

*Introduction*

## ‘PACIFIC MOBILITY’

Irony, Class, and the Car as Medium



Every age has its own gait, glance and gesture ...  
not only in manners and gestures, but even in the form  
of the face.

—Charles Baudelaire<sup>1</sup>

### **Between ‘Atlantic’ and ‘Pacific’**

When English-American automotive journalist Lesley Hazleton wrote her *Confessions of a Fast Woman* in 1992, her confessions seemed an exact reproduction of almost every trait of the automotive adventure as analyzed in my previous study about *Atlantic Automobility* in the early part of the twentieth century (the first volume of what now has become a trilogy about ‘Automobility’). She describes her conversion into a speed addict (including the historical double entendre of ‘fast’), the subsequent cyborg experience (“It was as though I became the car, or the car became me, and which was which didn’t matter anymore”), the experience of a special form of the ‘Now’ while driving fast (“I seemed to exist beyond time, in the absolute moment”), the experience of the illusion of flight, the comparison of fast driving with dancing, “the direct, physical sexual arousal behind the wheel, of a powerful car at speed,” the spatial roaming experienced as “conquest,” the hooligan-like “terrorizing [of] others” while overtaking on the freeway

giving her an “übermensch delight,” even if it is “inherently fascist,” this all crowned by the experience of “transgression” (a feeling I have called, in my previous study, ‘transcendence’, an experience beyond the self, “being god-like,” in Hazleton’s words).<sup>2</sup> Hazleton’s *Confessions*, as a religious act, seem to confirm many contemporary observers’ idea that, indeed, nothing much has changed in a hundred years, and hence nothing much will change when (if?) hundreds of millions of Asian would-be motorists decide to join the ‘movement’, thus not only fueling a persistent diffusionist myth, but also seemingly confirming a widespread conviction among social scientists that the use of timeless concepts such as ‘fluidity’ is appropriate to characterize ‘modern automobility’. But as everyone who has read my second monograph about the automobility of the immediate post-WWII decades (the second volume of the ‘Automobility trilogy’) can tell, her addictive behavior (her fascination by the “power on demand” afforded by the car) is somewhat anachronistic.<sup>3</sup> Fraught with doubt, her confessions rest upon “the perfect irony that I had discovered the transcendent delights of the internal-combustion engine just as it was nearing the end of its era.” As an explanation, she uses the only major difference from the macho car pioneers of lore: she tells us her life story, how she, as a girl and a young woman, loved “breaking down stereotypes—in being feminine while acting masculine.” As a second difference from a century ago, she has a much broader understanding of mobility, not limited to traditional transport: “For a woman, entering a ‘man’s world’ is certainly a form of travel, of exploring different realms of interest and intellect.” She realizes, indeed, that she is driving in an “anachronism,” that current traffic levels in Manhattan make the car an “ultimate decadence. Owning them is all that matters. Using them is irrelevant.” No wonder, then, that the latter part of her book is dedicated to a test drive in General Motors’ Impact, the “zero emission vehicle [ZEV]” developed to comply with the coming ban on gasoline cars in California, where in 2003 ten percent of car sales will be electric. Reluctantly, she prepares for the “cool, post-modern” era, but not before she decides to take up flying lessons. “It was so easy to imagine in a fast car that I could fly,” she writes, “Why not actually do it?”<sup>4</sup> With this, we are transported directly back to 1907, when British car pioneer T. Chambers predicted that once the combustion-engined car was as reliable as the electric car (which was “too unexcited to be attractive”), “the amateur will turn his attention to balloons and airships, seeking for further difficulties to overcome,” thus avoiding the “boring” electric car.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Californian ZEVs did not come, as we will see in Chapter 2, a decade or so later some social scientists indeed started to talk about ‘the end of the car’. They must have meant ‘the end of the *Atlantic* car’, as at the same time a *Pacific* car had appeared, million-fold, soon overtaking

its Atlantic counterpart. Whereas my previous study (the second volume of the trilogy) could be read as a correction to the ‘Atlantic bias’ of the first volume (especially the first chapter, where the entire first half of the twentieth century was told again, but now from a non-Western perspective), the current third volume reconstructs the provisional end result of an ongoing shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific regions of the world.

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Where, in my earlier studies, ‘Atlantic’ stood for a car culture developed transnationally, during the first half of the twentieth century, in a group of European and North American countries, the use of ‘Pacific’, indeed, is meant to indicate a historical shift, taking place in the second half of the century (but prepared during its first half), toward a culture dominated by car cultures beyond the West, not only in a quantitative sense, but in a qualitative sense as well, in its (sub)cultural traits. In *Atlantic Automobilmism*, I analyzed the two pre-WWII phases of ‘Emergence’ and ‘Persistence’ of what I called the car as ‘adventure machine’, in which the (predominantly masculine) experience of automobilism was produced in a three-pronged way: as high-speed thrill; as a spatial, basically aimless roaming in the countryside; and as the adventure of tinkering, all against a background of aggressive conquest, of both his woman passenger and the colonial ‘Other’. The experience was deeply corporeal, haptic rather than vision-based, foundation for a transcendent, indeed ‘god-like’ feeling. Although car driving was presented, especially in belletristic utterances like car-related *autopoetic* novels, poems and movies, as a highly individualistic affair, the physical reality was one of being part of a ‘swarm’, a moving flow without a proper leader, in everyday traffic.

In my more recent book publication, I studied the transition period of the immediate post-WWII decades, which I called ‘Exuberance’, and which added not only a fifth element to the car adventure (that of the car purchase, or car consumption in general, bringing the *status* of car ownership more to the fore<sup>6</sup>), but also the eagerness to spread the ‘automotive gospel’ across the globe, enabled through its infrastructure, especially road (network) building, crucially supported by the World Bank, IMF and many Western consultants. The current study focuses on the last two periods, ‘Doom’ and ‘Confusion’, terminology derived from a Western perspective but kept on even if we recognize that these phases may have been experienced differently after worldwide automobilism became more ‘Pacific’. Hence I will add a relativizing note to these terms: “Doom, for some?” and “Confusion: Where is the Adventure?”

Even less than in the ‘Atlantic’ study (where Canada, Australia and New Zealand were barely dealt with), this ‘Pacific’ study does not intend to

provide an accurate geographic coverage, excluding certain regions (the Middle East, for instance) or including others (such as Africa, not bordering on the Pacific Ocean, but on another “Afro-Asiatic Mediterranean”), but serves as a moniker to indicate that the rules of the automobilistic game are now increasingly written elsewhere. Europe is as much a part of this “transnational space” as Asia was part of (under the spell of) Atlantic automobilism before WWII. In other words, the world, including its mobility, seems to enter a “Pacific century,” the result of “the ongoing shift in the balance of the global economy toward the South in general and the East in particular,” regions that are “moving beyond their role as factories of the world.” No wonder, then, that a new field of study is currently in the making: Transpacific Studies, a field intent on not only provincializing Europe (as Dipesh Chakrabarty proposed in 2000), “but the United States as well.” Tellingly, it is a field inspired by recent mobility studies, emphasizing “inner-Asian flows and translocal networks,” and it helps us to include “the view from Asia” in our history.<sup>7</sup>

### **Recapitulating the Rise and Decline of the Adventure Machine as an Ironic Tool**

If we see the adventurous character of car driving as the (socio)psychological element of Western automobilism (social because it was based on the nuclear family and was soon to be experienced in a swarm), the (psycho) sociological element can best be characterized as ironic. The ‘ironic car’, shaped in the West before the war, enabled white middle-class motorists (as the historical inventors and developers of the adventure machine) to be close to the Other, but protected by the automotive capsule, as an ironic prosthesis, like its belletristic equivalent functioning as a distancing tool. However, in our previous study we observed, on the basis of similar belletristic sources that we used to re- and deconstruct the adventure machine, that this class-based adventurous automobilism became ‘tamed’. The ironic car became an ‘absent car’: it was always there but never mentioned (‘he came to our house’, ‘she turned to the right’, in both cases: in a car). But at the same time, other hitherto marginalized groups revived the adventure machine, from native Americans, women (such as Lesley Hazleton) and children, to queers and blacks and Mexican Americans. It is this ‘layering’ of mobility, this superposing of a new layer of mobility over the co-existing old, the latter subject to modernization as much as the former, which emerged in the transition period, and which became mainstream in the current period under study. No wonder, then, that during the two last phases we will, for instance, find the ‘flight experience’ reformulated and

rejuvenated time and again: the feeling that one is ‘floating’ over the road, as if one is moving in *womb-like fluids*. The same applies to that other literary technique that seems to be directly produced by the driving experience: the technique of ‘*inversion*’ (often, but erroneously, ascribed to Marcel Proust, because it was also being experienced in nineteenth-century trains), where the outside world seems to move while the inside is fixed, the very *haptic basis of automotive narcissism*.<sup>8</sup> Inversion enabled the motorist to feel like they were the very center of the world, seemingly immobile (the driver vis-à-vis the car, although proprioceptively moving constantly to handle the car) and mobile (the car vis-à-vis the world) at the same time. Transcendental experiences engendered by this sensorial amalgam were themselves special forms of mobility, a transformation (or *transfers*, in the parlance of a journal dedicated to New Mobility Studies) from one state (the world of “direct experiences,” according to a recent study of “transcendental forms”) into another.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, “layers” of experience exist, and the mobility between them is enabled by media: “Transcendence and medium are inseparable and complete each other simultaneously,” so much so, one is inclined to think, that we really need a scholarly study of media traffic (*Verkehrswissenschaft der Medien*). Even more so: according to Edmund Husserl, “the relation to transcendence is afforded only through the *medial structure of experience*.”<sup>10</sup> We will encounter, in the coming chapters, several examples of this transcendental rivalry between cars and media, reality and virtuality. This should not come as a surprise after our previous study, where we observed a gradual shift “beyond adventure,” as we called it, toward the car as possession and status symbol. It seemed as if this shift was enhanced because of the car’s massive spread beyond the West.<sup>11</sup>

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The loss of ‘automotive irony’ through the ‘taming’ of the car fits into a more general trend of post-postmodernism, defined by Nathan Brown (quoting Jeffrey Nealon who coined the term) as “‘intensification and mutation within postmodernism’ correlated to just-in-time production.” Post-postmodernism has been observed first in the realm of high-brow literature production, displaying “an attitude that ‘seeks to temper reason with faith’.”<sup>12</sup> One of these attitudes is the “postironic syndrome,” or postirony in short, defined by Lukas Hoffmann as literature’s “attempt to communicate with the reader instead of presenting her a *passive* entertainment,” an attempt he identified to be present in the non-fiction literature of American writers David Foster Wallace and Dave Eggers, representatives of the so-called New Sincerity movement. They are part of a more general intellectual shift, for instance among consumption and cultural studies scholars who started to cast consumers, readers and audiences as

creative subjects, with sometimes unpredictable appropriation practices, “ultimately ... challeng(ing) the broader instrumental terms in which we think about the boundaries between persons and technological artifacts.”<sup>13</sup> Writing “straightforward realism,” postironist writers “are actively struggling with both postmodernism and irony” (the former often called the “age of irony”), a struggle implicitly directed against ‘universal ironists’ like Richard Rorty, who can be considered the philosophical spokesperson of this version of literary criticism. Rorty claimed that “the opposite of irony is common sense,” and, indeed, ‘straightforward realism’ is belletristic literature’s ‘common sense’. But postironists propose a counterclaim that the opposite of irony is postirony. This needs some explanation.<sup>14</sup>

A historical analysis shows that postirony was split off from “skeptical postmodern irony” when the latter became fully absorbed in late-capitalist culture, and lost, “by becoming mainstream, ... its disturbing, progressive power, and in its omnipresence in contemporary culture’s mainstream became restrictive instead of liberating.” It became, in German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk’s terminology, “cynical reason” (*zynischer Vernunft*). Characterizing modernity as utopia, Sloterdijk concluded that “modern society realized at least one of its utopian plans, namely complete automobilization, the condition that every adult Self propels itself in his self-moving machine. Because modernity cannot conceive of the Self without *his* movement, the I and the car are metaphysically one like soul and body of the same moving unit. The car is the technological double of the fundamentally active transcendental subject.” Whereas the Beat and their fellow postmodernists used irony to rebel against their world, as has been discussed in my previous study, the ironic attitude has now permeated scripts and scenarios for films and TV series, games and popular culture in general. In Alan Wilde’s analysis of modernism and postmodernism, “the defining feature of modernism is its ironic vision of disconnection and disjunction, postmodernism, more radical in its perceptions, derives instead from a vision of randomness, multiplicity, and contingency: in short, a world in need of mending is superseded by one beyond repair.” Whereas religious fundamentalists, especially after 9/11, are ardent anti-ironists, “media-savvy young people” have a greater propensity to irony “the more time one has spent in school, and the more expensive the school,” leading to a split in audiences between those who understand the irony of an utterance (the ‘wolves’) and those who do not (the ‘sheep’), as argued in the same previous study. No wonder that “New York and Hollywood, well populated with Ivy-League-educated scriptwriters, produce a popular culture drenched in irony.” Postmodernism thus has “become little more than a market category.”<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, and ironically, postironic trends are also becoming visible in general culture, for instance in the

loss of irony in the use of emojis in internet communication: “they are meanwhile used as serious messages.”<sup>16</sup>

But the split from irony (as a modernist “excuse for ruthless individualism”) by postironists is not total: theorists spent a lot of energy distinguishing between several forms of irony, trying to prove that postironists still use “aesthetic irony” (as a speech act, like I did in the last sentence of the previous paragraph), but reject the “ideological irony” or “existential irony” that was already observed to permeate society by the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century. Kierkegaard found that irony delivered “subjective freedom,” but he warned that as soon as it becomes mainstream it “restricts humans in their ability for deep and humane feelings.” Artist and art researcher Johannes Hedinger formulated the new ideology as follows: “Many people nowadays wish (again) to live life unfragmented (*ungebrochen*), direct and positive-affirmative (*positiv-bejahend*), seek truths while allowing proximity (*Nähe*) and emotionality [and] accept responsibility. By using the distancing gesture of irony this is seriously not possible.” Postironists realize that they cannot fall back into traditional realism, let alone “seek refuge in quixotic sentimentality,” and instead try to “incorporate modernist aesthetics and postmodern ‘textual self-consciousness’ to change it into something ‘real,’” the latter aimed at “disambiguate(ing)” postironists’ work and thus, as Dave Eggers hoped to achieve, “create postironic ‘believers’ [among his audience, GM] rather than ironic cynics.”<sup>17</sup> Lee Konstantinou, who coined the term “postirony,” distinguished between several historical “cool characters” (the hipster, the punker, the believer, the coolhunter or trendspotter, the occupier) as “characterological types” who represent in their respective behavior “the shift in U.S. literature, politics, and culture from countercultural irony through postmodern irony to contemporary postirony.” His analysis, much broader than only literary, resonates with mine, when I identify such ‘cool characters’ or ‘cold personae’ already before WWII in the West, who reported on their automotive adventures in a tongue-in-cheek style. From this perspective the pre-war car, as a distancing, ‘ironic tool’, can be seen as the enabler, literally (through its diffusion), of the spread of (existential) irony during the second half of the twentieth century, and beyond.<sup>18</sup> But instead of trying to distinguish between different forms of irony, in an attempt to overcome its relativistic, individualistic effects without giving up its comforting distancing effect, it is perhaps better to agree with Konstantinou’s conclusion (he refers to the irony of the Occupy movement), that “it is not whether *we* live lives of irony but rather where *we* target *our* irony.” Thus, he aligns with Hardt and Negri’s analysis of the “white overalls” movement in Italian cities in the 1990s, which organized raves with “mountains of sound equipment and a caravan of trucks for huge, carnevalesque dance parties . . . , a spectacle

of postmodern irony for political activists.” They observed similar “ironic and symbolic innovations” during the Genoa G-8 protests in the summer of 2001.<sup>19</sup>

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Applied to the car, the discourse on (post)irony seems to be the result of a crisis within the middle class or even its intellectual avant-garde. In John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s perhaps somewhat blunt assessment, “pop psychology tells us that Americans cherish the car as a status symbol or sex symbol or symbol of power. That is a middle-class point of view. It suggests that most of us drive only passenger cars or sports cars. But most blue-collar Americans think of their automobiles in economic terms: it is either a work tool, essential to their livelihood, or a form of capital.”<sup>20</sup> In his excellent historical sociology of postmodernism, Michael Featherstone identified “the 1960s generation” as the post-WWII carriers and promoters of postmodern irony. It was the “new petite bourgeoisie,” especially its avant-garde of “new cultural intermediaries,” with its audience of “para-intellectuals,” who from the mid-1970s started “the process of ‘postmodernization’” in an effort “to expand and legitimate its own particular dispositions and lifestyle.”<sup>21</sup> It is this *class-based aspect of the irony discourse* that we will mobilize in the following chapters to help us understand the taming and simultaneous reviving of the car as adventure machine in a new ‘body’, so to speak: as a medialized machine. We will have to explain how this class’s postmodern “de-distanciation” and “sense of communal feeling” worked against the ‘ironic car’ and how its “sense of adventure” included the adventure machine less and less.<sup>22</sup> In order to do so, we will have to reintroduce the class concept in our argumentation, a requirement first acknowledged by Indian scholars studying the emerging new middle class in their country and who saw that, despite Bourdieu’s “study of middleclassness,” “from the 1980s onwards, the ‘Indian middle class’ became almost entirely invisible in academic research, not least because ... class analysis more generally disappeared from the agenda.” There is, among these scholars, a desire to “restore ... agency to class,” after the previous decades in which “class was largely submerged in favor of identity,” and social scientists started to emphasize “issues of lifestyle, personal identity, and normative change” in a society in which “the system of production is not ... any longer the principal locus of identity formation.” This new emphasis was all the more understandable, because the working classes “have shown a decided reluctance to act collectively on behalf of their (presumed) interests.” This is why, for instance, Hardt and Negri undertook a “passage from class to multitude.” In the Indian case this shift was undertaken by Subaltern Studies scholars, whose influence on South Asia studies was never counterbalanced by what the New Left accomplished in



Latin American and Africa studies: establishing “a solid political economy tradition,” a solid base for “nothing short of a complete remapping of the stratification system and its consequences.”<sup>23</sup>

As we will see in the following chapters, there exists a relationship between the increasing ‘invisibilization’ of the working class in the scholarly discourse about mobility and what we have called the ‘absent car’ in the belletristic utterances of the (Western) middle-class avant-garde. For the Global South, this relationship is less pronounced, but it cannot be doubted that the “recent demise of any type of class analytics” has diverted scholars’ attention away from the informal sector. Rina Agarwala, who studied this for the Indian case, distinguished between an informal “petty bourgeoisie” or “micro-entrepreneurs” and an “informal proletariat.” Both groups also play a dominant role in the motorization of the Global South, either in the form of the “getihu” in China or the “bush taxi” drivers in Africa, to name only two examples. One of Agarwala’s colleagues also questioned the usefulness of the term “working class,” as it often “refer(s) to those in permanent wage work, who have commonly been organized by trade unions.”<sup>24</sup>

## **Reconsidering Class: Carnavalesque Mobility and the Postironic Car**

In the history of mobility, the ‘carnavalesque’ seems to occur more frequently the more middle-class mobility became ‘tamed’. This should not surprise us if we realize that Bakhtin’s theory highlights, in film theorist Robert Stam’s words, “the *linguistic* dimension of class struggle.” We will see in the coming chapters that the carnivalesque can push extreme behavior into the mainstream: “it is striking,” Peter Stallybrass and Allon White observed in their study of the carnivalesque, “that the extremes of high and low have a special and often powerful symbolic charge.”<sup>25</sup> Theorizing the carnivalesque can be attributed to Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975), a literary theorist and philosopher in the Soviet Union who, from the 1920s, developed a theory of the novel by analyzing, first, the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky and then, and especially, of the French early-Renaissance Franciscan François Rabelais. In his dissertation, written in 1940 but published only in 1965 (and appearing in English translation as late as 1968), Bakhtin criticized the usual appreciation of Rabelais’ descriptions of quasi-medieval folk fests such as carnival with its “masquerades” (including “the considerable role of games”) as a periodic “safety valve,” and instead showed how in all countries of medieval Europe folk humor created a “second life outside officialdom,” offering “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from

the established order,” a “liberation from all that is utilitarian.” Bakhtin also showed how modernist literary critique of Rabelais’ work missed these traits completely, treating them as vulgar aberrations, whereas his concept of “grotesque realism” argued instead that “the material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego [as these critics would have it, GM], but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable.” Bakhtin’s folk, Michael Holquist explained, “are blasphemous rather than adoring, cunning rather than intelligent; they are coarse, dirty, and rampantly physical, reveling in oceans of strong drink, poods of sausage, and endless coupling of bodies.” The “low’ spectacle of the marketplace” does not offer modern sublime (Victor Hugo saw the grotesque as “a means of contrasting the sublime”), only a form of *bodily trance*. And although by the end of the Middle Ages “the lower genres began to penetrate the higher levels of literature,” and grotesque realism “lost its living tie with folk culture ... having become a literary genre,” and its laughter “was cut down to cold humor, irony, sarcasm,” one cannot deny that the “*interior infinite* of the individual was unknown to the medieval and the Renaissance grotesque [and that this] discovery made by the Romanticists was made possible by their use of the grotesque method [namely through] its power to liberate from dogmatism, completeness, and limitation,” properties especially characteristic of modern bourgeois culture. From the moment that the middle class appeared, the grotesque was seen as belonging to “the alienated world.”<sup>26</sup>

The main participants in these carnivalesque “folk merriments” were “lower- and middle-class clerics, schoolmen, students, and members of corporations,” but Bakhtin’s conclusion that “the medieval culture of folk humor belonged to all the people. ... Nobody could resist it,” has been criticized by later students of the carnivalesque as “naive populism.”<sup>27</sup> For our purpose, however, namely to ‘mobilize’ Bakhtin for further deepening the mobility history of the last decades, his description of “the carnivalesque crowd in the marketplace or in the streets” as “not merely a crowd. It is the people as a whole, but organized *in their own way*, the way of the people,” resonates with our description of the automotive crowd-in-movement as a swarm. “The individual feels that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a member of the people’s mass body.”<sup>28</sup> Obviously, far from claiming that driving swarms of automobilists represent anything subversive, I claim that Bakhtin’s dichotomy between ‘low’ and ‘high’, ‘folk’ and bourgeoisie helps us, in this study, to search for collective actions of motorists against the grain (such as depicted in the *Fast and Furious* movie series, see Chapter 3). Also, some post- and post-postmodern novelists explicitly mobilized Bakhtin’s carnivalesque, as we will see.

According to film student Robert Stam, “key topoi of the carnivalesque (are) the grotesque body, gay relativity, free and familiar contact, banquet imagery, marketplace speech, and the bodily lower stratum.” Bakhtin traced the “liberating explosion of otherness” back to “the Dionysian festivities of the Greeks and the Saturnalia of the Romans,” and through these into the beginning of human history. Stam claimed that Bakhtin’s categories “almost always apply equally to art and to life,” which enables a multi-medial history of mobility to study media interaction and observe intermedial ‘rhyme’. After our extensive discussion of the problem of ‘representation’ in our previous study, we can only quote approvingly Stam’s observation that “artistic texts do not so much ‘call up’ a world as ‘translate’ and ‘re-present’, in a reflexive manner, the languages and discourses of the world.” The attractiveness of novels for our purpose, we argued in that study, is that the writer has to undertake a so-called “intersemiotic translation,” a transfer of meaning from a different sign system (such as ‘body language’, see Chapter 3) into (written) language.<sup>29</sup> Central in Bakhtin’s philosophy is his social, or “dialogic,” approach to the body, which is not free, but “subject to the grip and grasp of the gaze of the Other.” One does not have a direct relation to one’s body, Bakhtin claimed, only through the Other, and through language. In our case this not only applies to the human (meat) body, but also to the car body. Borrowing from Bakhtin’s “grotesque body,” which he described as “poorly formed,” one can also distinguish ‘over-the-top bodies’, such as made by drag-queen transvestites, but also by American Puerto Ricans who ‘pimp up’ their cars, as we will see in the following chapter. Thus, Bakhtin’s theory has a “built-in affinity” with alterity, with “opposition(al) and marginal practices, be they Third World, feminist, or avant-garde,” even if his analysis has been accused, time and again, of misogyny and sexism. And despite Victor Hugo’s denial of the sublime in the carnivalesque, transcendence seems possible, transcendence into a Nietzschean celebration of the “homo ridens.”<sup>30</sup>

For the historian, carnival is not only a historical phenomenon with much broader implications than a simple folk fest (in this respect Bakhtin’s and later historians’ descriptions prefigure Subaltern Studies as they unearthed many instances of violent riots during such fests by ‘reading history against the grain’), it also points toward a “mode of understanding,” a way of historical analysis: the inversion undertaken during such fests remind us that “what is socially peripheral is often symbolically central.”<sup>31</sup>

Stam’s claim that Bakhtin’s categories “almost always apply equally to art and to life” inspires us to distinguish between a real-life tradition of the carnivalesque and a virtual, fictionalized tradition, a distinction which at the same time forms the basis of my concept (proposed in *Atlantic Automobilmism*) of affinity between the production of (mobility) texts and the production of car driving experiences.<sup>32</sup> Referring to my previous study,

in which I discussed the ambiguities of “representation,” the carnivalesque can be considered as “a concept and a practice which comprise an alternative to – rather than just a predecessor of – representation.”<sup>33</sup>

In the *real-life tradition*, we can identify groups of people (such as the Chinese “netizens,” internet-citizens whose behavior recently has been analyzed by anthropologists) who, like their medieval counterparts, lived two lives, one official, one carnivalesque, “free and unrestricted,” in Bakhtin’s optimistic formulation, “full of ambivalent laughter.” In 1988, Polish “guerilla street-theater” performed a “ProletaRIO Carnival” (*Karnawal RIObotniczy*) which announced the collapse of Eastern European state socialism. In 2010, Chinese youth were “living online” for nineteen hours per week, including virtual marriages between their avatars. Minghua Wu in his study of the discussion platform Weibo presented this as the twenty-first-century successor of the medieval marketplace, where the “surrounding gaze” (*wei-guan*) from the village square had now been transposed online as a form of “alternative and popular surveillance.”<sup>34</sup>

The other, *virtual tradition of the carnivalesque* can be described as a process of encapsulation of its characteristics within an elite, middle-class universe: whereas the real-life carnival went “underground,” the literary carnivalesque functions as an “echo” of the social practice of carnival, visible, for instance in the films of Federico Fellini (*Satyricon*, 1969) and Pier Paolo Pasolini, in which the violence is perceived by the audience “in a spirit of carnival and ritual.”<sup>35</sup> When Dominick LaCapra posits that the carnivalesque nowadays survives “primarily as a literary tradition,” he implies that this tradition is “cut off from interaction with vital and important social institutions such as carnival itself.” Several students of the carnivalesque have argued that literary scholarship in the 1980s saw Bakhtin as “some kind of solution to the *impasse* of representation”: whereas Russians were busy reconstructing Bakhtin’s heritage, West Europeans and Americans integrated him into poststructuralism.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, literary and cultural studies scholarship generally undertook two transformations in Bakhtin’s heritage. First, led by Bakhtin himself, whose “grotesque realism” was understood by many as the literary taming of the real-life carnival, they de-classed Bakhtin’s theory, which already in itself was weak in class analysis, to say the least, a fact which, according to Peter Hitchcock, enabled the theory’s easy integration into poststructuralism and other “theoretical projects that articulate the eclipse of social class as class (or class as social).” Second, they virtualized the experience, making it primarily into an object of literary experience. Hence, we find warnings, in this tradition, against the “*dangerous* tendency in theorists such as Kristeva and Foucault to analyse carnival in terms of its liberating qualities,” because the celebration of the “anarchically disruptive, diffusely subversive Other” is “more mystifying than enlightening.”<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, within this literary tradition there are also other students (Stam calls them “left,” as opposed to the liberals we quoted earlier) who tried to ‘rescue’ Bakhtin from the poststructuralists and their “increasing abstraction.” They are particularly to be found among feminist literary scholars as these students identify “feminists and ... women writers in general” who may benefit the most from a “carnivalization” of literary theory.<sup>38</sup> Other theorists observed “a battle ground between (mainly American) liberal academics and (mainly British) anti-Stalinist Marxists.” One of the points of struggle was the different interpretation of the role of irony in the novel: whereas György Lukács in his *Theory of the Novel* (1916) saw in this an example of “bourgeois decay,” “Bakhtin strove to reveal its popular-democratic roots.”<sup>39</sup>

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How, then, can Bakhtin’s ‘carnavalesque’ be productively applied to the *history* of mobility?

The classic *carnavalesque mobility* is produced by the “mob,” the seemingly unorganized group at the ‘low’ side of society who gave ‘mobility’ its first historical meaning, “obscene, lascivious, and scandalous” in their “unlawful games and interludes, drunkenness, etc.” In the ‘gaze’ of the ‘high’, who in the transition from Middle Ages to Renaissance “substitu(ted) observation for participation,” the mob was a real threat and hence, ‘low’ urged ‘high’ to develop the distancing effect of *irony*. In fact, the historical carnival may be seen as the birthplace of irony, as the folk form of irony, because in the reversal of social hierarchies the ‘low’ sets the ‘high’ apart, without excluding them in the festivities: according to Bakhtin “there is not a grain of nihilism in carnival, nor of course, a grain of shallow frivolity or trivially vulgar bohemian individualism.” The folkish countermodel of Norbert Elias’s self-distancing as a ‘civilization process’ is the carnivalesque laughter, and irony is, together with “humour” and “sarcasm,” a “genre ... of reduced laughter.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, Bakhtin provides a historical grounding of the ironic experience that goes far beyond the current philosophical father of irony, Søren Kierkegaard: originally, irony, in its coarse carnivalesque form, was of the people, and then it was captured by the middle class (as Kierkegaard sensed), at first by its cultural avant-garde, then, after WWII, invading the entire Western culture, through its mass media. Bakhtin observed in his Rabelais book that “it was precisely the infiltration of folk humor into great literature that has remained unexplored”; nor, I would like to add, has the infiltration of folk mobility (of the car modifying tribes, for instance) into middle-class ‘high mobility’ been explored.<sup>41</sup> This book is a first effort to do just this. Thus, the carnivalesque is the corporeal irony of the ‘folk’, and as such, paradoxically, it is postironic in its refusal to use

laughter as a distancing tool (except for briefly setting itself apart from the ruling class).

Bakhtin also grounded the body in a multisensorial context: like the automotive driving experience, its seemingly dominant visual characteristics (Urry's 'tourist gaze', in general the interest among mobility historians in landscaping) make us easily forget that the corporeal aspects of carnival also encompass the "always kinaesthetic," driven by sound and music. Like carnival, car driving implies an "orchestration" of the multisensorial experience.<sup>42</sup>

### **Between Adventure and Status Consciousness: Theorizing the Medialization of the Car**

Parallel to the class-based shift toward a postironic car culture (and conceptually related to it), a technological change occurred. It is the medialization of the car, the shift toward 'the car as message', which makes the integration of media studies within mobility studies quite urgent. How can this be done?

In our previous studies, we used autopoetic sources to deconstruct the automotive adventure. We did so through three analytical levels: content, symbol and affinity. Whereas the latter level appeared to be crucial for understanding the emergence of automobilism (in that the production of a literary text appeared to be very similar to the production of automotive experiences, undertaken, historically, by motoring pioneers who often were at the same time part of a literary avant-garde), in the last two phases covered by this book the symbolic realm seems to become more important. In an effort, partly based on ecological psychologist James Gibson and philosopher Paul Ricoeur, to give "an alternative account in which human experience and understanding rather than objective truth, play(s) the central role," George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argued that "our ordinary conceptual system ... is fundamentally metaphorical in nature," implying that "most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts." Metaphors can be analyzed as signs of subcultures: "There are American subcultures where you buy the big car and don't worry about the future, and there are others where the future comes first and you buy a small car. There was a time (before inflation and the energy crisis [of the 1970s, GM]) when owning a small car had a high status within the subculture where [the metaphorical expressions, GM] VIRTUE IS UP and SAVING RESOURCES IS VIRTUOUS took priority over BIGGER IS BETTER. Nowadays the number of small-car owners has gone up drastically because there is a large subculture where SAVING MONEY IS BETTER has priority over BIGGER IS BETTER."<sup>43</sup> This begs

the question, what happens with the automotive adventure (itself a powerful metaphor as well!) when it gets embroiled in these shifts?

In this study, we will base a large part of our argument upon the first analytical level, content, although we will find that novels and poems have become rather unreliable sources in a culture dominated by mass media such as movies and especially online practices such as gaming. Furthermore, media studies help us to see that content itself is being de-privileged. It was Marshall McLuhan (1964) who argued that, because of the “narcissistic incorporation” of media in the current “final phase of the extensions of man,” an analysis of its content would not deliver any clues about its “magic.”<sup>44</sup> Will this development realize what McLuhan predicted in his chapter on “The Mechanical Bride,” that the car would be supplanted by the house as “status symbol,” the “adventure” fading away?<sup>45</sup> We will see, in the chapters to come, how this belief in the substitution rather than the co-existence of technologies will be falsified time and again.

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In common sense auto talk, medialization of the car is often equaled to the car’s ‘smartification’, understood as the *addition* of electronically controlled intelligence to a machine that until then was still considered to be a (very sophisticated) piece of nineteenth-century technology.<sup>46</sup> However, a second form of medialization of the car involved the *mixed use* of the (electronified) car and other mobile technologies, such as smartphones and other representatives of ‘new’ and ‘social’ media, testifying to the “increasing convergence between transport and communication.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed, a new intermedial hybrid, embedded in and representing “network-mobility,” has been and still is in the making, of which the repercussions on the automotive experience have so far been little investigated.<sup>48</sup> “By focusing on the intersections of the two scholarly fields” of transport and media studies, New Mobility Studies, as coined by the journal *Transfers*, deals with the changes this combined use of technologies affords the traveler and others on the move, changes we will investigate in detail in the chapters to come. Combining driving or passengering with “texting, blogging, tweeting, updating, friending and following” (practices all associated with being ‘networked’ through new media) may very well have influenced the way car users have experienced automotive adventure, if there was any adventure left (in the quadruple meaning explained above) after the 1960s. How would automotive adventure change, one wonders, if it could be shared through “following, ... a common term for describing how people interact with one another in social media spaces,” or if the thrill of uncertainties and risks could be alleviated by consulting *tripadvisor.com* online, as travel writer Sihle Khumalo does all the time while traveling, by taxi and mostly by bus, through West Africa, as we will see in

Chapter 3? Both forms of car medialization (through electrification of the car itself and through equipping passengers with new media tools) “remediate,” in the words of Bolter and Grusin, the ‘old’ technology of the car into a new technology, so much so that “travelers can maintain a constant sense of co-presence with a dispersed social network.”<sup>49</sup> It is the introduction of mobile communication from the mid-1990s that seems to have had the most (conceptual) impact, not only because its genealogy “cannot be reduced to a single technology or a linear history” (thus complexifying mobility history considerably), but also because the very concept of mobility, often reduced to the physical movement of people and vehicles, “is challenged by the multilayered mobility of mobile media. The mobile phone,” with its heterogeneous history in which the car played a decisive role, “has in fact been characterized as neither ‘fixed’ nor ‘mobile’, or even as being defined less by ‘mobility’ than by ‘connectivity.’”<sup>50</sup> This (multi)layeredness, especially when it regards what Karl Hörning calls “*Vergleichzeitigung*” (synchronization) of old and new media, plays a dominating role in the *world history of mobility* of the last half century or so.<sup>51</sup>

But it is the third medialization, the conceptual *turning of the car itself into a medium*, that may have the widest and most intensive repercussions for a globalized automobilism, all the more so if one realizes that a medium “both connects and separates,” as John Tomlinson asserts, just like the ‘ironic car’.<sup>52</sup> What happens with the nineteenth-century ‘tourist gaze’ and twentieth-century ‘tourist glances’ (the former from a train, the latter from a car) when we approach cars as “vehicles for defining both personal and cultural identity,” as one succinct definition puts it? “As these media become simultaneously technical analogs and social expressions of our identity, we become simultaneously both the subject and object of contemporary media,” Bolter and Grusin observe. How would all those diversified masculinities and femininities we dealt with in the previous studies behave when offered “new opportunities for self-definition” afforded by the hybrid car-medium (a mechatronic ensemble), when the self (itself part of a hybrid of a higher order, called ‘driver-car’ by Tim Dant) becomes a “networked self”?<sup>53</sup> How can we mobilize Michael Featherstone’s insight (based on Bakhtin and Bourdieu) that “the body [including the car body, GM] is the materialization of class taste: class taste is *embodied*.”<sup>54</sup>

Up to now, such a three-pronged “intermedial research” approach to global automobilism has been rare in New Mobility Studies. One elegant example is what Jennie Germann Molz and Cody Morris Paris have done for backpacking, a traveling practice that they renamed “flashpacking” because of the interventions and interferences of new media. Media scholars Jeremy Packer and Kathleen Oswald have also proposed “to place the automobile at the center of any history of mobile communication,” making an effort



to systematically investigate the contact zones between transport and communication (although they did not dwell much on our third level, the ‘car as medium’) through the elegant analogy of the concept of *screen*, even if it perhaps overemphasizes the sense of vision.<sup>55</sup> Recent ethnographic research into Western youth car cultures also uses the media metaphor explicitly to analyze a vehicle “which provides opportunities for social liberation or unequivocal private space for personal reflection and seclusion.”<sup>56</sup> But in general, the omission of cross-disciplinary studies is all the more regrettable, not only for mobility studies, because, as James Clifford has argued, cultures are “no longer seen ... as self-enclosed, spatially bounded entities, but are constituted rather through a variety of discrepant travelling practices,” in line with what was soon to be called the ‘mobility turn’.<sup>57</sup> This is also true for non-Western forms of travel writing: philosopher Achille Mbembe, for instance, insists that “the cultural history of the [African] continent can hardly be understood outside of the framework of itinerance, mobility and displacement.”<sup>58</sup>

Such research has been undertaken much more extensively into the “intramedial” relations within literature (for instance when a play is read instead of enacted), or into the “intermedial” relations between literature and film that started in the 1990s, or travel writing, through its “annexation ... of photo-reportage.” This resulted in, among other things, the more extensive definition of a medium as a (Foucaultian) “dispositif of communication, characterized not only by certain technical and institutional transfer channels, but also by the use of a semiotic system (or several such systems) aimed at publicly transferring contents; part of these contents are ‘messages’, but not exclusively so. Generally speaking the type of medium influences the transferred contents, but also the way they are presented and experienced.”<sup>59</sup> In the following chapters we will repeatedly find examples of how the automotive experience is reshaped by and in turn reshapes the car-as-medium (also in cases of private, rather than public [as the definition above seems to limit itself to], transferred content), whether this takes place through the creation of ‘parallel realities’ or through ‘immersion’ in the act of driving, the latter practice being an example of what we could call *intermedial affinity*, and what in Media Studies is considered to be a “transmedial” phenomenon, or, if the direction of borrowing is clear, “intermedial transfer.”<sup>60</sup> In Chapter 3, where we discuss the emergence of gaming, we will explore the mechanism of immersion further, but for now it should be emphasized that *immersion* as a perceptive technique is not new: literary theory, well before it froze into poststructuralism, and literary practice (writing, reading) acknowledged the immersive effects of the nineteenth-century novel. In fact, in literary culture a split between reader publics took place, similar to the split we will observe in this study between

car users: whereas an intellectual avant-garde devised what I would like to call ‘ironizing’ techniques (such as Brechtian alienation), “a popular branch ... remained faithful to the immersive ideals and narrative techniques of the nineteenth century. (Ironically, the high branch turned out to be heavily dependent on the resources of the low branch for its game of parody.)” Immersion, Marie-Laure Ryan claimed in her study of *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, “can be an adventurous and invigorating experience comparable to taking a swim in a cool ocean with powerful surf.” “Opening a book is embarking on a voyage,” or, in Emily Dickinson’s imagination, a “Frigate.” I agree, but would prefer another mobility metaphor, emphasizing the *affinity* between immersion while driving and while reading. “Dwelling in fiction” (through what narratologists call metalepsis) is comparable to dwelling in the car, but whereas a text requires a purely mental effort, as a “product of an act of imagination,” the car, and by extension virtual reality, “is a technologically induced phenomenon,” in the latter case leading to an “experience of being surrounded by data.” This dwelling is a corporeal act: “In [real life] and [virtual reality] all action passes through the body.” Ryan gives the amusement park as “a testament to the postmodern fascination with the playful spirit and protean nature of the carnivalesque.” In this sense, the amusement park (and as we will see, automobilism, to a certain extent) can be seen as “an outstanding model of ‘virtual reality’ (defined as ‘an immersive, interactive experience generated by a computer’), a successful symbiosis of human entertainers and constructed mechanisms dedicated to human pleasure.” But however the sophisticated reader tries to distance herself from immersive reading practices, “they never outgrow the simple pleasure of being lost in a book.”<sup>61</sup> We will see in the following chapters that automobilism’s affordances are not much different. Psychologist Richard Gerrig, for instance, used the metaphor of *transportation* to describe the experience of moving away from the immediate physical environment and losing oneself in a story, a process akin to the spatial aspect of the car adventure.<sup>62</sup>

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In the following chapters we will see the motorist evolve from a poet (as we have characterized her in our previous study for the pre-war period in the West) into a film figure or another virtual edition of a (game) hero, or at least a subject immersed in the formation of identity and the “styling of body, soul and spirit.”<sup>63</sup> This juxtaposition of two ideal-typical motorists positioned one century apart corresponds with the contrast between Max Weber, as a representative of the “first modernity,” and Ulrich Beck, who coined the concept of the second or “reflexive modernity,” being at the same time a continuation of and a breach with the first modernity,

characterized by “uncertainty, politicization and the struggle for (new) borders.” Beck’s observed unprecedented boost of individualization works along three dimensions: a release from social ties and commitments, a disenchantment with norms and beliefs, and a dimension of reintegration, within new forms of social ties.<sup>64</sup> Within this triangle of societal shifts, the neoliberal individual is born: “the responsibility for risks has been increasingly directed away from organizations and collectivities,” writes Stephen Lyng in his sociological study of what he calls “edgework” or voluntary risk-taking, “and displaced onto individuals.”<sup>65</sup> We will likewise see emerging in this study the ‘neoliberal motorist’. We will witness how this form of risk-taking becomes increasingly mainstream. In modern society, the submission to risk, as historian and philosopher Pierre Rosanvallon concluded in his *La société des égaux* (The society of equals), “is no longer a choice that one makes or an adventure that one probes, but an obligation that one undergoes.”<sup>66</sup>

In the following pages we will witness the emergence of a new subjectivity of automobilism, what I will come to call the *neoliberal motorist*. As we will see, neoliberalism emerged during the late 1970s and 1980s, first in a destructive form, then, during the 1990s, and paradoxically, as an interventionist project.<sup>67</sup> In economist and philosopher Hermann Rauchenschwandtner’s rather pessimistic vision, the late twentieth-century individual is characterized by “indolence,” a “jadedness (*Ermattung*) in the face of multiple possibilities of the satisfying of his needs,” in contrast with the *ennui* that haunted the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle*, a nervous mood in which the automotive adventure was shaped. At the turn of the new century, “the modern individual fluctuates between reckless fantods (*haltlose Reizbarkeit*) and a slow enjoyment (*Geniessen*), between an immobility in movement and a moving immobility.”<sup>68</sup> Surrounded by the uncertainties of what meanwhile has become the “world risk society,” the reflexive individuals, in the words of Deborah Lupton, who compared Beck’s analysis to that of the other pivotal author on the risk society, Anthony Giddens, “invent new certainties for themselves.” In the nearly half-century covered by this book, we will see that this is done through the adjustment or ‘taming’ of the adventure, a process already started during the Atlantic Interbellum. Tellingly, Giddens describes this process as “develop(ing) a *cocoon* of invulnerability which enables [the individuals] to get on with life.”<sup>69</sup>

Although we find here an adequate characterization of the mood of the *Western* motorist as depicted in many a late twentieth-century novel, as we will see in the following chapters, one wonders, again, whether this also applies to women and other marginalized would-be motorists, and to all those beyond the West who have no time for a morally charged ‘indolence’. Indeed, while we analyze the changing role of the car (and mobility in general) in the modernization process, we will have to adjust, at the same

time, our vision on global modernity.<sup>70</sup> This is all the more true if we focus on mobility, and automobilism in particular, which has been, as we argued previously, from the end of the nineteenth century an international, if not transnational phenomenon, and which became, as the following chapters will show, a truly global phenomenon during the latter third of the past century. More so than my previous studies, this book should therefore be fundamentally global in scope. But this latter observation should be qualified: different from aviation, which also became global during the past century (and perhaps should be the true mobility marker of late twentieth-century globalization, more so than the car<sup>71</sup>), the car is, at most, a ‘continental vehicle’, despite efforts to mimic the railway network in its intercontinental connectivity: the car is only global in its representation and its construction, not in its (localized) use.

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This book is structured in two parts: “Doom, For Some? Questioning the Car” and “Confusion: Where is the Adventure?”, the first part consisting of one chapter, the second of two chapters. In Chapter 1, we will first follow the trajectory of the energy and urban crises around the world. We will argue that, although its immediate physical impact (in terms of energy consumption) was modest, in the perception of most Westerners the car represented a profound turning point, the beginning of a period of utter confusion in the realm of mobility during the last quarter century, as the following two chapters will show. Chapter 2, then, documents the breakthrough of the car beyond the West, while Chapter 3 is an effort to identify the ‘motifs, motives and motivations’ of new groups of motorists through artistic utterances, most notably novels, but also songs, movies and games.

The Conclusion takes up the issues raised in the current chapter and elaborates on the consequences of the emergence of new, ‘deplorable’ car subcultures for the future of mobility in the twenty-first century.

## Notes

1. Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), quoted in Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage, 1994) (first ed.: 1991), 73.
2. Gijs Mom, *Atlantic Automobilmism; Emergence and Persistence of the Car, 1895–1940* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015); Lesley Hazleton, *Confessions of a Fast Woman* (Reading, MA, etc.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992), 4 (cyborg), 5 (absolute), 8 (flight and transgression), 18 (dance), 27 (godlike), 32 (arousal), 44 (conquering), 47 (terrorizing and übermensch), 49 (fascist). In this book I use the present tense to describe the content of belletristic utterances, while I use the past tense to recount the content of secondary sources.

3. Gijs Mom, *Globalizing Automobilmism; Exuberance and the Emergence of Layered Mobility, 1900–1980* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2020).
4. Hazleton, *Confessions of a Fast Woman*, 169 (Impact), 195 (cool), 198 (do it).
5. Gijs Mom, *The Electric Vehicle; Technology and Expectations in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 41.
6. Mom, *Globalizing Automobilmism*, 15.
7. Dietmar Rothermund, “Der Blick vom Westen auf den Indischen Ozean vom ‘Periplus’ bis zur ‘Suma Oriental’,” in: Dietmar Rothermund and Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (eds), *Der Indische Ozean; Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum* (Vienna: Verein für Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Promedia Verlag, 2004), 9–36, here: 9 (*Mittelmeer*); Michael Mann, “‘How many people were crying oceans...’; Südasiatische Migranten im Indischen Ozean,” in: Rothermund and Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, *Der Indische Ozean*, 123–143, here: 124 (transnational); Tu Wei-ming, “Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center,” *Daedalus* 120 No. 2 (Spring 1991), 1–32, here: 9 (in this book I follow the Chinese custom to place the family name first, unless Chinese themselves have adopted the Western style, for instance in book or journal publications); Arne Hansen, Kenneth Bo Nielsen and Harold Wilhite, “Staying Cool, Looking Good, Moving Around: Consumption, Sustainability and the ‘Rise of the South,’” *Forum for Development Studies* 43 No. 1 (2016), 5–25, here: 5 (factories); Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Hoskins, “Introduction; Transpacific Studies: Critical Perspectives on an Emerging Field,” in: Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Transpacific Studies; Framing an Emerging Field* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014), 1–38, here: 17 (United States), 25 (mobilities perspective); Weiqiang Lin and Brenda S.A. Yeoh, “Transpacific Studies; The View from Asia,” in: Hoskins and Nguyen, *Transpacific Studies*, 41–63; Christiane Brosius, *India’s Middle Class; New Forms of Urban Leisure, Consumption and Prosperity* (London/New York/New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), xxii (inner-Asian).
8. Mom, *Atlantic Automobilmism*, 162–163.
9. Toru Tani, “Transzendenz und Medium,” in: Michael Staudigl and Christian Sternad (eds), *Figuren der Transzendenz; Transformationen eines phänomenologischen Grundbegriffs* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014), 143–161, here: 161; see *Transfers, Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies*, founded 2011. Transfers are a manifestation of the general process of *translation*, extensively discussed in the Introduction to the previous volume. For instance, in the current volume we will encounter forms of translation (transformation) in the communities of car-modifying youth, in their appropriation of existing cars and ‘translating’ them into “culturally ‘unique’ vehicles.” See Andrew Bengry-Howell and Christine Griffin, “Self-Made Motormen: The Material Construction of Working-Class Masculine Identities through Car Modification,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 10 No. 4 (September 2007), 439–458, here: 442 (unique).
10. Tani, “Transzendenz und Medium,” 143 (layers: “Stufen”), 144 (“*Transzendenz und Medium sind voneinander untrennbar und ergänzen sich gegenseitig*”), 146 (“*Dank der medialen Struktur der Erfahrung wird die Beziehung zur Transzendenz möglich, zumindest bei Husserl!*”; emphasis in original); Christoph Neubert and Gabriele Schabacher, “Verkehrsgeschichte an der Schnittstelle von Technik, Kultur und Medien. Einleitung,” in: idem (eds), *Verkehrsgeschichte und Kulturwissenschaft. Analysen an der Schnittstelle von Technik, Kultur und Medien* (Bielefeld: transcript verlag, 2013), 7–45, here: 29 (*Verkehrswissenschaft*).
11. Mom, *Globalizing Automobilmism*, 13–17.
12. Nathan Brown, “Postmodernity, Not Yet; Toward a New Periodisation,” *Radical Philosophy* 2 No. 1 (2018), 11–27, here: 11 (Nealon quote from his *Post-postmodernism*,

- or, *the Cultural Logic of Just-In-Time Capitalism*, 2012), 12 (attitude; the quote inside the quote is from Tom Turner, *City as Landscape: A Post-Postmodern View of Design and Planning*, 1996).
13. Lukas Hoffmann, *Postirony: The Nonfiction Literature of David Foster Wallace and Dave Eggers* (Bielefeld: transcript verlag, 2016), 9–10 (*passive*; italics in original); Joe Karaganis, “Presentation,” in: idem (ed.), *Structures of Participation in Digital Culture* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2007), 8–16, here: 9 (appropriation).
  14. Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., *The Poetics of Mind; Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge/New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 370 (age of irony); Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2009<sup>27</sup>) (first ed.: 1989), xv (ironist), 74 (common sense), 82 (literary criticism).
  15. Hoffmann, *Postirony*, 11 (struggling), 37 (skeptical), 49 (mainstream), 51 (savvy); Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*; Jedediah Purdy, *For Common Things; Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 10 (drenched); Lee Konstantinou, *Cool Characters; Irony and American Fiction* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 3 (marketing); Peter Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2013<sup>19</sup>) (first ed.: 1983), 42 (italics in original); Alan Wilde, *Horizons of Assent; Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic Imagination* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 131; on irony and its split audience see Mom, *Globalizing Automobility*, 10–11.
  16. Rein Janssen, “Emoji zijn nu volwassen” [Emoji are mature by now], *De Volkskrant* (17 September 2016), 13.
  17. Hoffmann, *Postirony*, 39 (aesthetic), 38 (Hedinger quote, my translation), 49 (mainstream), 56 (excuse), 61 (existential), 63 (quixotic), 90 (disambiguate), 104 (believers), 192 (humane); Wilde, *Horizons of Assent*, 179 (subjective).
  18. Konstantinou, *Cool Characters*, xii (shift), 36 (types).
  19. *Ibid.*, xiii (emphasis added; who are these ‘we’? See the Conclusions of this study); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude; War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York, etc.: Penguin Books, 2005), 266–267.
  20. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994), 167.
  21. Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 35 (1960s), 36 (postmodernization; the quote within the quote stems from P. Cooke), 37 (mid-1970s), 43 (new middle class), 44 (intermediaries), 84 (petite bourgeoisie and lifestyle), 109 (para-intellectuals).
  22. *Ibid.*, 86 (adventure), 101 (communal), 103 (de-distanciation).
  23. Henrike Donner and Geert De Neve, “Introduction,” in: Henrike Donner (ed.), *Being Middle-Class in India; A Way of Life* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2011), 1–22, here: 1–2 (agenda), 6 (Bourdieu); Ronald J. Herring and Rina Agarwala, “Introduction; Restoring Agency to Class: Puzzles from South Asia,” in: Rina Agarwala and Ronald J. Herring (eds), *Whatever Happened to Class? Reflections from South Asia* (Lanham/Boulder/New York/Toronto/Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 1–23, here: 6 (identity); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Empire, Twenty Years On,” *New Left Review* 120 (Second Series) (November–December 2019), 67–92, here: 85; Vivek Chibber, “On the Decline of Class Analysis in South Asian Studies,” in: Agarwala and Herring, *Whatever Happened to Class?*, 24–49, here: 24 (“Subalterns”), 33 (solid); David B. Grusky and Jesper B. Sørensen, “Can Class Analysis Be Salvaged?” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 No. 5 (March 1998), 1187–1234, here: 1189 (lifestyle), 1197 (production), 1205 (reluctance), 1223 (stratification). For the (neo-Marxist) counterargument that meanwhile “a large body of more systematic research

- on work and occupations ... suggests that individual identities and self-definitions are strongly affected by detailed occupational affiliations,” see *ibid.* (quote on 1197–1198).
24. Rina Agarwala, “From Work to Welfare: A New Class Movement in India,” in: Agarwala and Herring, *Whatever Happened to Class?*, 91–108, here: 91 (analytics), 94 (micro-entrepreneurs); John Harris, “Middle-Class Activism and the Politics of the Informal Working Class,” in: Agarwala and Herring, *Whatever Happened to Class?*, 109–126, here: 111 (working class).
  25. Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures; Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 8 (*linguistic*; italics in original); Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 3.
  26. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World; Translated by Helene Iswolsky* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) (first ed.: 1965 as *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable*), 6 (second life), 10 (truth), 19 (ego), 34 (genre), 35 (marketplace), 38 (sarcasm), 43 (Hugo), 44 (*interior*; italics in original), 48 (alienated), 97 (penetrate), 99 (masquerades), 231 (games), 276 (utilitarian); Krystyna Pomorska, “Foreword,” in: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, vii–xi, here: vii (1968), x (1965); Michael Holquist, “Prologue,” in: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, xiii–xxiii, here: xviii (valve), xix (blasphemous). One pood (Russian *pood*) is 16 kg.
  27. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 82 (schoolmen); Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History; Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 296. Elsewhere in his study, LaCapra nuanced his critique by pointing at the Soviet Stalinist atmosphere and speaking of a “seemingly naive but perhaps strategic populism” (296n11).
  28. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 255 (crowd; italics in original).
  29. Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 10 (lower stratum), 86 (otherness), 178 (re-present), 180 (almost always); Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines; Travel, Language, Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), 2 (intersemiotic).
  30. Ann Jefferson, “Bodymatters: Self and Other in Bakhtin, Sartre and Barthes,” in: Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (eds), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 202–228, here: 202 (grip); Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 5 (language), 89 (homo ridens); Minghua Wu, *Chinese Media Cultures in Transition; Weibo and the Carnavalesque* (New York etc.: Peter Lang, 2019), 30 (poorly formed). Victor Hugo received support from film student Robert Stam in his analysis of some ‘carnavalesque’ surrealist novels: “Rather than high art’s sublimation, we are given a strategy of reduction and degradation, which uses obscenity, scatology, burlesque, and caricature to turn upside down all the forms and values by which, in Pierre Bourdieu’s words, ‘the dominant groups project and recognize their sublimity.’” Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 110.
  31. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, 20 (peripheral; the quote is from B. Babcock, *The Reversible World*, 1978).
  32. Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 180; Mom, *Atlantic Automobilmism*, 202–204, 648–650 (affinity); Stam distinguished a third element in Bakhtin’s philosophy: “an ‘anticipatory’ mode of socialist gregariousness” (Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 10).
  33. Jefferson, “Bodymatters,” 214 (representation).
  34. Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution; Central Europe 1989* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1; David Kurt Herold, “Noise, Spectacle, Politics: Carnival in Chinese Cyberspace,” in: David Kurt Herold and Peter Marolt (eds), *Online Society in China; Creating, Celebrating, and Instrumentalising the Online Carnival*

- (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 1–19, here: 4 (netizens), 12 (Bakhtin quote); Wu, *Chinese Media Cultures in Transition*, 6.
35. Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 98 (underground), 116 (Fellini etc.).
  36. LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 321 (literary tradition and cut off); Jefferson, “Body matters,” 215 (*impassé*; italics in original), 243 (poststructuralism).
  37. Clair Wills, “Upsetting the Public: Carnival, Hysteria and Women’s Texts,” in: Hirschkop and Shepherd, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 85–108, here: 93 (*dangerous*; my italics); Peter Hitchcock, *Dialogics of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 4 (class analysis). In general, Hitchcock argues that Bakhtin’s “vagary,” his lack of a “normative evaluation of the social” proved to be “a boon to the Bakhtin industry” (*ibid.*, 3).
  38. Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*, 15; Hitchcock, *Dialogics of the Oppressed*, xiv (abstraction); Ken Hirschkop, “Bakhtin in the Sober Light of Day (an Introduction to the Second Edition),” in: Hirschkop and Shepherd (eds.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 1–25, here: 9 (carnivalization); Wills, “Upsetting the Public,” 85: “I want to ask whether some women’s texts may not have a more productive relationship to carnival.”
  39. Craig Brandist, “The Bakhtin Circle” (<https://www.iep.utm.edu/bakhtin/>, last consulted 24 May 2020), no page numbers [17].
  40. Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, 32 (mob), 33 (obscene), 42 (participation); LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 298 (nihilism; Bakhtin quote from his *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 1929); Wills, “Upsetting the Public,” 93 (self-distancing; the quoted term is from Klaus Theweleit in his *Male Fantasies* [1987], but Theweleit, like Stallybrass and White, refers to Elias); Nancy Glazener, “Dialogic Subversion: Bakhtin, the Novel and Gertrude Stein,” in: Hirschkop and Shepherd, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 155–176, here: 161 (reduced laughter).
  41. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 136.
  42. Michaeline A. Crichlow and Piers Armstrong, “Introduction; Carnival Praxis, Carnavalesque Strategies and Atlantic Interstices,” in: Michaeline A. Crichlow (ed.), *Carnival Art, Culture and Politics; Performing Life* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2012), 1–16, here: 9 (kinaesthetic); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze; Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, 1990); Gijs Mom, “Orchestrating Automobile Technology: Comfort, Mobility Culture, and the Construction of the ‘Family Touring Car’, 1917–1940,” *Technology and Culture* 55 No. 2 (April 2014), 299–325. For an explanation of ‘kinaesthetic intelligence’ (‘the ability to control one’s own bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skillfully’), see Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder, *Communicating Mobility and Technology; A Material Rhetoric for Persuasive Transportation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2017), 33.
  43. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2003) (first ed.: 1980), x (truth), 3 (fundamental), 23 (subcultures quote; capitalization in original), 57 (understood).
  44. Heidemarie Schumacher, *Fernsehen fernsehen; Modelle der Medien- und Fernsehtheorie* (Cologne: DuMont, 2000), 66–67.
  45. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005) (first ed.: 1964), 236–237.
  46. Gijs Mom, *The Evolution of Automotive Technology; A Handbook* (Warrendale: SAE International, 2014), esp. chapter 9 (Automation), 171–189.
  47. Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller and John Urry, “Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings,” *Mobilities* 1 No. 1 (March 2006), 1–22, here: 4.
  48. Dorit Müller and Heike Weber, “‘Traffic’—On the Historical Alignment of Media and Mobility,” *Transfers* 3 No. 1 (Spring 2013), 65–74, here: 67 (network-mobility).



49. Jennie Germann Molz and Cody Morris Paris, “The Social Affordances of Flashpacking: Exploring the Mobility Nexus of Travel and Communication,” *Mobilities* 10 No. 2 (2015), 173–192, here: 180 (convergence), 182 (following); Julia Hildebrand, “Media and Mobilities: Modes, Messages, Movements, and Moods” (paper Drexel University, n.p., n.y. [2016]), 5 (focusing); I thank Julia Hildebrand for providing me with this manuscript, which has since been published as “Modal Media: Connecting Media Ecology and Mobilities Research,” *Media, Culture & Society* 40 No. 3 (2018), 348–364; blogging etc: Jennie Germann Molz quoted in *ibid.*, 17; Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2000) (first ed.: 1998). For *Transfers; Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* see <https://transfers.berghahnjournals.com/> (last consulted 6 June 2020).
50. Regine Buschauer, “The ‘Ambulant in-between’: Media Histories of Mobile Communication,” *Transfers* 3 No. 1 (Spring 2013), 96–118, here: 98–99.
51. Karl H. Hörning, “Was fremde Dinge tun; Sozialtheoretische Herausforderungen,” in: Hans Peter Hahn, *Vom Eigensinn der Dinge; Für eine neue Perspektive auf die Welt des Materiellen* (Berlin: Neofelis Verlag, 2015), 163–176, here: 166. For an introduction to ‘world history’ and ‘global history’ (and its aim to “overcom[e] Eurocentric narratives”), see Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. 217–219.
52. John Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed; The Coming of Immediacy* (Los Angeles, etc.: Sage Publications, n.y.), 98.
53. Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 231 (identity, simultaneously and opportunities), 232 (networked self); Tim Dant, “The Driver-Car,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 No. 4/5 (2004), 61–79; Jonas Larsen, “Tourism Mobilities and the Travel Glance: Experiences of Being on the Move,” *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 1 No. 2 (2001), 80–98.
54. Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 90.
55. Molz and Paris, “The Social Affordances of Flashpacking”; Volker C. Dörr and Tobias Kurwinkel, “Einleitung,” in: *idem* (eds), *Intertextualität, Intermedialität, Transmedialität; Zur Beziehung zwischen Literatur und anderen Medien* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014), 6–10, here: 7 (*intermediale Untersuchungen*); for an excellent overview of the car as medium from a geographical point of view, see Peter Adey, *Mobility* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010), chapter 5 (Mediations), 175–224; Jeremy Packer and Kathleen F. Oswald, “From Windscreen to Widescreen: Screening Technologies and Mobile Communication,” *Communication Review* 13 (2010), 309–339, here: 310 (center), 313 (screen). For the use of the metaphor ‘screen’ as both a window upon and a wall against the ‘other’ world, see Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance; Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 92. For an analysis of “the trope of the window” in an excellent, but equally vision-biased study, see Anne Friedberg, “Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles – Endless Cinema or Private Telematics,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 1 No. 2 (2002), 183–204. As I have shown in a previous study, the car is at the same time also a vibrator, a womb, a floating machine and an acoustic cocoon. See Mom, *Atlantic Automobilmism*.
56. Zannagh Hatton, “The Tarmac Cowboys: An Ethnographic Study of the Cultural World of Boy Racers” (unpubl. doct. diss., University of Plymouth, May 2007), 18.
57. James Clifford, *Routes; Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25, as paraphrased by Graham Huggan, “Anthropology/Travel/Writing: Strange Encounters with James Clifford and Nicholas Rothwell,” in: Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (eds), *New Directions in Travel Writing*

- Studies* (Houndsmill/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 228–246, here: 229. For the ‘mobility turn’, see for instance John Urry, “Moving on the Mobility Turn,” in: Weert Canzler, Vincent Kaufmann and Sven Kesselring (eds), *Tracing Mobilities: Towards a Cosmopolitan Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 13–23.
58. Maureen Moynagh, “Afropolitan Travels: ‘Discovering Home’ and the World in Africa,” in Kuehn and Smethurst, *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies*, 281–296, here: 281.
  59. Werner Wolf, “Intermedialität: Konzept, literaturwissenschaftliche Relevanz, Typologie, intermediale Formen,” in: Dörr and Kurwinkel, *Intertextualität, Intermedialität, Transmedialität*, 11–45, here: 20 (my translation); Joachim Paech, “Warum Intermedialität?” in: Dörr and Kurwinkel, *Intertextualität, Intermedialität, Transmedialität*, 46–69, here: 46 (1990s); Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001) (first ed.: 1991), 206, n. 13 (photo-reportage).
  60. Wolf, “Intermedialität,” 25 (*Transmedialität*), 27 (*intermediale Transposition*); for an early example of a cross-medial analysis, see Anne Sofie Laegran, “Escape Vehicles? The Internet and the Automobile in a Local–Global Intersection,” in: Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch (eds), *How Users Matter; The Co-Construction of Users and Technologies* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2003), 81–100.
  61. Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2; Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015; revised ed.) (first ed.: 2001), 4 (split), 6 (adventurous), 37 (dwelling), 61 (imagination and data), 62 (voyage), 65 (Frigate), 67 (simple pleasure), 208 (body), 210 (amusement park), 211 (pleasure); definition: Marie-Laure Ryan, “Immersion vs. Interactivity: Virtual Reality and Literary Theory,” *SubStance* 28 No. 2 (1999), 110–137, here: 111.
  62. Gerrig quoted in *ibid.*, 116.
  63. Katharina Scherke, “Die These von der ‘Ästhetisierung der Lebenswelt’ als eine Form der Analyse des Modernisierungsprozesses,” in: Sabine A. Haring and Katharina Scherke (eds), *Analyse und Kritik der Modernisierung um 1900 und um 2000* (Vienna: Passagen-Verlag, 2000), 109–131, here: 114–115 (quote on 115).
  64. Sabine A. Haring, “‘Modernisierungstheorien’ in der Soziologie gestern und heute: Max Weber und Ulrich Beck im Vergleich,” in: Haring and Scherke, *Analyse und Kritik der Modernisierung*, 283–322, here: 297 (continuation), 298 (dimensions), 299 (uncertainty).
  65. Stephen Lyng, “Edgework and the Risk-Taking Experience,” in: *idem* (ed.), *Edgework; The Sociology of Risk-Taking* (New York/London: Routledge, 2005), 3–14, here: 8.
  66. Pierre Rosanvallon, *La société des égaux* (n.p. [Paris]: Éditions du Seuil, 2011), 326.
  67. See Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” in: Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (eds), *Spaces of Neoliberalism; Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (Malden, MA/Oxford/Melbourne/Berlin: Blackwell, 2002), 33–57, here: 37, 41.
  68. Hermann Rauchenschwandtner, “Geld, Geist, Geltung: Die Moderne in der Spannung zwischen individuellen Begehren und allgemeinen Ansprüchen,” in: Haring and Scherke, *Analyse und Kritik der Modernisierung*, 197–226, here: 199–200.
  69. Deborah Lupton, *Risk* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 66 (world), 67 (invent), 78 (*cocoon*; my emphasis; this is Lupton’s paraphrase).
  70. For a brief overview of (mostly sociological) modernization theories, see Haring, “‘Modernisierungstheorien’ in der Soziologie gestern und heute.”
  71. Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund, *Mobility at Large; Globalization, Textuality and Innovative Travel Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 13.