binary division of qualities. Nor are the characters a simple reversal of the masculine/feminine polarization. Things are much more "untidy" than that. To me, *Thelma & Louise* guides its audiences into a fog[18] of binaries, a haze of notions of sex-based stereotypes. It argues that there is not *one* thing a woman is—which is one of the points Moi wants to make with her Beauvoirean approach to working out "a theory of the sexually different body," a theory, which, in her view gains nothing from a

[18] In her afterword, in which she explains "The Point of Theory," Moi refers the reader to Wittgenstein's standpoint that "the role of philosophy is to be therapeutic, to produce a diagnosis of the theoretical pictures that hold us captive, not in order to refute them, but in order to make us aware of other options: 'A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it inexorably' (PI §5)" (qt. in Moi 119). Moi reminds us of Wittgenstein's thought that a philosophical problem is a "question that arises when we are lost in a kind of linguistic fog" (119). Moi understands Wittgenstein's view of the "clearing of the fog as an intellectual liberation" as a never-ending task which, she hopes, will be a "philosophical therapy [that] would help feminist critics and theorists not to get lost in meaningless questions and pointless arguments, and enable us instead to raise genuine questions about things that really matter" (120). And by things that really matter she means "the sphere of the ordinary [. . .] in which our political and personal struggles actually take place" (120). I could not agree more.

"rethinking of the concepts of sex and gender," as it will not yield a "good theory of the body or subjectivity" (4).[19]

Thelma & Louise is not only a conquest of a male-buddy-genre, but also an appropriation of a set of qualities traditionally viewed as traits of masculinity characterizing male human beings (here: inhabiting the road) while, at the same time, *retaining* traditional qualities of femininity. Thelma and Louise are yielding *and* assertive, affectionate *and* aggressive, they are loyal *and* independent, they are tender *and* forceful, they are gentle *and* strong, and so on and so forth.

To summarize this section, then, I have proposed that *Thelma & Louise* constitutes a regendering of the genre. The rescripting, which makes this turn possible, provides for more than an uncomplicated appropriation or one-for-one substitution of one gender for another. A re-scriptive regendering, rather than a simple reversal in terms of appropriation, is needed, because, given the tradition of gender and the tradition of the genre, a simple appropriation is not "doable"—at least not *at this point in time* of the genre's development. At this point, putting women behind the wheel turns out to be an upsetting move to critics, to men and women, to the feminist or masculinist, delighted or repulsed, viewer alike. However, as I have indicated, the evolution of the genre does not stop here, in the first half of the 1990s. It continues and changes shape anew. I will now deal with the transformation of the road genre, which is effected by the daughters of Thelma and Louise.[20]

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[19] I cannot here give a fair account of Moi's elaborate argument. I encourage the interested reader to consult her essay.

[20] From here on, I am letting *Thelma & Louise*, the roadmovie more or less "fuse" with Thelma and Louise, the characters, and vice versa. One reason for this is the fact that the narratives that I analyze in the following sections regularly allude to the roadmovie through its characters, who thus come to symbolize both female subjects and the road narrative.

De-scripting the Road Narrative: The Metafictional Turn

Thelma & Louise constituted a renewal of the road genre. But, as has been noted, the two women do die in the end—a rather bleak result that makes it tempting to say that the movie failed, rather than succeeded, when it comes to the question of liberating women. Although the film did liberate the road genre script, Thelma and Louise were never able to sit down comfortably in the director's chair; this is, however, what the "daughters" of Thelma and Louise do.

Although Thelma and Louise died, it is obvious from the narratives I wish to examine now that a new generation of women has survived and grown up with Thelma and Louise's revolutionary adventure vividly in their minds. These women (or female characters) seem to thrive on what Thelma and Louise did, and they refuse to drive off the cliff; they want to resolve the road differently. I will here present a number of examples from *Wild Ways: New Stories of Women on the Road* and *Flaming Iguanas: An All-Girl Road Novel Thing*.

The *Wild Way*s collection shows that *Thelma & Louise* has had an undeniable and impregnating impact on many of its (writing) descendants. The movie did indeed accomplish an appropriation of territory. Not only did it appropriate the road as a generic space, but judging by the "acts" of its daughters, it also opened up a space for road mothers, who thus appropriated the important role of road models.

Such female role models are invoked repeatedly in *Wild Ways*. Sometimes the role models are juxtaposed to the road fathers who previously reigned supreme, sometimes they quietly supersede them, sometimes they explicitly reject them. Although in *Flaming Iguanas* role models assume different shapes, the rejection of road fathers is nonetheless upfront. (I will return to this point shortly). The following three examples from three different stories from *Wild Ways* indicate which female forerunners the women of these "new" (to quote the collection

title) road stories think of and relate to. The first example, from Bidisha's story "Leaving," shows an interesting combination of influences: "And here I am, an ordinary writer writing ordinary things [. . .] thinking about a story I have to write. Travelling, journeys, feminism—I arrange my hat and think of lipstick, Thelma and Louise—Cindy and Barbie" (109). Does this combination of names imply an analogy (between the two pairs Thelma and Louise and Cindy and Barbie), or is it the contrasting effect Bidisha is after when she lists images coming to her protagonist's mind when she thinks of "travelling, journeys, feminism"? To me, the reference is a reflection on the images of women brought to the narrator since adolescence (or childhood). These act as scripts which develop, to repeat Gregory's words again, a "series of steps and signals, part structured and part improvised, that produces a narrativized sequence of interactions through which roles are made and remade by soliciting responses and responding to cues" (116). However, the point here is, I believe, that the response solicited is "Thelma and Louise—Cindy and Barbie," not "Kerouac and Cassady—Ken and Action Man."

"Tofino" by Jill Dawson is a story about two women, Nickie and Ann, and Nickie's teenage daughter (who is the narrator of the story), traveling down the British Columbia Coast into Washington state and then back to Canada. The party set out four weeks earlier, initiating their journey by renting a car:

> They were disappointed initially when the guy at Budget Rentals produced a Chevy that was so unlike their dreams. Brand spanking new for a start. [. . .] This Chevrolet, this white Chevy Cavalier, with its *Beautiful British Columbia* is a bit too much like a Nissan Micra for Mum's taste. But hell, what does she know about cars anyway? They decide that Thelma and Louise would still have driven it if it was all the rental company had on offer, and that, after a short giggle at

> their own silliness with this Thelma and Louise thing, seems to do the trick. (55)

They have had "a fantastic trip. Fantastic scenery, fantastic motels, fantastic food. The only thing missing has been fantastic sex, and you can't have everything [. . .] Perhaps we should pick up a hitch-hiker, like Thelma and Louise, what about it Nickie?" (57). The repeated reference to Thelma and Louise as road models, however facetious, is thought-provoking. The reference recurs in Emily Perkin's "Can't Beat It":

> We think the chances are good that we'll stumble across a movie being made in the desert. For practice we make Super 8 films of each other going into gas stations.…Our acting routines include: Swedish tourists who speak no English; old college buddies who are delighted to bump into each other; a couple fighting; Thelma and Louise. (8)

Here the characters Cecilia and Marcie (as the narrating character has chosen to call herself during the stay in America), two Australian women on a road trip in the United States, financed by a grant from the Australian Arts Council, stage themselves as Thelma and Louise. As we can see, Thelma and Louise again surface in the narrative, enabling a rescripting of the road. In another scene, the narrative playfully issues a territorial claim on the road by moving *beyond* its male road predecessors and their scripts. "Can't Beat It" *literally* stages and rescripts the road:

> Today we filmed [Cecilia] sitting on the car bonnet in front of an oasis—she thought it was an appropriate setting, the 'life-giving water in the arid desert,' the 'fluid feminine," that sort of thing [. . .].
>
> 'Here we are taking a very thrusting action, a very direct straightforward tradition if you like…We're playing here…with the idea of a non*linear* narrative, with sub*vert*ing the road, using mimicry and yet attaining something entirely

> *original*.' (She smiles.) 'And entirely feminine. And what is the feminine if not a frontier? We are rewriting the desert here [. . .].
>
> 'In a way, we're paying homage to Kerouac and to Cassady—they refused to accept a strict, narrow time structure [. . .] they also colluded with phallocentrism—look at the benefits they reaped, the fame, the 'freedom," the access to naïve—I don't say stupid—women. *So we must look further than these men. We look to the road itself and pay homage to that, to the passive, 'female' land that must bear the scar of the road that man has carved through it, the burdened road, burdened land that carries its traffic in much the same way the female carries the male* [. . .] (6-7, last emphasis added).

Marcie, obviously bored, leaves the camera running and goes for a little walk.

In "Men and Women" I claimed that in the various travel genres women were traditionally "walk-ons," not heroes. In "Can't Beat It," the female characters are not only protagonists; they also take on the role of film-director. To use another cinematic metaphor, women can be said to have promoted themselves from the relatively hidden position of assisting script-*girl* to that of woman-director. Cecilia and Marcie (by way of Perkins' narrative scheme) are toying with the founding text, the textual directors, the "original script" of the road, the traditional gendering of landscape as female or feminine, and with their own "artistic" situation. By way of metafictional commentary these "new" women on the road shed light on the genre's burdened past and its conservative constructions of female subjectivity. They are addressing belatedness with a self-conscious and ironic vengeance—*without a trace of anxiety*.

"Can't Beat It" refers extensively not only to the road genre but also to America in a way which makes their road trip a model example of what

Eco would call travel in hyperreality: Perkins' Cecilia and Marcie exemplify the mind-boggling experience of the traveler who, for the first time, encounters the material/spatially tangible phenomenon of the "real" United States, heretofore the make-believe (and, it should be added, the stereotypical and genre-typical) America mediated through films and commercial icons.[21] They exclaim: "Here we are in the United States of America. We are *so* excited! It is like a dream. It's like the movies. It's *just* like the movies" (3). The hyperreality of silverscreen-America is projected onto "reality," making it real and true. There are several references to American cultural/movie and media icons. Cecilia "smokes Kent, because Audrey Hepburn used to smoke them" (4). It is a big event coming across "Our first drugstore! Cecilia bought 'a pack a Trojans'. They were the most American things we could think of. I recorded the event on our Super 8 camera. The guy asked what kind, and Cecilia said Ribbed, buddy—for her pleasure" (5). In the car "we play Bruce Springsteen exclusively. I thought some of the lyrics would go against Cecilia's feminist stance, but she sings along regardless" (9). This pattern of metafictional and postmodernist self-conscious rhetoric justifies, I would argue, another modification of the scripting term; "Can't Beat It" comes closer to a *de-scripting*, that is, a deconstructive rescripting of the road narrative.

Whereas the patriarchal yoke in *Thelma & Louise* seemed to require an engagement of violence to be lifted off women's shoulders, in "Can't Beat It" the yoke of forefathers, patriarchs, and contemporary males seems easily cast off. For example, the references to other "big" male names, more loosely associated to the road in terms of its wider meaning of Western, are given with humorous zest: Cecilia "sprays herself with Evian three times a day 'toning and moisturising in one'" and comments, "I am

[21] See Umberto Eco's travel narrative "Travels in Hyperreality." See also Jean Baudrillard's travel narrative *America* for an interesting analysis of America in this vein, and see Holland and Huggan for a specific analysis of Eco's and Baudrillard's travel narratives.

surprised to find that I like not washing. Did Martin Sheen wash in *Badlands*? Did Billy the Kid wash? Did Jim Morrison? No way" (8).

Apart from deflating potential patriarchal pressure, the sentence harbors self-conscious play; the stereotypical qualities associated with women—the pampering of the skin, the paying attention to beauty and maintenance of outer signs of femininity are juxtaposed with the delight in not washing. Marcie may, of course, also have referred to *Thelma & Louise,* in which there is a gradual shift in appearance of the two women as their journey progresses, from a very neatly clad and well-groomed exterior, from skirt and lace frills to dirty faces without make-up, suntans and hair let loose, and jeans, T-shirts, and bandanas. The "appropriation" of "both/and"-binaries in *Thelma & Louise* is also taking place in "Can't Beat It," but it is enacted in a self-conscious manner, the women constantly observing their own activities, their own de-scripting.

The reviewers of *Thelma & Louise* were the ones articulating feminist interpretations of the film and filmic interpretations of feminism. The authors and characters of the three quoted stories from *Wild Ways* explicitly deal with the stakes of feminism; feminism is, in fact, ubiquitous in the three quoted narratives. But its status is always hemmed in, made ambivalent. In Lopez's novel *Flaming Iguanas,* this ambivalence becomes acute and is to a high degree connected to the "issue" of road models, and to the long-standing questions in the debates on feminism, that is, "what feminism," and "whose feminism"? The main character of *Flaming Iguanas,* Jolene alias Tomato, whose intention it is to cross the United States on a motorcycle, never mentions Thelma and Louise, although one of its reviewer does: "Lopez gives Tomato an outlaw integrity that Thelma and Louise only hinted at."[22] The publisher's blurb on the back cover of *Flaming Iguanas* also wants to connect Lopez's narrative to that of male

[22] Back cover blurb by Patricia Holt, *San Francisco Chronicle*.

road ancestors: "Tomato Rodriguez hops on her motorcycle and embarks on the ultimate sea-to-shining-sea all-girl adventure—a story that combines all the best parts of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Easy Rider*." But, it should be noted that Lopez/Tomato never mentions *Easy Rider*. The divergence between the two narratives becomes particularly conspicuous if one considers the fact that *Easy Rider* does not contain one grain of comedy and takes itself very seriously, whereas *Flaming Iguanas* is extraordinarily funny and self-ironic. The similarities between Tomato, a Latina lesbian-biker-bitch-to-be, and Captain America, a snow-white heterosexual dead-to-be drug smuggler, begin and end with their preferred choice of transportation. If there are any undertones of the *Easy Rider*-narrative, they could possibly be found in Lopez' "Before"-statement. However, she advertises the pre-road-trip-state of affairs in a tone of voice very far from a venerable homage to Billy and Captain America. She can be said to venerate the road, but it is a road that changes with the eye of its beholder, and in Lopez's view nothing is too sacred to be made fun of—including herself and her highway project. *She* is the director of this adventure. Her "statement of purpose" is well worth quoting at length:

> Magdalena and I are gonna cross America on two motorcycles. We're gonna be so fucking cool, mirrors and windows will break when we pass by. We'll have our own hardcore theme music that makes our heads bend back and bite the sky, and women wearing pink foam curlers in passing RVs will desire us and we'll slowly turn to them at seventy-five miles an hour and mouth "hello" back. Bugs may stick to my burgundy lipstick, but I'll just spit them back and they'll look all the prettier for it. [. . .] We'll be riding the cheapest motorcycles we can find/stopping every forty-five minutes for gas. Truck stop waitresses will wink

> and jam dollar bills in our happy little beautifully tanned fists, but we'll whisper "no thanks," because we don't need it/we'll live off the fumes of our estrogen. And we'll be spitting our mango pits like fucking bullets if anyone says anything about our huge Latin American breasts. (1–2, slashes in original)

The quote adamantly states that: we are women, and we like other women, thus bringing out explicitly the theme of homosexuality. It also asserts that women on motorcycles are women without the need to pretend to be men and that women have an equal right to the road. It also says that if anyone objects to the fact that we are *women* on the road we will launch a counter-attack, and it will be violent. Of course the tone is self-consciously jocose, but given the gendered legacy of the genre, the underlying assumption of what *must* be de-scripted is extremely serious.

Although there is no direct reference to *Easy Rider* or *Thelma & Louise,* there is, nevertheless, a straightforward rejection of other (genre-important) road fathers:

> Ever since I was a kid, I'd tried to live vicariously through the hocker-in-the-wind adventures of Kerouac, Hunter Thompson and Henry Miller. But I could never finish any of the books. Maybe I just couldn't identify with the fact that they were guys who had women around to make the coffee and wash the skid marks out of their shorts while they complained, called themselves angry young men, and screwed each other with their existential penises. (27)

In conjunction with this "counter attack" on men's and women's traditional roles, I want to recall Brinkley's review of de Beauvoir's *America Day By Day*, and agree with him that de Beauvoir does indeed imbue the road genre with "savvy existentialism," although in a completely different sense than he had in mind. In addition to the

"existential penises," the following certainly supports the claim:

> Erica Jong was there for me in my mother's bookshelf between *Vaginal Politics* and *The Second Sex*, unapologetically running around the world in heat with her panties stretched taut around her ankles. But I never identified with her being tied to relationships like a dog to a tree/like a tongue to its mouth. (27)

It is very interesting to note what can either be a reference to Ellen Frankfort's 1972 book or a mischievous allusion to Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Such a comment woulld, in combination with the unquestioned influence of de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex,* signal a certain ambivalence to feminism, as does the dismissal of Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*. The indirect mention of *Fear of Flying* demonstrates an ambiguous relationship to a potential female predecessor. *Fear of Flying* is often mentioned among the works of "liberating" feminist fiction, and also given as an example of modern picaresque.[23] However, there is no such generic association anywhere in Tomato's account.[24] Lopez has called her book a "road novel thing." She has chosen a genre (which she uses whichever way she pleases) and acknowledges the fact that there is a generic past while simultaneously throwing it out. Road fathers are ousted with suggestive determination. This is an "*All-Girl* kind of road novel thing."

Tomato's choice of role model, then, falls only partly on a French feminist philosopher. Xena, Warrior Princess, is mentioned as another: "Xena must live forever" (163). Others are "wanted"; when Tomato reaches her final destination, San Francisco, she finds herself in the arms of a lover who "was like a queen lesbian going 120 miles an hour down hill without an iota of hesitation about turning on a somewhat straight girl"

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[23] See Butler; Lauret.

[24] Jong could possibly stand for the picaresque novel *Fanny* (1980), but that is less likely, particularly since Lopez makes no specific connection with this older type of travel

(248). Tomato's reflection on the experience brings the burning question of role models and feminism to a highpoint:

> To my relief, the next morning I didn't feel like a member of a lesbian gang. I didn't feel the urge to subscribe to lesbian magazines, wear flannel shirts, wave DOWN WITH PATRIARCHY signs in the air, or watch bad lesbian movies to see myself represented. No. I wanted a Bisexual Female Ejaculating Quaker role model. And where was she dammit? From now on I would demand to be represented. (251)

As shown by the previous quote, Tomato descripts all potential male residues latent in the genre. As one reviewer expressed it: "Lopez isn't your father's road warrior. She's way too passionate to be beatnik cool" (Stovall 17). However, in addition to expelling male road models, she calls for a new one: She demands "to be represented." Her search for a representative after which to model herself sexually and racially is expressed throughout the narrative. Tomato keeps commenting on her own constitution as ethnic and sexual being. Thus, *Flaming Iguanas* will not content itself with merely a regendering of the road persona, but wants a further expansion of the territory of subjectivity to include other races, other ethnicities, and other sexualities than white, North-American heterosexuality. Thus, regendering is only one aspect of this narrative, which demands more and more *room* for the female mobile subject.

To summarize, *Thelma & Louise* takes one step away from the gender of the scripts of *On the Road* and *Easy Rider* by way of rescripting. With *Wild Ways*, the regendering escalates from rescripting to *de-scripting*. This de-scripting consists of metafictional commentary, as well as a postmodernist self-conscious rhetoric. In the first case, an appropriative turn takes place, in the second, a metafictional one. In both these "turns"

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genre.

the *regendering* of the road narrative is crucial. But, to return to the title of this essay—how new is this "new" aesthetic?

New? Aesthetics of the Road

Holland and Huggan claim that "postmodern devices have not so consistently infiltrated the travel book as they have the contemporary novel" (158). It is nevertheless true that there are a number of postmodernist literary devices, which are present in the new aesthetics of the new women's road narratives analyzed here: extreme self-consciousness, self-theorizing, parody, irony, and playfulness. Holland and Huggan also point out that when "postmodernism impinges on travel writing, then, it usually does so obliquely, under the sign of 'meta': metatravel, metahistory, invariably metanarratives, reflecting on their own status as texts—as theoretical texts—on travel" (158). This can, to a certain extent, be said also about women's recent road narratives. However, which travel narratives do Holland and Huggan analyze as postmodern? They analyze "metanarratives" by Italo Calvino, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, Bruce Chatwin, Robert Dessaix, and Paul Theroux (158). None of these narratives is written by a woman, or is about a woman traveler. Holland and Huggan touch in passing upon gender in their analysis of these so-called postmodern itineraries. In their analysis they ask, for example: "Is there a space for the individual traveler within the overarching system?" (159). They answer with Calvino's words by pointing to the "*indeterminate* and *evanescent* movement of subjectivity" (159, my emphasis). Holland and Huggan thus speak of "the traveler" of metanarratives as a gender-neutral entity, and of "travel" in a very general sense. Having moved through the terminology of migrancy and nomadism (174), and Jonathan Raban's and Paul Theroux's "increasing tendencies toward metafictionality" (176), Holland and Huggan conclude that "while the various techniques of metafiction provide scope for

injecting a sense of play into travel narrative, by definition they also detract from the travel book as a more or less "authentic" autobiographical account" (178).

Holland and Huggan insist on rejecting the "new" in travel writing and emphasize its repetitions, despite their identification of various "counter travelers" as including "women travelers, subverting the male traveler's traditional values and privileges; gay male travelers, either seeking liberatory spaces or flouting heterosexual travel codes; and ecological travelers, reacting against the environmental damage they most frequently associate with tourists" (198). Although they observe that these counter-travelers "generally locate themselves in opposition to 'conventional' modes of travel," they interpret this oppositional stance as providing "a further alibi for travel writing while still depending on its traditions" (198). They insist on the repetitiveness of the genre, although they at certain points *hint* at the possibility of something new transpiring in the genre, for instance by mentioning that "counter travel, of one sort or another, has certainly energized travel writing [. . .] in the decades since the war" (198). Despite this, and despite their investigations under the rubrics "Women's travel writing and/as feminist critique," and "Transgression, performativity, and the gay male traveling subject," and their brilliant introduction of the narratives investigated in these sections as interrogations of male clichés, phallic myths, and male tropologies "clearing a space in the process for the subjectivities of women travelers, and for the exploratory journeys and performances of gay men" (110), they dis-connect genre from gender. They make gendered subjectivity secondary to a higher generic order governed by repetition. Thus, they observe that "oppositional narratives cannot escape but being haunted by an array of hoary tropes and clichés (originary, primitivist, exotic, etc.) any more than they can hope to distill 'authentic' encounters from their commodified sources" (198).

In their final words, Holland and Huggan invite the travel book to "reexamine its biases" as the genre, despite its involvement in the processes of commodification, has the capacity to "engage large numbers and several different kinds of readers," and as such merits its existence. In other words, the final statement of the investigation turns into an attempt at "rescuing" the travel book from its death, rather than declaring what in it is new (217).

Holland and Huggan thus end up where they begin, despite all their excellent examples of "new" subjectivities on the road. I would argue that, due to their being caught up in the theories and vocabularies of postmodernism and postmodernity, and to their intensive focus on genre, they fail to *see* the new, which becomes visible only *when gender governs the perspective of the analysis*. Consequently, the narratives analyzed in my article are not "new" by virtue of being metafictional accounts, or postmodern picaresques, but rather, due to the simple—yet complicating—fact that the mobile subjects are women. Thus the genre is vitally and fundamentally *regendered*. As *Flaming Iguanas* shows, the genre calls for additional re-organization—"re-subjectivization." What I have done is to describe two phases of the development of the road genre in terms of its employment of certain narrative devices, here conceptualized as *rescripting* and *descripting*. The regendering of the genre is "something new" and something too significant to be set adrift amongst the strong undercurrents of postmodernism, to be eventually submerged by its greater literary paradigm.

ARTICLE 4

The Women's Road: Regendered Narratives of Mobility

> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Consciousness. Feminist consciousness – understanding that women can and should be whole human beings, not measured in relationship to male supremacy – is, was, and will always be the soul of feminism. In the seventies, Jane O'Reilly called this experience the "click," as in women "clicking–things-into-place-angry." In the nineties, on celluloid, Thelma's moment of consciousness came when she said to Louise, "Ah feel a-wake," and for the next hour these two women had the power of clarity and righteousness – the kind of righteousness that makes you blow up a leering truck driver's eighteen-wheeler or lock a macho policeman in the trunk of his squad car.*
>
> ----*ManifestA: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000)
> Jennifer Baumgarder and Amy Richards

Introduction

In what follows I take a closer look at two books: the short story collection *Drive: Women's True Stories of the Road,* edited by Jennifer Goode (2002), and the road-trip handbook *The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road* by Cameron Tuttle (1999). These recent narratives of mobility, I argue, carry on the "clicking" legacy of the road stories analyzed in my article "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise: New? Aesthetics of the Road," stories that, as I have claimed, illustrate two varieties of *regendering* of the road narrative, the type of narrative of mobility focused in my thesis.

The first variety of regendering, represented by the road movie *Thelma & Louise* (1991), which I termed an "appropriative turn," is

constituted by the act of women taking the place of men in the driver's seat, in the process "re-scripting" the traditional masculinist road text authored and inhabited by men—joggling the binary cultural opposition of "mobile men" and "sessile women."[1] The second variety of regendering

[1] I am (and throughout my thesis have been) bracketing the possibility of men being subject to a similar rescripting process. On the one hand I have chosen not to focus on men on the road, on the other hand, the texts under scrutiny neither center on male road travelers, nor do they include male characters that, at least at a first glance, could be interpreted as re-scripted, that is, displaying both stereotypically masculine and feminine traits. A road narrative that I could consider for analysis is *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, an Australian road movie from 1994 (Elliott). It presents certain interesting traits as far as subjectivity on the road and the regendering of the typical road traveler and narrative go.

In *Priscilla* three drag queens (one trans-sexual, one bi-sexual, and one gay man) hit the road and encounter in the process a mixture of positive and negative reactions, most of which are related to their deviant gender performance. The three characters are perceived as something other than men: part female, part male. Their subject-hybridization (for lack of a better expression), in terms of gender, caused by their drag-identities, crosses binary boundaries in a similar way to the road protagonists of *Thelma & Louise*, but with different and less dramatic results. In fact, the reviews of *Priscilla* lack the hysterics of the reviews of *Thelma & Louise*. The critical opinions vary from the modestly radical: "wonderfully fresh and non-formulaic" ("Lucky Country" 84) to the radically non-radical: it is "a traditional road picture, but with fabulously excessive costumes and hair" (L.R. 16); "a roaringly comic and powerfully affecting roadmovie" ("Movies" 97), and "a motion picture that can best be described as the transvestite equivalent of a Bob Hope/Bing Crosby road epic" (Flick 22).

Pearson's review, which is a noticeable exception, states that "[*Priscilla*] is, in its purest form, an updating of and expansion upon a uniquely American institution, the 'road' movie." He adds though that the film is a "futuristic fantasy." He does not believe the three drag queens would "actually survive among redneck macho outbackers in any time soon to come, but the makers of the film can and do for our benefit" (Pearson Jr. 61-62). Referring to how the protagonists overcome the sometimes aggressive homophobia they encounter, and to their performance of "*I will survive* [for] an appreciative Aborigine audience," Pearson claims, "the movie manages to transcend genre and become an experience that is both liberated […] and liberating" (62).

In general, though, the disturbing elements of *Priscilla* have somehow been neutralized, or neutered, as it were, by the critics. They have categorized the film as just another roadmovie without any successful regendering impact. *Priscilla* is reviewed in lullaby-terms by media commentators soothing themselves into the safe position of situating *Priscilla* as a fantasy, an unrealistic future phenomenon. Judging by its critical reception, *Priscilla* stands out as a conciliatory comedy whereas *Thelma & Louise* appears as a seditious, inflammatory speech. Three homo- and bi-sexual male drag queens obviously cause less upset than two heterosexual middle-class women. The main reason for this, I would claim, is the positioning of *Priscilla* as a fantasy rather than a realistic representation. The reception of *Thelma & Louise* obviously found the movie realistic and therefore threatening.

We recall, however, that *Thelma & Louise* was accused of being non-feminist from the perspective of viewing the movie as non-realistically portraying women's behavior. But, the drag queens do not seem to be taken very seriously at all. Graham

I called a "metafictional turn." This turn was represented by selected narratives from the short-story collection *Wild Ways: New Stories of Women on the Road* (1998), edited by Margo Daly and Jill Dawson, and the novel *Flaming Iguanas: An All-Girl Road Novel Thing* (1997) by Erika Lopez. In these stories re-scripting was taken a step further than in *Thelma & Louise*: road fathers like Kerouac/Sal Paradise and Cassady/Dean Moriarty were explicitly rejected in favor of road mothers like Thelma and Louise, whose importance for women's narratives of mobility became particularly visible. Moreover, men were not fought for access to the road, because this battle was apparently already considered won. Rather, women were able to focus on their own development and to do so in relation to other women rather than to or against men. I argued that, by way of meta-fictional commentary and postmodernist self-conscious rhetoric, these narratives "de-scripted" previous masculinist road texts, that is, they ousted patriarchal forerunners and paved the way for women's self-representation on the road and for future generations of regendered narratives of mobility, such as the ones that I will deal with in this article.

By "women's self-representation" I mean the process by which female subjects "produce themselves as women within particular discursive contexts" (S. Robinson 11). This process, as Sally Robinson points out, is not always linear or stable, but rather "proceeds by a double movement: simultaneously *against* normative constructions of Woman that are continually produced by hegemonic discourses and social practices, and *toward* new forms of representation that disrupt those normative constructions" (11). The women's narratives of mobility analyzed in Article 3 of my thesis and the ones that are under scrutiny

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Huggan's treatment of the film in "Exoticism, Ethnicity, and the Multicultural Fallacy" supports this view. Huggan writes that the opportunity the film has to spoof "white-male supremacist myths" has not been seized and dealt with seriously. The myths "are merely estranged by being dressed in gaudy drag performer's clothes. [. . .]. Eventually, as in drag performance, the film reasserts male camaraderie, protecting phallic values that [. . .] remain intact" (94).

here are all characterized by what I have proposed as a *new aesthetic of the road*. These narratives thus contribute the type of new forms of representation that Robinson refers to, representations that disrupt normative constructions of Woman and of the road as a masculine territory. They constitute productive fictional disruptions that consequently bring us new feminist representations of women that I have termed new female mobile subjects.

As my thesis introduction and Article 3, "The Daughters of Thelma and Louise," hopefully have demonstrated, and what I have wanted to emphasize by opening the present article with the epigraph from the book on Third Wave feminism, *ManifestA* (Baumgardner and Richards), the road movie *Thelma & Louise* has become a compelling symbol for feminism and a powerful model for women's self-representation—an icon of resistance against sexism.[2] The movie has elicited a lot of excited responses—what journalist Jon Katz has referred to as "*Thelma and Louise* discourse". Barbara Miller argues that this Thelma and Louise discourse "played and continues to play an important role in the *political mobilization* of women" (205, my emphasis). I align myself with this argument and want to add a reason why it plays such a role. I find that it is highly relevant that *Thelma & Louise* was a movie about women entering the highway, rather than a film about women marching into Wall Street. Although either scenario could serve to illustrate women's appropriation of male-dominated territory, a narrative of mobility gives signals of double mobilization. The consequence of putting two women at the wheel, as I see it, was the beginning of a radical regendering of the traditionally masculinist (road)travel paradigm—whether this was an intended result

[2] Baumgardner and Richards also include the other icon of feminist resistance that I brought up in my thesis introduction namely Anita Hill's battle against the sexual harassment by Clarence Thomas. The frequent referring to these two media events by feminists shows how vital they have indeed been to the raising of feminist consciousness (20).

or a manuscript by-product. Either way, I claim that the disturbance of the gendered polarization of mobility was an essential factor in making the movie so influential, stirring, and controversial, and so important to feminism. Such a disturbance jerks a very fundamental leg of sexism, of patriarchal stability and permanence.

Patriarchal stability rests on (among other things) a long history of gendered notions of mobility and automobility that are founded on the binary opposition of masculine activity/feminine passivity. This binarism lingers in contemporary Euro-American culture, setting up norms for feminine and masculine behavior. Harsher before the 1960s than they are now, these norms influence the view of, for example, women moving and traveling alone or possessing a vehicle, and restrained them from obtaining the technical competence needed to purchase and maintain a car. It is no longer as controversial as it used to be that a woman drives, or does mechanical work, albeit the areas of activity involving the car are still male-dominated realms in which stereotypical sexist thinking about women's driving and relation to the car flourish and continually need to be dealt with.[3]

One of Second Wave feminism's most important demands was that all women should have the right to control their own bodies, for example, in terms of choice when it comes to terminating pregnancy or with whom and when to have or not to have sex. The call for women's physical mobilization is an extension of this demand, a demand that I now see Third Wave feminism, which I introduce in the next section, take for granted. The physical mobilization of the female body—including the possibility to walk away, have sex, perform sports, exercise or travel—and the acquisition of, for example, mechanical skills to go with her

[3] For studies of gender and automobility see, for example, Merritt Polk's *Gendered Mobility* (1998) that offers a survey of contemporary conditions, and Virginia Scharff's *Taking the Wheel* (1991) that presents a historical background of the present state of affairs, starting in the early twentieth century.

automobilization, are critical to the feminist projects of liberating women (socially, financially, sexually, etc.).

Following the section on Third Wave feminism, I show how the regendering, which I claim has already been accomplished by narratives like *Thelma & Louise* and Erika Lopez's *Flaming Iguanas*, is figured in the books *Drive* and *Bad Girl's Guide.* These narratives have not only embraced the feat of Thelma and Louise and their "daughters" as described in Article 3, but have also moved forward, incorporating in their treatment of women's narratives of mobility the kind of feminist consciousness that can be placed under the heading of Third Wave feminism. I now briefly present this kind of feminism before delving into the narratives themselves.

Third Wave Feminism

The two books analyzed in this article are written (mostly) by women who could be termed Third-Wave feminists. Third-Wave feminists, according to Baumgardner and Richards in *ManifestA*, are young women born in the mid-1960s or later, "reared in the wake of the women's liberation movement of the seventies" (15). Many of these young women say "I am not a feminist," despite the fact that they are leading highly "feminist" and "revolutionary lives" (48). They have inherited and now take for granted the rights that First and Second Wave feminists fought for, such as the vote, reproductive freedom, and job equality:

> Feminism arrived in a different way in the lives of the women of this generation; we never knew a time before "girls can do anything boys can!" The fruits of this kind of confidence are enjoyed by almost every American girl or woman alive, a radical change from the suffragettes and bluestockings of the late nineteenth century, and from our serious sisters of the sixties and seventies. […] For anyone

> born after the early 1960s, the presence of feminism in our lives is taken for granted. (17-18)

This nevertheless poses a problem, argue Baumgardner and Richards; regarding feminism as an all too personal agenda, women risk losing an important empowering force in their lives, and the women's movements lose power and members. They write:

> For our generation, feminism is like fluoride. We scarcely notice that we have it. […] The only problem is that, while on a personal level feminism is everywhere, like fluoride, on a political level the movement is more like nitrogen: ubiquitous and inert. (18)

The disconnection between the personal and the political is regretful, according to Baumgardner and Richards. Contemporary society is still not gender equal, and it is not possible to remedy this situation merely by working on an individual level. There is a need for collective organization against the injustices based on gender discrimination that occur on a daily basis. Baumgardner and Richards illustrate this by offering a number of examples of discrimination taken from "Ask Amy," Richards's on-line advice column. Every day the column receives letters about unjust treatment on the grounds of gender: a girl cannot join her wrestling team; a female cashier at Petsmart does not get promoted because management does not think women should be assistant managers, a binational lesbian couple cannot marry (18). These women know they are being treated unfairly, say Baumgardner and Richards, but they are unaware of the movement that "has changed and will continue to change marital law, wrestling, or the Petsmart status quo" (18). It is important, they write, to make clear that Third Wave feminism builds on the work of the Second Wave. The self-assertive behavior of young women today actually contributes to a "historic narrative" of women's struggle. Baumgardner and Richards want to improve the awareness of

the young generation of women that they "were born into a feminist history" (17). They thus decided to write a "Third Wave feminist manifesta" (18). With *ManifestA*, Baumgardner and Richards want to alert people to "the power of everyday feminism right in front of our noses" (48).

In this article I want to alert the reader to the kinds of feminism inherent in regendered narratives of mobility. The narratives that I analyze here seem deeply entangled in Third-Wave feminist movements. They share the typical Third-Wave feminist attitude of taking their rights, their mobility, for granted. Another revealing sign is their exclusion of the use of the F-word, as in Feminism. They display feminism "right in front of our noses," a feminism that may go unnoticed or unvalued unless decoded in terms of its particular characteristics as a movement which acts as if feminism is like Fluoride—invisibly everywhere—yet deeply indebted to the Second Wave.

"Mapping Myself as I Go"—*Drive: Women's True Stories from the Open Road*

> I took out the jack, a mysterious implement needing a man's abilities. I dropped it back into the car—another generation of women might be able to change tires
>
> ----*Long Division* (1972)
> Anne Roiphe

> [I]t was my first car so I loved and pampered it. I replaced every knob and handle on its dashboard and doors, bathed it in Armor All twice a month and even replaced its engine—not once, but twice—after it seized due to oil and radiator leaks.
>
> ----"Cruising in my Caddy" (2002)
> Kari J. Bodnarchuk

"Like the Great American road trip itself, *Drive* is full of colorful characters with unexpected tales that inspire, entertain, heal, and fuel the seductive power of wanderlust," writes Cameron Tuttle about this

anthology edited by Jennifer Goode. It is a collection of twenty-one short stories of women hitting the roads of the U.S. or Canada. Finally—as the back cover announces—after having only learnt of the experiences of male writers of the road from Jack Kerouac to Charles Kuralt, "we hear from the women."

The back-cover endorsement by Holly Morris states that by putting the "pedal to the metal" these women "show that the road is often a map to the soul." This can be associated with what has been put forward throughout my thesis, namely that hitting the road is associated with identity building. After regendering, the number of identities available to women on the road has increased. Regendering has made it possible for women to cross and combine gendered identity characteristics in a way that was not achievable when women were still mainly allotted the role of, for example, the damsel in distress. Rather than assuming such ready-made roles, the women of *Drive* shape their identity in conjunction with the road trip, the reasons for which in this collection are many—testing a new car, mourning a lost love, finding new relations, re-acquainting oneself with friends or relatives, or coming to terms with life. The road trip contributes to finding one's subject position, or rather, position*s* in relation to self, world, and other. In the essay "Mapping Home" Deborah Gitlitz phrases this kind of shaping of subjectivity as a relaxing of the "anxious grip on the self I have been, I am freer to unfurl in unexplored directions, mapping myself as I go" (Gitlitz 205). The mapping, or self-representing of the women/travelers/authors of *Drive* adheres to a regendered road script, that is, a new aesthetic of the road. This can be observed, for example, in the planning of a road trip, which usually sets up in the traveler an anticipation of some kind of subjectivity-shaping activity. To repeat what I said above: because the road narratives of the late 1990s and early 2000s seem to have become both re-scripted and de-scripted, the role models included in this activity are different than they

were in the era of *Easy Rider* (1969) or *On the Road* (1957); the range of available subject positions is extended, and a different outcome of the narrative can be projected. Women on the road are no longer regarded as damsels in distress or sexual objects on the receiving end of sexual attention. They are female mobile subjects with the agency to construct their identity or situation, controlling in the process their own sexuality. Thus, in the short story "Messieurs Monsters Hit the Road," Alexandria Madero, one of the contributors to the volume, looking forward to her road trip, articulates her road script as follows:

> I will be a pioneer and do the things I read about in those biographies. I will strike out on my own and learn to paint like Georgia O' Keefe. I will read brave, original poetry at open-mike nights around the country like Carolyn Kizer. I will wear rings on every finger like Frida Kahlo and I will learn to be caustic like Dorothy Parker. I fantasize that I will have a stream of sexual exploits, real bodice ripping, tortured affairs. I will fuck women, I will fuck men; I'll even look at pets differently. (XX)

Madero has chosen four female artists, the American painter O'Keeffe (1887—1986), the Mexican painter Kahlo (1907—1954), the American poet Kizer (1925—), and the American critic and writer Parker (1893—1967). O'Keeffe, Kahlo, Kizer, and Parker are all strong women who have "struck out on their own" as Madero wants to do, and increasingly serve as icons of female empowerment. Kizer is perhaps not as internationally renowned as the other three, despite the fact that she won a Pulitzer Prize in 1985. But she has "sharply and gracefully challenged the patriarchal poetry establishment," writes Edwin Weihe, clearing the path for "several generations of confident women, these often amazing poetic voices. Carolyn Kizer, they will tell you, polished the stones for them to walk on" (n. pag.).

None of the four has any explicit connection to road trips, perhaps apart from O'Keeffe who traveled rather extensively after moving from New York to New Mexico. All four are women who were not afraid to be shocking and all four are female pioneers. Madero does not invoke male road models like Kerouac or Hunter Thompson, nor does she call up historically acclaimed male pioneers like Daniel Boone or Lewis and Clarke to accompany her identity-formulation. The ones she does use, O'Keeffe, Kahlo, Kizer, and Parker, have feminist role-model value, and the summoning of their presence emphasizes the re-scripting venture of a new narrative of mobility such as Madero's and the other stories of *Drive*. The outcome of women's attempted mobility is no longer that of death, as in *Thelma & Louise*, or Henry James's *Daisy Miller*, but the strengthening of female identity. There is also sexual gratification for the central female figure rather than exploitation of the woman on the margin by the male hero, as in Kerouac's *On the Road*. There may be experimentation, sex with men, and sex with women, maybe even with pets. However jestingly spoken, there is a striving towards disruptions of normative constructions of Woman, the road, and of sexuality.

There are, however, stories that stick out from the collection by leaning on and taking into consideration the old heavily masculine-gendered road tradition in a different, less defiant or flippant way. These stories indicate that there is a certain generational difference among the twenty-one narratives of *Drive*. This generational difference I find affirmative of the regendering that has taken place over time, rather than contradicting it. It confirms the Third-Wave feminist characteristic of re-scripted and de-scripted narratives of mobility, and indicates the importance of the women's movement for the emergence of the female mobile subject. I will therefore account for a few of these stories and their generational differences in more detail. First, however, I want to insert a few words on homosexual identity in the narratives of *Drive*.

Queer women have an undisputed place in *Drive*. All the narratives analyzed in my thesis so far have featured heterosexual protagonists apart from Lopez's *Flaming Iguanas*. In *Flaming Iguanas*, the leading woman Tomato discovers her lesbian identity at the end of the road in San Francisco. Sexual preference is, however, not something to be sought in *Drive*. Female sexuality is accepted and sexual identities generally taken for granted, whether they be homo- or heterosexual. Most of the gay protagonists, for example the two lovers who live together in a brown van in Gitlitz' "Mapping Home," or Moe Bowstern, who is going to work on a fishing boat in Kodiak in her story "The Grapevine Passport." They do not question or wonder over their own gay identity. Nor does the world they travel through. On the contrary: after Deborah Gitlitz has left Olympia Washington on a road trip with her partner Val, she feels that no one recognizes her: "They don't see the things I thought were obvious: [. . .] that I'm queer; that I'm a grown woman, and inclined to friendliness" (197). The reader is not offered a story in which being gay is problematic or derided. Instead, what are offered are glimpses of cultural elements that come as parts of certain subjectivities, motorcycle riding for example. The reader is thus given a peek at queer motorcycle culture, which in the last ten years has become an accompanying feature of lesbian identity.

It should be added here that motorcycle culture and sexual identity is a quite complicated field, which I do not have the space to explore fully in this essay. The following excerpt from a 1996 article by a very upset Harvard undergraduate, Alicia Moretti, is very telling:

> Motorcycle culture has its roots in outlaw culture, yet it currently denies the legitimacy of any educated, non-heterosexual, non-white, or non-male rider. It has become a restrictive and elitist clique—as exclusive and oppressive as the dominant culture which the original rebels sought to escape. In non-traditional biker culture—the Dykes on Bikes

> community—I am assumed to be an aggressive and lesbian rider. However, in old-style biker bars, I'm assumed to be a passive passenger (the technical term is "riding bitch"). I am assumed to be heterosexual and horny, stupid and submissive. (n. pag.)

If the car is more or less won (or in the process of being conquered), the motorcycle seems to pose a new, or rather the same old, identity challenge, a challenge that, tragically enough, can be seen articulated on (men's) bumper stickers even today: "no fuck—no ride." The appropriation of the motorcycle, by women, (non-white and straight in particular, according to Moretti) seems to lag far behind their conquest of the car.

Nevertheless, there has been a dramatic increase in women bikers. Amy Aronson, in her 1999 article "A Vroom of One's Own" featured in the magazine *Working Woman,* notes that "today 1 out of 11 American motorcycle owners is a woman compared with 1 out of 100 in 1960" (18). That is approximately a thousand-percent increase. Although women still constitute a minority of all riders, their increase in number and presence—regardless of race and sexual affiliation—will eventually modify the masculinist domination of motorcycle culture, and change the motorcycle scene the way it is now described by Moretti.

Drive does not, however, reveal any of the lesbian aggressiveness Moretti talks of. Then again, it does hint at the straight biker community's problem with women bikers. In Anne Stone's story "Ride to Live" Anne, who is not presented as gay, is sneered at by one of the women riding behind a man in a group ride, presumably for deviating from the heterosexual pattern of the group. But gay biker culture is not in any way accentuated in *Drive*. Being a female on the road is the number-one characteristic that all the essays emphasize, over and above sexual affiliation.

I now return to the generational differences in the collection. The reason why the stories I analyze below are given relatively much space in this article is that they so clearly illustrate the difference between the masculinist and the regendered narratives of mobility; they show women's shifting roles in the process of regendering over time, from woman as housebound, as passenger, to driver appropriating the car, to independent owner and mechanically skilled operator of the car. They support the claim that women who could be called Third Wave feminists produce thoroughly regendered narratives of mobility.

Thus, I here examine in more detail Stone's "Ride to Live," Janet Mason's "Tequila Sunrise," Alice Evans' "Good for the Long Haul," and Sharon B. Young's "Driven." They all show their generational belonging by their manner of referring to men, motorcycles, and cars, and the way they position their female subjects in relation to men who, with few exceptions, are posited as antagonistic or dominant, even dangerous, forces.

The aforementioned Anne Stone tells the story of how she decided to buy her own Harley and learn to ride herself when the male rider whom she dated suddenly became very selective in taking her out for rides. Stone's view is colored by male-female polarizations and antagonisms: "Riding is still a man's world, where women sit behind their men, protected from more than the elements" (247). She reminds the reader of the potential vulnerability of a traveling female which matches the masculinist road script assigning women roles as victims or objects who need to look out for and protect themselves from potential threats, some of which come from men. When she is on the road her "manners are impeccable […] I don't ever forget that I am a woman traveling alone no matter how much fun I am having, no matter how tired I feel, no matter who approaches me" (248). She does not display any mechanical self-confidence, submitting partially to the damsel-in-distress paradigm; when

the shift lever of her bike stops working as she gets off a freeway outside of Portland, Maine, and she has "no clue how to fix it"; a man, (a fellow-Harley-Davidson owner) repairs it for her. He "rescues her." Stone also refers to motorcycle culture in a way which emphasizes its masculinist biases;

> For a man to drop his bike is a mortal wound; he never lives it down. […] But women are *expected* to drop their bikes. I just heard that a local riding chapter instituted a new policy that all Sportsters (mostly women drive Sportsters) must be parked across the street from the annual bike show in case a woman drops her bike (this to avoid the domino effect). (251)

Although women are now "allowed" in biker culture as riders, their status is still not on a par with that of biker-men. What makes Stone's story stand out as generationally different is the way she points out these male-female imbalances or instances of sexism. In a story by a woman from the younger generation, the man would not occupy such a central role, if any role at all. The new generation of mobile women (as represented in the collection *Drive*) usually refrains from even referring to these gender differences.

The theme of the vulnerability of the traveling female is rehearsed in Janet Mason's story. Janet and her high-school girlfriends are in no way traditionally "good" girls. They drink and smoke heavily, have sex, take drugs and play hooky from school. But their situation on the road is very much portrayed as susceptible to male abuse in relation to men's mobility—older men have potentially dangerous cars, alcohol, and dope with which they move around in the public realm, and women/girls, if partaking of this, are expected to reciprocate with their looks and bodies: "Kim and Jennifer were beautiful, so everything was free" (66). Reflecting on the memory of her and her friends' hitch-hiking adventure Mason states: "I was rebellious, but I was not a female James Dean. There was

nothing invulnerable about me. Teenage girls who drink are walking targets" (77).

Another slant to the "old" generation mobile woman is given by Alice Evans whose story "Good for the Long Haul" in parts also represents the old-fashioned view of women's place in regards to mobility and men. In 1975, she zooms into a hippie camp in Oregon on the back of her sister's ex-husband Bill's BMW motorcycle in the hope of seeing a friend of Bill's. In her description of Bill's attitude towards her we may again note the stereotypical view of woman as the female passenger who is transported (rather than moving, driving or riding herself) and needs to be rescued, preferably by marriage: "To Bill, I was a damsel in distress, and he the white knight, his BMW a silver charger on which he would carry me away to adventure and freedom and perhaps romance" (216 *sic*). And she does find romance. She starts dating Bill's friend Jon, and they get married. Unlike many marriages of Second Wave feminist fiction such as Marilyn French's *The Women's Room* (1977) or Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks* (1976), their marital union is a rather happy alliance. Nevertheless, it contains an element of subordination if read from the point of view of women's car use and taking of the wheel as a symbol for being in charge of her life and destiny. Alice codes her feelings of powerlessness as a lack of control of their car. She dreams of the clutch of the car going out, and in her dreams she is "never driving. It was always someone else. Sometimes a man I couldn't see. Sometimes Jon. I had surrendered the wheel" (218). She wonders whether her dreams have something to do with the fact that her husband seems to think that he is a race car driver, "driving right on the edge of his ability to control the wheel. And I, I was just hanging out in the passenger seat, in full surrender, seeing what would happen next" (219). First after a couple of years does she start driving the car herself. And still later she "takes back the wheel" of her car, and her husband puts the car in her name, buying himself "a small, red truck" (226). The story

ends with Alice finally selling the car that has been, as she says, "the car of my youth, my chariot and transport of my inner self" (229). She and Jon "with a dog to carry and a child on the way" are looking for a "car good for the long haul, a car with an extra gear" (229). Evans's story is one that combines matrimony and a heterosexual family life with the road trip. As the quotes reveal, her narrative is not a rebellious revolutionary tale announcing her independence in relation to men or normative constructions of Woman. She nevertheless takes the wheel eventually but the male/female hierarchy in relation to driving and handling the car (read as a symbol of control and power) remains indubitable.

A similar relationship of women to men and cars is articulated by Sharon B. Young who in her story "Driven" laments the fact that she, at fifteen, was refused indulgence of her longing for a driver's license, a longing that "became acute when [her] dad traded in the old Dodge for a fire-engine-red Ford Mustang" (290). She and her brother both "drooled at the prospect of driving it" (290), but, she complains, my "brother's desire to drive a sporty car was accepted as a natural, male sort of thing. Mine was generally dismissed" (290).

She eventually learns how to drive with the help of a driver's education class. But she still does not get to drive the Mustang, and her mother only takes it grocery shopping once a week. Her brother is, however, given a used car as a graduation present. Sharon resents her car-less state until she finally gets to take over her brother's car. She is exhilarated: "I drove. And drove. And drove. I was born to drive. I was not born to sew" (290). Her mother had not driven a car since she had married Young's father, and her mother's mother had "remained housebound unless her father or husband, or, later, one of her daughters took her where she needed to go" (292). As these two women grew older, not having had the habit of driving, "the world began to shrink" (294). Young has no wish to repeat her foremothers' immobile destiny or content

herself with a small world. Later in life, her husband asks her to stay home instead of driving around to ease the pain of her mother's death. But, she comments, "the more my husband urged motionlessness upon me, the more I realized that he had no idea what I needed" (294). Three months later she leaves him.

The kind of recognition and mention of gender-differences in Stone's, Mason's, Young's, and Evans' narratives in relation to cars or motorcycles is rare in stories written by the younger women represented in the collection *Drive*. At the most they refer to such norms and rephrase them, as when Sylvie and Tara greet the tow truck coming to pull their car out of the mud: "'Definitely damsels,' […] 'but nix on the distress'" (286). These women show mechanical skills: they crawl resolutely under the car as in Marian Blue's "Changelings," and they take an interest in automotive technical details, like Shelly Whitman Colony does in her short story "In the Land of the Saltbush," who in the process learns that the blowing salt of the desert will corrode the terminals of her car battery "like sprayed acid" (13). Kathryn Morton, with some satisfaction over her "blood on blackened knuckles," replaces the fuel-pump on her old Saab herself. In her story, "Tooling Along," she points out that "fixing the car myself was just another way of side-stepping authorities who everywhere seemed ready to position themselves in my path, telling me what I could and could not do" (25). Kari J. Bodnarchuk supplies the reader with very detailed data on every aspect of her inherited Cadillac and the four cars she has owned over the past thirteen years. She has tuned up her Mazdas and Subarus herself, and has a well-developed vocabulary for road-related tear and wear of the body, such as "Red Knobby Syndrome" (round marks all the way from the back to the knee-joints from the beaded seat cover) and "automobile ass" (Kari's term for a rear end that after seven hours of driving feels "big, thick, and rubbery," Bodnarchuk 240-41).

All of the above quotes show how the car has become a sign of

female empowerment. These automobile-competent writers have de-scripted the norms that act to enforce the prejudice that auto-work and being an authority on cars in general, are masculine occupations. To these women a jack is as familiar as a hygiene pad, rather than "a mysterious implement needing a man's abilities" as it was to the female road-tripper in Anne Roiphe's novel from 1972, *Long Division* (84). As a matter of fact, the two "devices" are conjoined in Tuttle's road guide where the "panty-liner" is listed as one of the indispensable things with an endless number of functions (ponytail band, taping loose wires together, pasting on one's forehead as sunscreen) for a girl to pack for her road trip. This is only one of the many ways binaries are de-scripted in the *Bad Girl's Guide* to which I now will turn.

"A Vroom With a View": *The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road*

> A road trip can be anything you want it to be. […] You can take chances (drive bottomless through the "Show Me State"), express yourself (sing "Respect" in the VIP Lounge at the Ramada Inn in Topeka), drive under the influence of an assumed identity (Thelma, Louise, Towanda), or just be yourself.
>
> ----*The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road* (1999)
> Cameron Tuttle

The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road by Cameron Tuttle is an invitation to women to hit the road. It advertises itself as a handbook that has "everything a woman needs to know about low-budget, high-adventure, safe road tripping," and is the ultimate tool "for any woman searching for the key to fulfillment and lasting happiness—the road trip" (9).

From page one the guide assumes a comical, ironic, but practical attitude to women's automobilization. It lavishes upon its audience feminist gusto and breathtaking rhetorical turns, keeping the reader

amused through all of its 191 pages, some of which are illustrated and most of which are adorned with a golden text band at the bottom of the page giving advice to the reader (presumably female, potentially bad-girl) addressed as "you," as to when it is time to hit the road. This may be, for example "when you're afraid to leave the house without makeup (11-12), "when you floss three times a day" (109-110), or "when you think a French tickler is an exotic flower" (128). Clearly, hitting the road has something to do with liberating the body from excessive control and with furthering feminist consciousness-raising: know the limits of feminine vanity, realize when to stop heeding society's demands on your hygiene, and, for crying out loud, keep track of developments on the erotic commodity market! As the introductory lines proclaim, a man/husband is no longer the ultimate goal and meaning of a woman's life; the "key to fulfillment and lasting happiness" is the road-trip. If you do not have your liberation under control—it is definitely time to mobilize!

In the very first paragraph of the book can be located both the book's road mothers and the typical type of humorous twist Tuttle uses throughout to convey a forceful I-can-do-anything-I want- "bad girl" attitude. But, what is a "bad" girl? The book gives a lot of options. To be bad can be "whatever that means to you—cop a bad attitude, use bad judgment, have a bad hair day, all week long" (9). Of course, Tuttle later adds: "there are degrees of badness and endless ways of being bad. It all depends on you and your idea of good behavior" (50).

A few words on the question of "good" should perhaps be added here, so let me bring up a few commonplace associations as to what a good girl is. The customary behavior for a good girl seems to be to always do the "right" thing, which can mean that she does not engage in criminal activities, run around the house turning it upside down, get herself dirty playing outside, or, most importantly, not make out with boys in the back of cars (or anywhere) and get herself pregnant. A good girl looks clean

and combs her hair. She looks like a girl, quite simply, and preferably wears a skirt and a cute sweater, and uses polite language.[4] She does not dress like a boy, or a tomboy, who wears pants, or shorts, dirty sneakers, and swears and shouts. A bad girl gives lip, argues, or is "bitchy"—a term that contemporary women nevertheless have reclaimed as an empowering epithet, for example, by reading into it the by now popular acronym *B*abe *I*n *T*otal *C*ontrol of *H*erself. Today, bad girls are being resurrected. Today, a bad girl, in a positive, liberated sense, and particularly in the context of women's narratives of mobility, can be interpreted as a woman/girl who is sexually liberated, who enjoys carnal pleasures on her own terms, without accepting condescending labels of herself as loose, promiscuous, or, as most women are referred to in *the* masculinist narrative of mobility, Kerouac's *On the Road,* a whore. After *Thelma & Louise*, the term "bad" has definitely acquired new meaning. Tongue in cheek, I would definitely say that now a *bad* girl could definitely be counted as a *good* feminist. She has claimed the right to her own body, rejecting normative constructions of herself as feeble, passive Other. If being bad means claiming independence and agency, feminism is definitely a "bad" discourse.[5] And the perfect location to practice one's badness seems to be the heretofore-masculine space of the road.

In the very beginning of the handbook there is an allusion to *Thelma & Louise*: "Despite what you've seen in the movies, you don't have to kill a man to go on a road trip" (9). Having thus established the association to her feminist foremothers, Tuttle reconfirms the kind of feminism-with-a-

[4] In *Good Girl Messages* Deborah O'Keefe argues that the stereotyped good girl image dispensed by books such as Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel *Little Women,* Edgar Rice Burroughs' 1912 *Tarzan of the Apes*, and Eleanor H. Porter's 1915 *Polyanna*, has been detrimental to the young women who were girls in the 1950s and earlier. There are of course others, as she points out, who claim the benefit of these girls as role models.

[5] Not to forget the use of the word "bad" in contemporary youth-speak as meaning something extremely good, cool, and attractive, or "awesome" (to use another word which has become part of the vernacular vocabulary expressing appreciation).

vengeance sensibility guiding her rhetoric with the phrase: "Just wanting to kill someone is enough" (9).

The *Thelma & Louise*-allusion is made explicit on page 36, where Tuttle suggests a range of possible "road-personas" to assume. Apart from the "Bonnie without Clyde"-look which is "armed and dangerous," and entails wearing a "black beret, a belted leather coat and a violin case," we are recommended the "Thelma & Louise"-look, "rugged yet feminine" (36). This look-formula ties neatly into the re-scripting argument mentioned above which, as I devised it, entailed not only a reversal of feminine and masculine attributes, but an incorporation of both, thus refusing rigid gender polarization. The Thelma & Louise-attitude, according to Tuttle, is "treat me nice or I'll blow you away" (36). Other suggested personas that, similarly to the "Bonnie without Clyde"-one, must be seen as de-scripted road fathers are "Mad Maxine" with a "menacing and fast"-look, a "motorcycle boots and lots of skintight black leather"-outfit, and a "take no prisoners"-attitude, and the "Sleazy Rider" whose look is "sexy and spent," combines "a little black dress, ripped stockings, and stiletto heels," and flaunts the attitude of "not looking for Mr. Right—I'm looking for Mr. Right Now" (37). There is no doubt about the bad girl position on sexuality in this road-personas gallery; it is assertive all the way: women have sex and it is in order. This is a clear instance of re-scripted binaries; not only men are allowed to be sexually active, scattering their seed, women too disperse and collect, not sperms and eggs, but personal pleasure.

Thelma & Louise are indeed firmly embedded in this book in many ways. There is a section to consult on "how to beat the speeding rap" (100-108) which proposes a few "techniques developed by experienced road trippers with clean driving records" that may actually provide for a better story to tell the cop than pleading "PMS" or "temporary insanity" (104). In this section Tuttle refers directly to the scene where Thelma and Louise are

harassed by a truck driver who makes obscene gestures at them (and whose eighteen-wheeler they proceed to blow up to "teach him a lesson"). Consequently, one of the scenarios to choose for your repertoire is "The Sicko Trucker" who, as you should report to the policeman who has stopped you, has been "making lewd gestures" and had to be sped away from as quickly as possible (104). A bad girl is not too good to pull a few white lies.

According to stereotypically gendered views on automobility, the car poses a lot of problem for women:

> If you're like most women, you've been conditioned to think of a car as a mobile chatroom, or a big purse on wheels, or even a high-speed motorized shopping cart. There's a hole for gas, a hole for the key, a steering wheel, and a stereo. That's all you need to know. (48)

Tuttle's handbook takes on this prejudice and advocates women to become mechanically confident and take control of the technical functions of the car. *The Bad Girl's Guide* steps right into stale traditions and guides the reader to reclaim the automobile. Tuttle suggests you keep certain things in mind when it comes to car care. The thrill of knowing that your car could break down anywhere at any moment aside, it can be useful to "poke around under the hood and kick a few tires every now and then, " because in this way "you can often prevent impending disaster" (40). Mechanical skills are part and parcel of a bad girl's equipment for the road. Consequently, the reader is given, a crash course in "Basic Auto Maintenance" (40), that is, a run-down of the function of the radiator, the fan belt, the battery, the hoses, why and when to check these and the oil, when to change fluids and filters, which, *nota bene*, should be done "more often than you change your hair color" (43). In addition to checking fluids and filling up the car with gas, you should "make an extra set of car keys"—you could always keep it on your belly-ring if nowhere else (45),

check your tire-pressure, and "remove your wedding ring: Why risk losing it—or all those free-drink opportunities—along the way?" (46).[6] If by any chance something does happen along the way, the book contains a section on "common breakdowns and how to deal" (*sic* 80), which contains step-by-step guidance on how to change a flat tire, handle overheating, "Wiper Blade Wimp Out," or "Muffler Malaise" (84).[7]

As Tuttle happily recounts, the road involves meeting new people and finding oneself in unexpected situations. Consequently the book includes a section called "safety school" (93). After *Thelma & Louise* there should be no doubt that a woman on the road may have to, and is allowed to, use violence, and therefore she should "take a mental inventory" of what she has handy that "could work as a weapon in a pinch" (94). "Non-gun Weapons You Already Own" include: a sharp metal nail file ("A quick, firm jab to the windpipe has a breathtaking effect"); a high-heeled shoe ("A stiletto-heel puncture through his foot will stop him in his tracks"); pen or pencil ("He'll hear you say no when you jam the point into his ear canal"); gas ("A well-timed release of toxic fumes is sure to clear a room"), and, finally, your knee ("Do it hard, fast and with no regrets," 94-95). As we can see, the anticipated perpetrator is predominantly a man ("He'll hear you say," etc.). The manner of defense has nothing to do with lady-like behavior: just fart or knee him in the groin; efficiency is all that matters, and violence, if necessary, is perfectly legitimate.

In the safety school we are again reminded of the *Thelma & Louise*-connection: "It's always risky picking up a stranger on the side of the road—and sometimes it's worth it" (97). Just remember to "keep the duct

[6] I would like to thank Dr. Kristi Siegel who noted that Tuttle here makes a "nice twist on all the women traveling alone guides (e.g., *Journeywomen*) that recommend a woman wear a wedding ring (even if she's single) at all times"!

[7] Apart from car mechanics, Tuttle lists the command of cellular technology as a useful skill. A cell phone, she states, may prove invaluable on a long cross-country road trip (96).

tape handy in case you need to hogtie him and throw him in the trunk" (97). Tuttle manages, of course, to keep a hilarious perspective also on the potentially hazardous activity of picking up a hitchhiker. She suggests that the reader always ask herself three questions: "1. Do I value my life? 2. Does he look like a serial killer? 3. Even if he does, would I value my life more with him in it?" (97). If a woman on the road is not certain about the last question she could, she says, "make a quick Brad Pitt stop" (97). This is more or less what Thelma and Louise did in the movie. This is how it is done: "Hit the brakes, make a U-turn, and get a closer look. You can check him out without making any commitment." If guilt or doubts emerge from the woman on the road's conscience, Tuttle prompts her to: "just think of all the times a carload of cat-calling guys slowed to check you out and then peeled off. It's payback time" (97). As can be understood, an old sexist account is here settled. Tuttle reminds the reader of the regular state of affairs of sexism that here is de-scripted, that is, instead of being feared and fought against, it is shamelessly reversed with an emphasis on female sexuality and pleasure. This is, however, done with a humor that speaks of a de-scripting voiding of the aggression and destructive violence potentially involved in such an encounter with representatives of the traditionally oppressive sex. This deflating of masculinism is repeated in the "BIG TIPS" and the glossary included on every second or third page of text. These tips include, for example, a warning never to pick up a hitchhiker near a prison or state correctional facility" regardless of how "horny you're feeling or how sexy he looks"(97).[8] A glossary can, for instance, further explain what a "Brad Pitt stop" really stands for: a noun which signifies "*an emergency pit stop to sneak a closer look at a piece of* **sweet meat,**" which in turn is listed as a noun meaning a "*tasty male morsel*" (97, bold and italics in original).

[8] The sign"Correctional facility. Do not pick up hitchhikers" is a regular feature along American highways.

Compared to *Drive, Bad Girl's Guide* is very heterosexually oriented and much of its humorous energy goes into managing potentially antagonistic encounters with men in a way that seems to aim at rendering these encounters harmless and leaving the women feeling empowered. The jocosely violent rhetoric of hogtying and duct-taping strangers and the admonitions to shameless flirtation and sex continue at every turn of the page. The book reveals a light-hearted defiance of patriarchal institutions in combination with a Third-Wave feminist reappropriation of the traditionally girlish color pink, which starts on the plastic crimson-colored book cover and ends with the inclusion of a bumper sticker of the same color that the reader can peel off and paste on her windscreen to proudly announce that she is a "road sister." A road sister, the glossary explains, is "1. a woman who road trips with style, especially one who has road tripped with you, a fellow bad girl […]. 2. someone with no shame, no fear, and no scruples about bending the law when necessary" (20). This law, in my view, not only includes breaking speed limits, but can also be read as contradicting the norms prescribing stereotypical feminine behavior, specifically norms that are not yet fully de-scripted, or are up for de-scripting, for example, those that say that auto-work and being an authority on cars in general are masculine occupations. The car reclaimed by women, Tuttle asserts, becomes something much more than a "mobile chatroom" or a "purse on wheels," it becomes, namely, "your freedom fighter, your power booster, your ticket to ride. It's a stimulant, an antidepressant, and a *vroom* with a view" (48).

Conclusion: Second and Third Generation Narratives of Mobility

Drive free or Die!
----*The Bad Girl's guide to the Open Road (1999)*
Cameron Tuttle

Compared to the road narratives previously analyzed in my thesis, the emphasis on the mobile woman in the two books scrutinized here seems to be the relational constructing of her own identity, by and between women. Unlike, for example, the women of Toni Morrison's *Paradise* (analyzed in Article 2) who constantly had to battle male power, the women on the road in these narratives pursue their identity projects undisturbed by patriarchal forces.

The first two articles of my thesis discussed the positing of the woman on the road as an always-potential "mother." Article 3 focused on foremothers and daughters, and, I could have claimed already in that article, a growing emphasis on sisterhood, or woman-to-woman interaction free from male interference. Housewife Thelma and waitress Louise were both clearly in need of respite from bad relationships with men. They bonded and found sisterhood on the road. Thelma's husband was perhaps more stifling than Louise's boyfriend Jimmy, who seemed to have a problem with committing and sticking around (being a musician on the road) more than locking her up in the house. Louise's escape from an oppressive man could instead be traced back in time to Texas, where, it can be assumed, she had been subjected to rape, an act of male violence that has a major influence on the turn of events in the movie and can be seen as setting up the acts of retribution on patriarchal authority, and reclaiming the power with which to fight, for example, sexual harassment.[9] Wives and girlfriends turn into women, and as the "buddy-

[9] Harvey Keitel's character, the police officer, refers to the rape in Texas as a motive for Louise to shoot Harlan, the man who attempts to rape Thelma. The rape supposedly stirs up bad memories in Louise. Shooting Harlan both prevents Thelma from having to go through what Louise has suffered and becomes an act of revenge on abusive men on behalf of Louise herself as well as of all women. "That is not a way to treat a lady," Louise says at one point in the scenes of the rape. Because of the rape Louise refuses to go through Texas, although taking this route would have been a faster escape.

theme" unfurls, they grow closer, into sisters.

In the *Bad Girl's Guide* girls on the road are also referred to as road sisters. In both Tuttle's guide and in Lopez's *All-Girl Road Novel* the epithet "girl" figures frequently. We have moved from mothers, to daughters, to sisters, and to girls. The difference between women and girls is obviously one of age, possibly also of maturity. The distinction between woman and girl is however not always very clear. For women talking about and among themselves, like Tuttle in her road guide, and Baumgardner and Richards in *ManifestA*, the difference between girls and women can be slight, great, or plainly ignored. Teasing out the definitions of feminism and women's liberation and their varying values, Baumgardner and Richards also engage with the term girl:

> Girl, bitch, slut, *and* cunt – *all of which are titles of records and books by feminists of our generation – are no longer scary words we have to keep in the closet, in fear that they will become weapons against us. Calling an adult woman "girl" was once insulting, like calling an adult black man "boy." But now that we can choose and use the word ourselves and not have it forced upon us, "girl" is increasingly rehabilitated as a term of relaxed familiarity, comfy confidence, the female analogue to "guy" – and not a way of belittling adult women. More and more women own* bitch *(and what it means to be released from the "please like me" gene),* cunt *(both the complex and odiferous body part and the wise, bad-ass woman), and* slut *(the girl whose sexuality is owned by no one but herself).* (52, italics in original)

"Woman" and "girl" are consequently used interchangeably, with the addition of new political content to these representations of female human beings. Girl is used to address grown women without the purpose of "belittling" them. Similar to slut and cunt, as Baumgardner and Richards point out in the above quote, girl has been reappropriated and

recoded to signify a woman, an empowered sister, in control of her own sexuality

The subject positions of mother, daughter, sister (and woman and girl then) cover a range of ages, but if they are looked upon in terms of generations where a mother precedes a daughter, we can speak of changes, or succession, over time, and venture some identifying labels with which to identify women's narratives of mobility. The re-scripting narrative of the road mothers *Thelma & Louise* can be regarded as a Second Generation narrative of mobility. *Flaming Iguanas*, *Wild Ways*, *Bad Girl's Guide*, and *Drive* can be counted as belonging to a Third Generation, with the difference that *The Bad Girl's Guide* seems one step farther removed from the second generation, being slightly younger and slightly more convinced of its right to the road, even closer to Third Wave feminism. Sister, as we know, can also denote membership of a feminist fellowship, and recalls the association of women and girls, bad or good, to the women's movement. Sisters can be of many ages and belong to different generations.[10] The labels Second and Third Generation narrative of mobility must therefore be seen as standing for certain characteristic traits of narratives of feminist groups whose ages may vary much more than their respective labels reveal.

In both *Drive* and the *Bad Girl's Guide*, women reclaim the road and take possession of the "vroom with a view." How? Let me here reverse the order in which I have presented the texts, and start by summarizing the strategies proposed in Tuttle's guide. In the section on *The Bad Girl's Guide* I brought up a number of aspects of reclaiming, which I would rather

[10] Generations are of course uneven in their time span and differ from one family, one class, one color to the next, producing very different experiences. Needless to say, the emotional attachment or mental affiliation each individual has to the different Waves of feminism is ultimately not age-determined and diverges and is dissimilar from one individual to the next. Nevertheless, age seems to have a lot to do with what kind of feminist attitude or what kind of knowledge a woman has to and about cars as shown by the narratives analyzed in my thesis.

place under the heading of a regendering which makes use of re-scripting and de-scripting strategies. This regendering entails that:

1) the role models appealed to are female, more specifically the road mothers Thelma and Louise;
2) the masculinist road narrative is ousted, there are no male road models and no respect for the traditional road tradition/ text which is de-scripted;
3) the attributes good and bad are reversed and inter-changed, binaries are re-scripted and masculine feminine characteristics possible to assume across gender boundaries;
4) women's sexuality is celebrated and in the control of woman herself, she is a subject who can look for sex rather than being the sexual object sought after;
5) women have appropriated mechanical skills, another aspect of re-scripting typical automobility-related attributes;
6) issues of violence and safety are dealt with both in a re-scripting and a de-scripting way, women can be violent, and male violence can be deflated and neutralized.

Drive, as I see it, implements the knowledge transferred by the Second Generation narrative of mobility, and demonstrates that the practical skills needed on the road, many of which are taken up in the *Bad Girl's Guide*, have been incorporated into the knowledge base of female road adventurers, as has the Third Generation bad-girl irreverence for stereotypically gendered rules of propriety, one of the consequences being its liberated and at times slightly equivoque vocabulary (automobile-ass; tasty male morsel).

It is significant that the narratives in *Drive* are the first stories that I

have analyzed in my thesis that present themselves as "true." And, as far as we can speak of truthful self-representation, all the stories seem to be autobiographical accounts with protagonists with the same names as their authors. If we accept these narratives as attempts at truthful renderings of reality, this allows for a confirmation of a parallel between the regendering of narratives of mobility and recent changes in women's social practices—women's increased physical and political mobilization—together with present-day feminisms. The regendering of narratives can in this case be seen as the result of a historical process that includes changes in literary representations of the road as well as socio-political developments (such as the results of feminist action).

In a way, the editor of *Drive*, Jennie Goode, gives the reader a summary of such a process of regendering of the narrative of mobility over the last thirty years as she in her introduction tells the reader of her own experiences of the road. She goes back to her own childhood, starting early as an eighteen-month old baby in 1973 to travel in her parents' Dodge Travco motor home. This was done the traditional way: "Dad drove, and Mom navigated" (ix). She recounts her growing up with male road models (Kerouac, Hunter S. Thompson, Least-Heat Moon), her gradual awakening to their shortcomings, the event of *Thelma & Louise*, and the necessity to go beyond it, they "do die in the end" (xii). Goode expresses much of the same wish that I have articulated elsewhere, namely for more room and road for the female mobile subject. Goode writes:

> I imagined that putting women at the center of the road-trip narrative would expand and change it. I wanted a road story with a baby in the back seat; a walk on the wild side that openly acknowledged vulnerability and risk; a good old fashioned female bonding road-trip tale. (xiii)

And, she says, one such story did appear in *Thelma & Louise*. The

way Goode recapitulates the movie and wants to move beyond it certainly emphasizes its eye-opening feminist values, and I therefore quote her at length:

> The first time I saw *Thelma and Louise*, I was completely riveted. […] It portrayed an experience of the road that I could recognize (though taken to extremes I hadn't experienced). I was captivated by the characters' elation and empowerment at shedding propriety, their excitement at trying on new personas, their anger and vulnerability at being a target of harassment and abuse, and the quiet transformation that occurred in the wide open space of the West. But then, Thelma and Louise do die in the end. As an acknowledgment of the odds facing women who challenge a misogynistic culture, it's a realistic close to the story. But I didn't want it to be the only end; I wanted to be able to see and read and imagine other conclusions, other futures for women. I wanted more stories, true stories, that followed many different women on widely diverging roads. […] This book is the result of that curiosity. (xiii-xiv)

Nowhere in her seven-page introduction does Goode use the word feminism, but as the quote clearly shows, she is dealing with many of its facets: challenging misogynist culture, harassment and abuse, consciousness-raising and play with self-representation, and subsequent transformations of awareness, the reclaiming of sexuality. Feminism here is, to use Baumgardner and Richard's expression, "like Fluoride," that is, everywhere.

Goode was born in the early 1970s. She belongs, by definition, to Third Wave feminism, and though her introduction speaks of feminist values and an awareness of history, her omission of feminism confirms the assumption made earlier that Third Wave feminists seldom use the F-

word. Moreover the way she has proceeded beyond road fathers ("looking back at Kerouac as an adult, I could no longer find myself in his version of the road-trip tale" xiii) and road mothers "[I wanted] other futures for women" xiv), to a very individualized road narrative reveals that, indeed, we have now moved well into the realm of regendered narratives of mobility. I might even go so far as to say that Goode tries on, not a post-feminist view, because as I have tried to explain feminism is everywhere, but a feminist view which relinquishes the struggle and has some kind of de-gendered, or even universal, mobile subject in mind. Goode does not articulate any theory of the traveling subject, but stresses how "each of us imbues the road with meaning, layering our own experiences and expectations like blacktop. Each traveler, each writer, experiences and records a different cultural and geographical landscape" (xiv). In this articulation, the feminist approach turns into a very contemporary multicultural perspective:

> The road looks different depending on whether we're female or male, black, brown or white, queer or straight; whether we have a car and money for a motel room, or just a thumb and a backpack; whether we blend in with the people we're passing, or as invisible as "outsiders" just passing through. […] Like all forms of travel, road trips are ultimately about exploration and discovery. They are about opening one's eyes to the surrounding world. (xiv)

But, in my view, the universalistic stance towards the road in the latter part of the quote is not the most interesting one taken by Goode. Goode's collection makes a more important contribution in that it places the female subject at the center of attention. The way the narratives in the collection figure this subject is radically different from the traditional figuration of women in road and travel narratives. My previous articles have related that women have, in basically all forms of travel, traditionally

and historically, been on the margins of the story. The Kerouacian road-trip was, as I framed it in my article "Men and Women on the Move," about male identity building. Making the most extreme argument out of this history, it can be said that men on the road have gazed upon and consumed women as objects and they have consequently assisted in the positioning of the male subject as the traveler, the universal human being creating his life. What Goode does, then, and what Lopez and Tuttle did, is change the gaze, both in terms of who is looking and what or who that person is looking at. Regendering has taken place. The gaze has been reversed. And, it seems, it has been more than reversed. At least in Goode's version, it has become "each" individual's—regardless of gender—tool of vision and exploration. It may sound universal and grand but, I believe, this is an aspect of Third Wave feminists' view of the world—a view that can be multicultural, highly individualistic, collective, and universalistic at one and the same time. There is a high degree of assumed freedom implicit in such a worldview, one in which gender inequality and sexism fade into the background. This puts it at great risk of being accused of relativism and losing sight of the feminist goal of ending sexism and promoting women's liberation and empowerment. But we must not forget that Goode's book is not just any collection of stories, but one which is focused on women's narratives, narratives that (as the book cover announces) "we" specifically have been waiting to hear and see exposed. They are meant to fill an actual void in the literature of the road by showing that there are indeed women on the road, and their experiences are worth recording and reading. The striving for freedom as far as subjectivity in narratives of mobility goes is more than justified, considering the legacy of the past which awards mobility to the already free—predominantly white, middle class, Euro-American males. Benevolently read, Goode's move toward multiculturalist/multi-identification of the traveler nevertheless indicates feminist generosity

while simultaneously claiming the freedom of the road—to choose one's subject positions, to move freely—specifically for women. Her collection does demonstrate that a lot has been accomplished as far as the regendering of the narrative of mobility goes. As the back-cover states: "*Drive* proves that a woman's place is anywhere the road will take her." She is no longer, in Baumgardner and Richard's words, "measured in relation to male supremacy" (11).

Judging by the content and intentions of the two books analyzed in this essay, the "room and road for the female mobile subject" must be said to have come into existence. To paraphrase Marilyn French's famous novel, there is indeed a "woman's road," which can be her own as Virginia Woolf would have it. Such a space provides necessary room for independence and freedom and provides access to the world.

Tuttle's "vroom," possibly a paraphrase on E. M. Forster's novel title *A Room with a View* fulfills a long-standing obstructed yearning for women's access to the world—a world that allows for female mobility. This yearning plays a part in the aforementioned works by Forster and Woolf as a desire obstructed by Victorian morals and patriarchal laws.[11] A woman's vroom could be seen as the long-awaited practical result of the feminist work of First, Second, *and* Third Wave feminisms against such morals and laws that would keep women *off* the road. The *Bad Girl's Guide* ultimately de-scripts masculinist road texts by urging women to take possession of the car and to view it as a liberating and liberated space. The Third generation narratives of mobility published in *Drive* prove that this

[11] In this paragraph I am referring to Marilyn French's *The Women's Room* (1977), E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908), and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929). The novels link together in terms of the mentioned desired but limited access. *The Women's Room* directs the readers' attention to the fact that there are places that women quite simply are not allowed to go. Forster's novel is an early illustration of the spatial and conventional constraints placed on women. Woolf's essay emphasizes the need for a woman to have an income and a space of her own. In this context she also brings up the issue of women's limited access to public places and functions.

view is indeed in circulation.

CONCLUSION

Genres, forwards Tania Modleski in her book *Old Wives' Tales*, are made up of often-told stories used by people in a given culture to make sense of the world. Such stories, she goes on, "mediate between us and 'reality'" (8). Reading and analyzing women-on-the-road narratives has aided me in my understanding of the world, in particular of the place and movement of women within and across it. My thesis investigates such stories by and of women in a loosely defined genre of road narratives.

From my point of view, stories of women on the road stage, question, and re-script crucial gendered paradigms of mobility that traditionally structure society and influence women's socio-cultural positions. In my investigation of these stories I have endeavored to employ a perspective that is in alignment with that of Modleski who writes:

> For me, some of the crucial questions for a politically engaged feminist cultural criticism are how the stories that women tell get legitimated or discredited, and how feminism can help and has helped to change the stories and thereby change the conscious and unconscious fantasies that wed us psychically to particular versions of reality. [. . .] [F]eminism can help grant legitimacy to women's tales, and by circulating them can continue to alter our very experience of reality. (8)

By steeping the discourse of travel and mobility that permeates this thesis in a commitment to feminist politics and the gendering of theoretical discourse, I have tried to do exactly this: contribute to an alternative way of seeing reality.

Thus, in my first article I expose the gender-dependent structure of the Kerouacian road narrative and the exclusionary effects of traditional travel tales that situated women on the margin of the narrative. I conclude that authors like Atkinson and Robbins depict a somewhat bleak picture of women's mobility, which prescribes getting *off* the road is better than staying on it. Robbins' protagonist fares better than Atkinson's because she is a highly fictional character with enormous thumbs, that is, weapons with which to fight rapists and other violators abiding the sexist law of the road. This law allows women in public space to be regarded as objects on display for male consumption. Insisting on reading Atkinson's and Robbins' narratives from a feminist perspective, I reverse the patriarchal model of the economy of desire and see the women on the road in these stories as movers in their own right, as subjects playing active roles. The male-gendered metaphor of the "traveler" is, in this context, discarded. Consequently, instead of seeing the woman who displays her naked body on stage in Atkinson's novel as a victim, or regarding Robbins' heroine as an exploited poster-girl, I emphasize their agency as *stripper* and *model*, making their own living, leading their own lives, moving around in the world.

In my second article I probe the question of why travel is reserved for men. Why would it be so scandalous for women to wander? The answer is motherhood, or rather potential motherhood. Because, in societies and cultures based on the patriarchal family model, women who depart from the house leave the hearth and the baby cradle and the home loses its trellis, its supportive core. From the grand Judeo-Christian narrative of Adam and Eve and onwards in the Western Tradition, the

female is given the burden and joy (?) of love and procreation and the male the task of passing on the name. How do women's stories tackle such a heavy tradition? James "killed off" his Daisy Miller for running around outside all by herself with a man, Defoe made his protagonist Moll Flanders an improbable and, of course, improper, character. Could Morrison and Robinson keep their characters alive?

I find that Morrison and Robinson have difficulties staging a happy ending. Morrison and Robinson both seem to write their characters into some sort of utopian realm, making their fates hard to envision. I propose the cartographic-sounding terms *materotopia* and *materotopology* to illustrate the complex gendered network of discourses in which women in their narratives are entangled, which limit their movements in a very physical way, and the utopian resolution their writers envision for them. Morrison's and Robinson's protagonists seem to disappear into some feminine, future existence. The two writers' endings of their stories however leave me yearning for the materialization of women in narratives of mobility who can stay alive and visible, stay on the road, and move on, clearly breathing.

As my third article argues, this yearning appears to have been fulfilled. I show that the road movie *Thelma & Louise* has come to stand for a confrontation with the traditional paradigm of mobility, and for a head-on collision between masculinism and feminism. The movie has changed the way women take on mobility without giving in to patriarchal pressure—Thelma and Louise fight back. They *re-script* the narrative, proving that women can be feminine *and* masculine, sympathetic *and* aggressive, etc. They appropriate the road, finally. Yet, in the end, patriarchal pressures appear too great, and they drive off the cliff towards a conclusion which seems very similar to the materotopian ending of Morrison and Robinson's novels. Sisterhood strengthened them, but could not help them survive. "New" stories of women on the road have

surfaced, however, and taken on the Thelma and Louise-legacy of appropriating the road. These stories, Daly and Dawson's collection of short stories and Erika Lopez's novel, *descript* the road narrative, taking women's access to the road for granted, joking meta-fictively about its road fathers, displaying no anxiety about their predecessors. They show indeed that the road can belong to women.

Finally, Goode's short story collection, which is discussed in Article 4, provides texts that to me neatly summarize the whole process of *regendering* that I have seen taking place: from the old male-female polarization with women on the side-lines, to women's taking of the wheel, the 1990s backlash, and the re-emergence of women's movements in new constellations of third wave feminisms. At last, in other words, women drive their own cars and motorcycles and display mechanical skills and technological confidence. Goode's collection of autobiographical, "true," stories demonstrates that not only fictional female travelers can hit the road with some success, which I somewhat disenchanted concluded in my first article, but that also "real" female mobile subjects have appeared and appropriated the road.

Tuttle's road guide, also analyzed in Article 4, further proves the anxiety-absolved attitude of a new generation feminists who seems to have realized that the road and the car are symbolic territories now well underway of being taken possession of by women. Although still controversial in certain camps, in the affluent Western world women's mobility is now far from off-limits. Women are no longer merely passengers, but steer their own destiny and control their own mobility.

In retrospect, I find that investigating women's narratives of mobility has been a way for me to understand the workings of the women's movement. This movement, I have found, is in dire need of physical mobility. Perhaps this is a self-evident fact. Perhaps not. In any case it has not received the attention that it is now beginning to get in the

world of research and media coverage. Let me end this study with a telling tale from Sweden.

Just recently was it discovered that immigrant women who were on long-term sick leave and could not keep up with their Swedish language classes needed to be mobilized—physically mobilized. They were taught how to ride bicycles in order to feel better and to be able to get to and from the places that they needed to go. The experiment was highly successful. The Swedish pilot study has now grown into an EU-project involving several countries. As Martha Nussbaum rightly has pointed out, mobility is one of the rights of a human citizen. The role of my thesis, I believe, is to lend an extra hand to our female citizens in particular.

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