



FRAMING THE NATION, CLAIMING THE HEMISPHERE

TRANSNATIONAL IMAGINATION IN
EARLY AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING (1770–1830)

MARKUS HEIDE



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*For Nora, Josefine, Julius, and Viola,
my dearest fellow travelers,
... and to Euclid Avenue and Follis, Toronto*

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I. Introduction: Frames and Claims

The journey motif is what enables Melville's Ishmael to assert his independence, just as it helps Huck Finn escape from the constrictions of Southern society, an unjust and restrictive social order. This legendary motif functions as a characteristic element in the literary construction of American experience – and of the United States as a distinct geographic and cultural space. Such symbolic rendering of travel reports in the U.S. canon's most praised fiction has been at the core of prolonged debate on American national character. Concepts, ideas, and myths that have been vital in debates on what constitutes American history – such as the frontier, manifest destiny, American exceptionalism, individualism, and freedom – have been analyzed as employing an imaginative language of travel, movement, and mobility.

However, it is not only American *fiction*, but also *non-fictional travel writing*, that has received critical attention in American studies: from the Myth and Symbol School to more recent transnational and postcolonial revisionist readings of American literary and cultural history. Non-fictional accounts of journeys of discovery, exploration, and leisure have been read both as first-hand accounts of mobility and as *imaginative* representations of landscape, narrative perspective, and cultural encounters. Many reports on North American travel were published before fiction garnered a mass audience in the United States. The texts' observations contributed to an understanding of contemporary patterns of *national* and *global* identification.

Historians and literary critics agree that travel reports have shaped perceptions of the so-called New World. These texts have,

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however, also shaped the emergence of early U.S. culture and its “geographical imagination” – what David Harvey defines as the ways that people compare themselves to larger social structures (1990, 418). At the same time, not much scholarly consideration has been given to the breadth of non-fictional travel writing in the revolutionary period, the early republic, and the first decades of the nineteenth century. In response to this, the present study reads North American travel writing of these periods within the historical and theoretical contexts of *nation-building*.

1.1. Travel Writing 1770 to 1830

Framing the Nation, Claiming the Hemisphere examines the national and transnational imagination in travel reports by American authors written between 1770 and 1830. The travel reports considered range from John and William Bartram’s pre-revolutionary travelogues and Jonathan Carver’s exploratory report on his journey through the Great Lakes region (1778), to early nineteenth-century reports, such as Anne Newport Royall’s *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States* (1826) and William Duane’s *A Visit to Colombia* (1826). Although earlier colonial writing about journeys in the Americas will be a point of reference throughout the study, this study’s primary sources were written between the beginning of the struggle against British rule, following the end of the French and Indian War, and the beginning of Andrew Jackson’s presidency. The decades between 1770 and 1830 were times of shifting colonial boundaries, nation-building, and emergent discourses of collective identification in North America. Travelogues of the time, as the following chapters aim to show, are affected by three central conditions: first, by realignments of the parameters of mixed-genre travel writing; second, by both established and emerging myths of the American experience; and, finally, by a discourse of nation-building that is characterized by anticolonial identification and the emergence of an expansionist national narrative.

The focus on inter-American and transatlantic relations affects questions of genre and narrative structure. What use do authors make of the non-fictional travel narrative within the emerging discourse of literary nationalism? The following chapters illustrate

strategies used by authors for employing the – indeterminate and hybrid – format of the travel report as means of giving expression to what are understood as distinctly American perspectives, experiences, and assessments of international relations. In view of the dominant role of European perspectives in travel writing, American texts of the period perform what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) and Walter D. Mignolo (2000) have described as “creolizing discourse”: a “re-articulation of global designs from the perspective of local histories” (Mignolo 2000, 41). Such creolizing texts transform conventions of the genre by adding vernacular, national, or anticolonial elements.

Based on the work of scholars including Richard Slotkin (1973), Benedict Anderson (1983), Amy Kaplan (1993, 2005), and Walter D. Mignolo (2000, 2005), I understand the American *national imagination* as a dynamic negotiation of boundaries both real and imagined. Such boundaries can be based on regional, religious, racial, linguistic, or anticolonial considerations. These boundaries are controversial sites that ultimately bear on what distinguishes the nation from its outside. How are the national ‘Self’ and its ‘Others’ represented and imagined in travel writing of this era? How do the nation’s constantly morphing geographical borders and its rapidly transforming union of republican states affect early American conceptions of self and international mobility?

In his study of early American travel writing, Pere Gifra-Adroher argues that if the United States, as a supposedly ‘enlightened’ republic, “was to disseminate its worldview then it had to necessarily produce its own representation of otherness” (2000, 88). Gifra-Adroher, therefore, directs attention to the discursive processes in the construction of national boundaries. Indeed, boundary controversies that *framed* the nation were among the issues negotiated by the ‘new’ discursive formations of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America, to which travel writing contributed. They include:

- (1) the permeable boundaries between ‘domestic’ and ‘abroad’ in North America,
- (2) the relation between the newly emerging, nationally anchored narrator and the implied ‘domestic’ reader,

- (3) discourse of a North American ‘interior’ shaped by a dichotomy between wilderness and civilization, and
- (4) the strong influence of generic and descriptive conventions from a colonialist tradition of European ‘New World’ writing, demonstrating the persistence of Eurocentric views.

The following chapters explore these boundary controversies as part of broader discursive negotiations of the relation between the nation and the world, the domestic and the foreign, home and abroad, as well as complex forms of collective identification.

In contrast to scholarship that engages a notion of Americanness based primarily on ‘domestic’ outlooks and experiences such as westward expansion (‘the frontier’) and the Biblical exegesis of New World experiences (‘the puritan past’), here I am rather interested in the function of categories such as the *outside world*, *neighboring nations*, and *colonial empires* in the emergence of a U.S. national literary imagination. How does a shift in focus from a discursive ‘domestication’ of North American space to an interest in the *Othering* of what lies beyond national borders ultimately affect the understanding of the emergent national self? These are the kind of questions that begin by seeing *the transnational as a fundamental element of national emergence*. Such a transnational reading of national discourse¹ does not suggest a categorical rejection of the significance of frontier historiography and mythology in conceptualizing early American society, culture, and literature. Rather, it situates frontier discourse as one particular imagined contact scenario among others. We find a similar notion in Slotkin’s seminal works, where, for example, the frontier stands as one of the founding myths of American identity, but is placed alongside mobility as a related integral feature of the national imaginary. The present study differs, however, from such established readings as it approaches early American

¹ On national and transnational approaches in literary analysis, see Benítez-Rojo (1996), 13, Rowe (2002), and Waller (2011), 1–3. On the interdependence of national and transnational perspectives, see Beck (2009), 82–90.

discourse of boundaries and borders, including that of the frontier, from a perspective informed by critical notions of nationalism, empire-building, and imperialist Othering.

This monograph therefore ultimately works to demonstrate how travel writing – with very few exceptions – supports and affirms the discursive processes of nation-building. From such a perspective, travel writing not only contributes to shaping the national imagination and its conceptions of superiority but is also complicit in territorial expansionism and its subjugation of conquered peoples and their respective cultural histories. The following chapters claim that travel writing of the early national period illustrates both the *connectedness* and the *entanglements* of a young United States. The primary texts analyzed in each thematic chapter negotiate categories such as *the outside*, *the home*, and *the world*, which I argue are foundational to the conception of national identity. The negotiation of these categories concentrates on cultural, ‘racialized,’ and colonial interrelations and dominant “global designs” (Mignolo 2000). Thus, the national narrative evolves from representations of *contact scenarios* in North America, in the transatlantic world, and around the globe. Without ignoring the roles of national mythology or the symbolism of American nature, my approach to travel writing ultimately concentrates on the continual co-existence of fluid notions of both ‘home’ and ‘abroad.’

Reading Travel Writing

The vast range of writing that can be read as ‘travel writing’ makes it inevitable to necessarily limit primary sources – especially in the present case, with a considered timeframe of sixty years (1770–1830). Thus, this study concentrates on anglophone travel writing that was written by authors who defined themselves, at least during the relevant periods, as either colonial Americans or as citizens of the United States. A large majority of primary texts were authored by individuals who were not professional writers. Most of the texts examined in the following chapters were chosen due to having been either published in book format or written with that format in mind. This selection, for the most part, means

excluding unpublished journals and private letters. Despite this limitation of primary sources, the study otherwise follows a rather broad definition of both travel writing and travel.

While Paul Fussell, editor of the *Norton Book of Travel* (1987), defines traveling as “movement from one place to another [that] should manifest some impulse of non-utilitarian pleasure,”² many critics maintain a much more encompassing notion of travel. This is the case for Elizabeth Bohls (2005), for example, who emphasizes that Fussell’s definition is based on the aestheticism of a “leisured elite” (xvi) and excludes the mobility of individuals inspired by motives other than the privileged attractions of Fussell’s “non-utilitarian pleasure.” To give an indication of other kinds of travelers, Bohls asks: “Do sailors, soldiers, servants, slaves, emigrants, exiles, transported convicts, military and diplomatic wives, count as travellers?” (xvi).

Along these revisionist lines reflecting on social privilege, the present study emphasizes the significance of accounts of “non-voluntary movement”³ that embrace captivity narratives, slave narratives, sailor narratives, and reports by individuals who had access to neither publishing nor public culture. Accounts by such authors have often been published posthumously, promoted by printers, professional authors, or scholars. Although the focus of this study is on reports written for publication, it also includes slave narratives (Olaudah Equiano) and captain memoirs (Amasa Delano).

Methodologically, this study is influenced by scholarship in both American studies and postcolonial literary studies. While American studies traditionally involves the critical examination of paradigms of national symbolism and cultural mythology (in addition to their more recent transnational redefinitions), postcolonial approaches have strengthened this project’s theorization of the function of literary texts as part of colonial expansion and rule – and as parts of the literary, cultural, and political discourse in the aftermath of said rule. In addition to analyzing the contradictions that complicate relations between discourse of nationalism

² See Fussell (1987), 21, see also Bohls (2005), xvi.

³ On the issue of voluntary and involuntary travel, see James Clifford (1997) and Kristi Siegel (2002).

and of colonialism, the present study engages issues from both genre theory and the history of ideas. In this respect, the corpus is approached in the sense of what Sacvan Bercovitch has referred to as “cultural close reading” (1975, 15), a critical method that derives its account of the imbrication of text and context from attentive explication and critique of the literary work’s own inscription of its cultural embeddedness. The aim is a balance between text and context, neither sanctifying the primary literary source nor privileging the cultural context.⁴

This study contextualizes travel writing within a broader perspective of American literary production of the period, including epic poetry, autobiography, slave narratives, and the beginnings of the American novel. The central focus of analysis, however, examines how American self-fashioning and self-positioning in the world appear in the travel writing of the period. I understand the *national imagination* as a symbolic construction both of the collective national ‘Self’ and of the outside world as the nation’s ‘Other.’ Thus, for example, an examination of the imaginative elements in travel writing emphasizes the discursive entanglements that combine images of the new, post-revolutionary, and – as it fashions itself – anticolonial community *as a unified nation*. In the emergent “national narrative”⁵ of the period, a regionally based American mythology – which had been forming since the first European settlements in the Americas – came to embed itself with new discourses of borders, national liberation, anticolonialism, and expansionism. Although this reading of the period’s travel writing is strongly influenced by scholarship in American studies that focuses primarily on U.S. national mythology⁶ and early U.S. fiction, it draws also on genre studies and the function of different forms of travel writing throughout the history of European colonial expansionism in the Americas.

Over the past decades, there has been a remarkable resurgence of critical interest in travel writing and its relation to constructions of Otherness. Such readings have examined forms of knowledge production within power asymmetries and processes

⁴ On “cultural close reading,” see Christopher Looby (1996), 8.

⁵ See Jonathan Arac (2005) and Donald Pease (1994).

⁶ See Slotkin (1973).

of global imperial expansion. A range of political events and social transformations, as well as various intellectual debates and movements, have contributed to such interest in forms of writing devoted to discovery, exploration, and tourism. Mary Campbell, commenting on theoretical approaches to travel writing, speaks of a “necessary reimagining of the world first occasioned by the post-World War II resistance movements and wars of liberation in the former European colonies, as well as by the waves of immigration that followed” (2002, 261). In addition to these socio-historical contexts, theoretical and methodological frameworks based on the work of Michel Foucault have been among the most far-reaching influences in the study of travel writing. Foucault’s theory of the historical functions of discourse significantly influenced such publications as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and Hayden White’s *The Tropics of Discourse* (1985), both of which introduced to literary studies new models of thinking about non-fictional representation, including travel writing.⁷ Subsequently, the theory of travel writing has been influenced by the self-critical analysis of ethnography (the ‘writing culture’ debate),⁸ the analysis of the function of anthropology in the thinking of the post-Enlightenment world, and theories of the postcolonial global condition. Feminist literary scholars, most notably Sara Mills (1991, 2005), have made major contributions to the study of the gendered figuration of exploration, conquest, mobility, cultural exchange, home, and the nation.⁹

One of the most influential studies in the field, Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) combines the study of genre, ideology critique, and the history of ideas in her examination of eighteenth-century travel writing on Latin America. Stephen Greenblatt’s analysis of early modern New World discourse in *Marvelous Possessions* (1991), meanwhile, has been widely perceived as directing the study of travel writing toward a new historicist cultural poetics that contextualizes

⁷ See Chris Anderson (1989).

⁸ See James Clifford and George Marcus (1986), Clifford (1988 and 1997) and Johannes Fabian (1983).

⁹ On feminist contributions to the study of travel writing, see Elizabeth A. Bohls (1995 and 2005) and Lila Marz Harper (2001).

writing among literary, social, and political articulation. Studies by Mills (2005) and Amanda Gilroy (2000), both influenced by Pratt's focus on colonial power asymmetries and questions of cultural and literary exchange, also concentrate on the involvement of texts in broader political and social discourse and intertextual linkages. Mills's work, which is characteristic of the complex theorizing of discourses of colonialism, emphasizes the processes of Orientalism not as a unified discourse as implied by Said's groundbreaking study, but rather as an amalgam of diverse elements that both affirm and contest dominant discourses (55). Similarly, Srinivas Aravamudan defines the "tropicopolitan" as an inhabitant of the geo-cultural tropical regions and, at the same time, as a tropological construct. Aravamudan's theory is built on the assumption that, because of these related yet distinct agencies and discursive functions, the subaltern cannot be conceptualized simply as a "resisting native and radical other who is completely outside of discourses of domination" (1999, 6).¹⁰ Such critical readings of travel writing help to examine and extrapolate the contradictions and complicities in the corpus of early U.S. travel writing.

Travel Writing as Hybrid Discourse

In accord with these theoretical and methodological perspectives, Amanda Gilroy defines travel writing as "a hybrid discourse that traversed the disciplinary boundaries of politics, letter-writing, education, medicine, aesthetics and economics" (2000, 1).¹¹ This notion of travel writing as "hybrid discourse" has informed more recent studies that highlight how in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a combination of autobiographical, historiographical, and ethnographical modes often proceeded along the lines of natural history. As a discourse, natural history structures and legitimizes much of the writing of the period.¹² This allowed

¹⁰ Similarly interested in conceptualizing colonial discursive positions, Peter Hulme (1986) emphasizes the simultaneous operation of a variety of discourses of colonialism.

¹¹ On intertextuality and travel writing, see Pfister (1993).

¹² See Christoph Irmscher (1999).

authors to generally underemphasize the colonial, ideological, and political dimensions of their writing while stressing their affiliation with cosmopolitan and Enlightenment discourse of scientific progress.¹³ This overlapping of modes of writing is a major point of focus in Nigel Leask's *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840* (2002), which analyzes the struggle in anglophone travel writing to integrate literary and scientific discourses (9). It also informs Susan Clair Imbarrato's *Traveling Women: Narrative Visions of Early America* (2006), which demonstrates how seemingly disinterested discourses, such as Carl von Linné's taxonomies, in fact, function within narratives and activities of empire-building.¹⁴ These studies stress the intertextual and discursive entanglements of travel writing.

Postcolonial and postmodern notions of culture, ethnography, and mobility have been especially effective in redirecting approaches to early American travel writing. James Clifford and George Marcus's essay collection *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986), Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) and *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), and Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (2014 [1983]) and *Language and Colonial Power* (1991) have all profoundly influenced the conceptual study of travel and travel writing. These ethnographers have ultimately shifted the debate on the construction of cultures toward a theorization of the processes of Othering. Their interest in the discursive aspects of cultural representation draws attention to positionality: that is, to power relations and to speaking and writing positions of authors, narrators, and the observed in ethnographic texts. Hence, representations and conceptions of Self and Others become contested sites of authority.¹⁵

Apart from exploring power asymmetries in the representation of cultural difference, the writing culture debate opened up by Clifford and Marcus took a particular interest in concepts of movement, mobility, and displacement in the study of culture and cultural theory.¹⁶ In this vein, Karen Kaplan's *Questions of*

¹³ On Natural History see chapter III of this study.

¹⁴ See Imbarrato (2006), 17.

¹⁵ See Clifford (1986), 10.

¹⁶ See, for example, Clifford (1997).

Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement (1996) links histories and discourses of tourism and migration while problematizing metaphors of travel. Kaplan's account of travel goes beyond modernist linear conceptions of movement, while at the same time rejecting postmodern celebrations of nomadism and displacement. Influenced by Foucault's discourse analysis and Said's concept of Orientalism, studies of cultural mobility and travel by Kaplan and Greenblatt, seen as well in Peter Bishop's *The Myth of Shangri-La* (1989) and Eric Cheyfitz's *The Poetics of Imperialism* (1991), have deepened the understanding of Western tropes for imagining 'other' cultures and peoples. Such works have directed attention to the ideological aspects of travel writing and to the ambiguous message of cultural and racial superiority that is ingrained in many Western contributions to the genre. Reflecting these debates in ethnography, cultural studies, and literary studies, more recent work on travel writing shows European travelers and their writing as *complicit* in processes of empire-building. Noting the ideological attachments of European authors reporting their encounters on the colonial frontier, Pratt refers to this complicit writing as emerging from "the text of Euroimperialism" (1992, 5), patterns of thinking that continue to fundamentally shape contemporary European perceptions of the world.

Furthermore, most studies focusing on the convergence of travel writing and broader discourses of colonialism and empire-building examine texts written by British and other European authors. This Eurocentric view predominates in scholarship on travel writing of the early U.S. republic, which concentrates primarily on Europeans as explorers, so-called 'discoverers,' or other actors on the 'frontier' between 'civilization' and New World spaces and categories such as wilderness, nature, and cultural primitivism. Far less scholarly emphasis has been devoted to two other kinds of travel writing. The first is the study of colonial 'creole' travel writing. This is travel writing by authors of European or African descent born in the Americas, who self-consciously understand themselves as the offspring of New World geography and culture.¹⁷

¹⁷ The term 'creole' was more commonly used in Latin American and Caribbean cultural and intellectual history than in anglophone continental North American writing. See Pratt (1996), 175, also Benedict Anderson (1983) and Goudie (2006), 8–10. Pratt approaches Hispano-phone creole and native

The second largely understudied form of travel writing emerges during fledgling nation-building processes across the Americas. Such writing documents times of general confusion, accelerated social transformation, and cultural re-orientation. The present study assumes that these two kinds of travel writing – by creole authors and by those engaged in processes of nation-building – are most valuable for understanding discourses of identity in settler colonies, and the particular functions of travel writing within such discourses. After all, such writing reflects on, and takes place during, moments of cultural encounter that establish new power relations marked by contradictory processes of ‘giving voice’ to emerging hegemonic groups and ‘silencing’ those perceived as inferior or as threat to the new status quo.

I suggest that early post-revolutionary identity formation and nation-building deserve deeper analysis, as these themes figure profoundly in Anglophone travel writing. The nation and nationalism, categories of Self and Other, and auto- and hetero-stereotyping of ‘Americanness’ were at this time in the very early stages of their development. Texts replete with imagery of travel and mobility, as well as with images of Self and Other, were produced during these times of radical change that came to fundamentally redefine social, political, and cultural spaces and categories in the Americas. Ultimately, travel writing of the early national period is produced within, and comments on, entangled discourses of anticolonialism, self-definition, and nation-building. In travel writing, what Chloe Chard (1999) describes as *national imagination* functions as a way of *ordering knowledge* in terms that both propose and invent specific national perspectives and patterns of description. Authors insert a national dimension, either in terms of information (e.g., travel routes) by making explicit who is addressed (the ‘implied reader’) or by forming “imaginative geographies” (Said 1978, 49).¹⁸ The following analyses will explore such discursive

texts as reacting, ‘writing back,’ to the colonizing project. In the emergence of British-American identity and conceptions of independence, the distinction of ‘white’ creole appears helpful for highlighting racialized power structures in North America, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

¹⁸ On the function of alterity in travel writing, see Chard (1999), 6–10. Chard highlights hyperbole and emotional responsiveness as narrative strategies in travel writing.

entanglements and processes of knowledge production in various forms of travel reports.

1.2. Nation-building and Literary Nationalism

Several military and social conflicts contributed to the emergence of early U.S. patriotism. The French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and the War of 1812 are among the most significant. Travel writing, on the one hand, *reflected* ideas of the nation as articulated by the general public, and, on the other hand, *shaped* ideas of the nation by offering descriptions, images, concepts,¹⁹ and fantasies of the new nation to the reading public. Through reflecting and shaping ideas of the nation, writing about journeys worked toward promoting the nation-building process.

The slow but substantive shift from British and British American (Giles 2001)²⁰ identification toward a distinctly U.S.-American national identification – along with the correlated shift in symbolism in public life and literary discourse – illustrates the *imagined* character of the nation. Such constructivist notions of the nation have been theorized by Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Homi Bhabha (1990), and Benedict Anderson (1983), the latter of whom observes that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact” are imagined (6). Anderson specifies furthermore that nations as “imagined political communities”²¹ are “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6).

¹⁹ Slotkin, for example, discusses Indianization as a concept related to American national identity formation (241).

²⁰ On the category of British North America, see Giles (2001) and Greene (1993), 95–129.

²¹ Anderson explains his notion of “imagining” by distinguishing it from Ernest Gellner’s notion of “inventing” as brought forward in *Thought and Change* (1964). Gellner here argues that nationalism “invented nations where they do not exist” (169). Anderson, in contrast, emphasizes that such an understanding of nationalism implies that behind the masquerade “true communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations” (6). Concerning the significance of boundaries in nationalism, Anderson writes: “No nation imagines itself as coterminous with mankind” (7).

This emphasizes the significance of ideas of boundaries²² and of self-determination for the discourse of nationalism. In his comparative analysis of nation-building processes around the globe, Anderson discusses the function of language, temporality, and memory in modeling any nationalism. His chief concern lies with the historical conditions and constellations that he regards as specific to nationalism, including the development of print capitalism and the related establishment of a monoglot mass reading public (43). The rise of both the newspaper and the novel was central to popularizing the representation of communities as nations. Such mass-audience publications contributed to the formation of “community in anonymity” (36), characterized by definitions of belonging and the idea of sovereign rule (25). Similarly to Anderson, Hobsbawm stresses the role of communication and subjectivity in the forming and maintaining of nationalism when he argues that “any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of ‘a nation,’ will be treated as such” (8).²³

In the post-revolutionary period, print material became more widely distributed and commercialized in the circum-Atlantic world. In their analysis of such forms of public discourse, both Anderson and Habermas stress that modern history demonstrates a growing tendency of individuals asserting autonomy and citizenship by virtue of reading and publishing. This appears especially relevant at the outset of United States nationhood, as claimed by Cathy Davidson (1986) and Michael Warner (1990).²⁴ In their readings of the social and discursive functions of the early American novel, Davidson and Warner reveal how print culture constituted a decisive contribution to nation-building processes in the United States after 1776. Other scholars, meanwhile, have reassessed the

²² Benedict Anderson (1983), Eric Hobsbawm (1990) and Christopher Looby (1996) understand nationalism as a discursive product dependent on notions of otherness, limits and borders. Looby stresses the importance of symbols and figuration in the emerging nationalism of revolutionary America (2–4).

²³ Hobsbawm (1990) also highlights the function of “standard national languages” and printing in the rise of nationalism (10–11, 34–37, 46–57).

²⁴ Warner (1990) refers to a “republic of letters” (x).

roles of various cultural manifestations in the making of American nationalism, most notably public performance (Waldstreicher 1997). Although the debate on the “Republic of Letters” and public performance brought about a reevaluation of the central function of print media, the general claim that print culture fundamentally contributed to the nation-building processes appears unchallenged. Scholars widely agree that diverse institutionalized printing and publishing of cultural work formed the basis for intellectual discourse that *established* the United States – literally and symbolically – and helped unite the population as citizens.

The signing and publication of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 marked a decisive moment in the synergy of nation-building and print culture. From this moment, American authors had somehow to navigate the shift from a British American (Spengemann 1977; Giles 2001) and white creole perspective (Anderson, Pratt, Mignolo) to a national-American and republican one. In the decades that followed, such processes of nation-building demonstrated distinct New World characteristics, which Anderson understands as key features of “new political entities” (46) in the Americas that underpinned the rise of the concept of nationalism around the globe. Anderson argues that these new American communities – “that sprang up in the Western hemisphere between 1776 and 1838, all of which self-consciously defined themselves as nations, and, with the exception of Brazil, as (non-dynastic) republics” (46) – preceded the rise of the nation state and nationalism in Europe.²⁵ However, these American republics and nations, in contrast to language-based nationalism in other parts of the world, emerged as creole states “formed and led by people who shared a common language and common descent with those against whom they fought” (47). Thus, in the case of the United States, simply using the English language was quite clearly insufficient to mark a national and transatlantic difference. Additional thematic, stylistic, and symbolic means became necessary for imagining the nation in writing.

²⁵ On nationalism and Romanticism in British and French literature of the eighteenth century, see Marlon B. Ross (1995). See Arac (2005) on nationalism and imperialism.

Defining the New World in such a manner supports the argument that travel writing took part in discursive nation-building by way of exploring national myths and the geographies,²⁶ landscapes, and cultures – actual and imagined – of the new nation in relation to other nations, empires, and colonial territories within North America. This discursive entanglement prompts a number of questions. How is the shift from colony to independent republic represented and negotiated in early U.S. literary discourse? How does travel writing of the period construct the *outside* of the nation? How does travel writing mark a shift from colonial to post-revolutionary or national self-understanding?

Larzer Ziff's account of literary production in the early republic analyzes a general shift in representational practices following the publication of the Declaration of Independence. According to Ziff, the Declaration brought about a change from a "culture of immanence" (referring to former British presence in colonial America) to a "culture of representation," in a nation now "dedicated to the principles of representation" (1991, 124–5). This was no easy transition. Ziff stresses that until the publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar" (1837) the literary discourse of this new culture struggled to represent itself as distinct from the past. Emerson was eventually able to redirect the proclaimed political independence of 1776 into a rejection of dependence on British and Old World intellectual institutions, whereas until then the literary culture of the early republic "followed a predominantly conservative course" (Ziff 134). The theologian and author Timothy Dwight was one of the most influential promoters of, as Ziff has it, "an America of conserved values rather than an America of expanding democracy" (133).²⁷ However, his was not the only voice, and, with regard to the U.S. as a nation and democracy in general, Thomas Jefferson's political actions and thought ran counter to Dwight's conservatism and anti-expansionism.²⁸

²⁶ Harvey (1990) speaks of "geographical imagination" (418) and highlights how notions of time and space are employed for comparing social structures.

²⁷ Similar to Ziff, Edward Watts (1998) emphasizes the conservative tendency of early American literary culture.

²⁸ On Dwight's nationalism see Benjamin Spencer (1957, 40–41). Jefferson's position will be discussed in more detail in chapter IV.

After 1776, literary circles generally took sides with one of these opposing factions, and, whether endorsing Dwight's America of conserved values or Jefferson's expansionism, attempted to employ rhetoric of national independence. The search for themes and forms of expression considered specifically American began to shape literary production. After all, the written word constituted a fundamental part of the coordination of public opinion and debate leading up to the American Revolution. Benjamin Spencer highlights precisely this significance of rhetoric, print, and literature for the success of the revolution and the formation of a national consciousness. In his pioneering study of literary nationalism in the early United States, Spencer concludes that "in literature as in politics the achievement of independence is not unrelated to declarations of independence" (1957, 339).

Articulations of *literary nationalism* first emerged prior to revolutionary struggles, as notably manifest in the 'Rising Glory' poetry of the 1770s. After U.S. independence was achieved, writers, politicians, and intellectuals – Noah Webster, famously – were outspoken on the pressing need for a national literature and a standardized American language. A newly literate subjectivity thereby embraced the popular view that America was created as a "refuge from tyranny" with a common "heritage of freedom" (Green 1973, 70). Literary nationalism remained a central issue in the United States until the mid-nineteenth century, when even a writer of Herman Melville's stature struggled to distance himself from Britain's literary tradition and its dominant influence on American letters, a topic Melville addresses in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850). The literary historian Martin Green notes that authors of the early nineteenth century "all still hailed the coming of a great American literature, while admitting the poverty of what had so far been achieved" (1973, 75). Green highlights the importance of George Tucker's 1813 essay "On American Literature" for its discussion of the aesthetics and literary nationalism of the period.²⁹ But it was at least until the literary success of James Fenimore Cooper that England remained the focus of U.S. "literary adoration," even for cultural nationalists.³⁰ Although

²⁹ On Tucker's essay, see James Fieser (2005), xviii–xix.

³⁰ See Spencer, 36.

American debate on literary aesthetics had begun with contributions such as Tucker's essay and Fisher Ames's "The Mire of Democracy" (1805), such contributions ultimately remained less sophisticated than political debate of the same time (Green 75–77). Green comments on the pressure to go beyond the literary achievements of early America that included "the description, the sermon, and the political pamphlet," adding that in the early republic these could be seen "yielding to the novel, the short story, the play, the lyric, the epic, the essay, the satire" (80). "America was now an independent nation," Green concludes, "and it was time to write an independent national literature, to attempt to great literary forms" (80).

Despite public pressure to achieve complete national unity, such a process demanded more than a growing distinction between the newly independent republic and its former colonial motherland. Apart from shifts in transatlantic relations, the emergence of a unified nation would also need to take place within the nation's own borders in the form of domestic social and discursive production. In his influential *The History of the United States of America* (1801–1817), Henry Adams observes that around 1800 such a development was yet to occur:

In becoming politically independent of England, the old thirteen provinces developed little more commercial intercourse with each other in proportion to their wealth and population than they had maintained in colonial days. The material ties that united them grew in strength no more rapidly than the ties which bound them to Europe. Each group of states lived a life apart. (1889–91, 11)

Adams's study was to shape literary history well into the twentieth century. In accord with Adams's appraisal of economic and social life in the first decades of the nineteenth century, literary historians such as Martin Green, Everett Emerson (1977), and Emory Elliott (1994) have demonstrated that regional perspectives and traditions maintained more prevalence than their nationalist counterparts in the literary scenes of New England, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies. In New England, the so-called "Connecticut Wits" came to prominence and produced some of the most noted poetic works of the later revolutionary period, whereas Thomas Jefferson stood as the

most eminent intellectual spokesperson of the South. While Elliott identifies three major culturally distinct regions within the original United States,³¹ Green, in his own regional approach to the literature and aesthetic exchange of the early United States, rather highlights the attachment of writers to the major urban centers of Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Hartford. However, regardless of whether one distinguishes specific cultural regions or emphasizes the intellectual milieu unique to urban centers, most studies of early republic literature nonetheless highlight internal variation. Everett Emerson, for instance, describes revolutionary America as “a collection of semiseparate colonies along the Atlantic coast emerging into unity and independence” (1977, 3). Therefore, both external and internal boundaries characterize the national literary discourse of the time. While external markers are used for defining the sovereignty of the nation, especially regarding transatlantic relations, internal or domestic markers are used to refer to regional, social, political, racialized, or religious distinctions within a society that finds itself in the process of uniting as a nation.

1.3. Fluid Boundaries: The Categories of Domestic and Abroad

Travel in North America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been associated less with journeys amid coastal regions settled by Europeans than it has been with life in the so-called ‘interior’ – that is, in territory west and south of the original United States.³² Notions of such travel in regions seen as uninhabited, or as inhabited by indigenous groups rendered ‘uncivilized,’ generally treat the major part of North America as set outside the contemporaneous European colonial map. However, the United States was primarily bordered by neither uninhabited nor undefined ‘interior’ space, but rather by territory that was administered by Spain, France, and Russia. Especially considering that the region was still home to indigenous nations, it is highly

³¹ In a similar way, Slotkin defines three culturally distinct regions in colonial America: “[...] Puritan, middle-colony or southern” (242).

³² See Harold Smith (1999).

significant that travel writing of the time is generally regarded as an expression of encounters with frontier topoi and experience of the boundary between civilization and wilderness. Despite the prevalence of this assumption, when critically reading the travel accounts of the period it becomes clear that authors focus not only on encounters with ‘nature’ and ‘uncivilized wilderness,’ but comment furthermore on interactions with forms of European colonial administration and settlement. Accordingly, many of the leading politicians of the time – most prominently Jefferson and Hamilton – were intensely involved in, and intellectually preoccupied with, foreign policy on the American continent.

Such dimensions of diplomatic history and international relations have concerned historians of the Hispanic borderlands, such as Herbert Eugene Bolton,³³ as well as scholars interested in the history of French and Spanish colonialism. Nevertheless, until recently most studies of travel writing of this period demonstrated a tendency to represent the territories west, south, and north of the United States as wilderness. This perspective produced a nationalized image of the interior: the idea of the wilderness as given domestic U.S. territory. Not only does such criticism work to erase Native American nations from national discourse, but it also deemphasizes the political, cultural, and discursive significance of European settler colonies in North America and overlooks the importance of conflicting colonial *claims*. Ultimately, such critical understanding of the interior as wilderness ignores the expansionist politics that lay at the center of a new republic fundamentally informed by geopolitical considerations that legitimized notions of empire-building among the political elite.

Although soon after independence Jefferson and other leaders envisioned an American empire reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, vast parts of what would become the U.S. in fact remained to be populated by Native American nations and

³³ In his controversial essay “The Epic of Greater America,” delivered as his presidential address before the American Historical Association in 1932, Bolton contradicts “purely nationalistic presentations” (68) of the history of the Western hemisphere and examines the Hispanic history of the southwest from a comparative perspective. For a more recent transnational approach to the history of the Western hemisphere see Fernández-Armesto (2003).

remained under European and Mexican rule up until the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Given this geopolitical situation for early American travel, it would be misleading to describe anglophone travel writing of the time primarily in terms of exploration of the frontier and ‘Western wilderness.’ Such an approach reduces the complexity of relations among continental neighbors as well as the ongoing geostrategic work of their political representatives, while also downplaying the multitude of perspectives held by settlers and travelers writing about North America. Reginald Horsman, a scholarly critic of U.S. imperialism, writes about this misconception of American expansionism during the early years of the independent republic:

The history of westward advance is sometimes written as though it involved a domestic expansion of pioneers across an empty American continent. In reality, of course, most of the continent had still to be obtained from foreign powers [...], and the American continent was inhabited by a variety of Indian tribes. (1970, xii)

Given the North American traveler’s need for negotiations with foreign powers, it is especially striking that their travel writing – and, even more remarkably, the majority of scholarship on such writing – generally lacks explicit notions of both the ‘domestic’ and the continental ‘abroad.’ This confusion can be traced to a long history of symbolically *claiming* New World land without recognition of existing settlements. This began with Columbus’s taking possession of clearly populated islands in what he believed to be India.³⁴ Such initial symbolic actions of colonial acquisition – like conquering and domesticating through raising flags and naming places – generated a New World discourse that represented the territory as empty space free for the taking. Moreover, much extant scholarship on American travel writing contains persistent reference to movement across what is imagined to be, or to have been, free land.

Fiction of the early national period by Lydia Maria Child, Charles Brockden Brown, and, most notably, James Fenimore Cooper secured the frontier experience a central position in the

³⁴ See Greenblatt (1991), Jane (1988), and Morison (1983).

American cultural imaginary.³⁵ Until the 1980s, in historical and literary studies the frontier was predominantly understood, in Frederick Jackson Turner's sense, as the dividing line between civilization and wilderness, rather than between separate sovereign nations or colonial empires.³⁶ At the end of the nineteenth century, Turner argued in his influential thesis that the frontier was a "meeting point between savagery and civilization" (1893, 3). This opposition aptly characterizes the logics through which settlers, explorers, and other travelers frequently understood and framed their confrontations with parts of North America that were, to them, unknown. At the same time, however, this opposition reduces the complexity of the cultural encounters that appear in writings about frontier life. Bolton is among the historians of the Hispanic Southwest to have addressed this issue. Later revisionist historians like Reginald Horsman (1970, 1981), Richard Slotkin (1973), Patricia Nelson Limerick (1987), and Annette Kolodny (1975) worked to produce much more complex understandings of frontier history. The present study approaches American cultural and literary history guided by such revisionist historiography. It focuses upon territorial expansion (in which 'the frontier' has been a central force) in the context of U.S. global relations and politics, with a critical eye especially on the ideologies of manifest destiny³⁷ and American exceptionalism.

In late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reports on North America, like other parts of the world, the notion of 'abroad'

³⁵ Spengemann (1977) and Slotkin (1973) discuss mutual influences between early non-fictional frontier narratives and the early American novel. Quite a number of non-fictional frontier narratives have been collected in the volumes of *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites (1966).

³⁶ Horsman (1970 and 1981) highlights attitudes to race in the history and mythology of the American frontier.

³⁷ On manifest destiny in the mid-nineteenth century, Horsman (1981) writes:

Agrarian and commercial desires and the search for national and personal wealth and security were at the heart of mid-nineteenth century expansion, but the racial ideology that accompanied and permeated these drives helped determine the nature of America's specific relationships with the peoples encountered in the surge to world power. By the 1850s it is generally believed in the United States that a superior American race was destined to shape the destiny of much of the world. (6)

is evoked, imagined, and negotiated geopolitically and symbolically. While depicting experiences and assessing regions outside the nation's geographical borders, the writing also evokes what is located and imagined to be outside the nation in other, literary ways: for example, by referring to implied readers in Europe, or raising intertextual references to European writers. In such cases, the category of 'abroad' structures the report without necessarily depicting a journey abroad. For example, we find references to an addressee in the Old World, as a reader, commissioner, or contractee.³⁸ Although I highlight controversial aspects of the theory and the history of the categories of 'domestic,' 'abroad,' and 'frontier,' I will retain to some extent the use of these terms because they reflect the rhetorical strategies of *claiming the continent* throughout United States history. Thus, although a key reason for my use of these terms is historical, it is also methodological – to explicate the very instabilities of these categories.

1.4. Cosmopolitanism and Imperialism

Cosmopolitanism and *imperialism* are not terms found in American travel writing and political thought of the late eighteenth century. These terms are first seen later, in the nineteenth century,³⁹ and are therefore employed somewhat anachronistically in my analysis of the travel writing of the early national period. Nevertheless, these two ideologies and forms of political practice help determine the relation of a writer to an imagined community, be it the nation, an empire, or humanity itself.

Ulrich Beck (2009) emphasizes that notions of nationalism always contain or imply *transnational* dimensions⁴⁰, as any articulation of a nation must necessarily define its own outside and thereby requires a boundary between *us* and *them*. An added consideration is that the nature of tensions between national and transnational identifications varies significantly, depending on geographic location as well as historical period. In the places and times relevant for this study, it is most significant that the

³⁸ As seen, for example, in Bartram's *Travels*, Jefferson's *Notes*, Crèvecoeur's *Letters*, reports I will discuss in the following chapters.

³⁹ See Arac and Rituo (1995).

⁴⁰ See Beck (2009), 82–90.

post-revolutionary American understanding of the intellectual leading class was strongly influenced not only by forms of Protestantism, but also by philosophical and political aspects of transatlantic Enlightenment thinking.⁴¹ The Declaration of Independence denotes the most obvious and popular expression of such intellectual and political influence. Although notions of cosmopolitanism appear already in the pre-revolutionary writing of Benjamin Franklin, universalist perspectives become more clearly evident in revolutionary authors like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson, who emphasize the idea of a world citizenship of learned men.⁴² However, the anticolonial and separatist rhetoric of the Declaration ran conceptually counter to notions of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism – in the sense of world citizenship and universalism – as articulated by Voltaire, Hume, and Franklin.⁴³

After independence, U.S. nationalism quickly acquired a *transnational* dimension in several senses of the term. Not only were international relations acknowledged, but, furthermore, it was nationalism that took on a universal dimension by imagining a specific mission of the young republic as seen in Jefferson's famous phrasing: the "Empire of Liberty."⁴⁴ At that time, a program of territorial expansion was endorsed and framed by an ideology of empire. Thus, early American cosmopolitanism and imperialism were articulated within both national and transnational discursive parameters.

The history of cosmopolitanism reveals for some critics its complicity with the ideology of colonial and imperial expansion. Eduardo Mendieta describes even Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitanism as imperial since it is "both blind and dismissive of its own material conditions of possibility" (2009, 241). Mendieta's early twenty-first-century perspective notes an "imperialist" lack of self-reflexivity in early American cosmopolitanism in its failure to be properly "dialogic" (245). But in the U.S. context,

⁴¹ See Kelleter (2002).

⁴² Universalism also characterizes the work of poets of the early national period, among them Philip Freneau and Joel Barlow.

⁴³ On Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, see Schlereth (1977).

⁴⁴ See Tucker and Hendrickson (1990), 159.

post-revolutionary cosmopolitanism appears imperial not simply because it lacks the self-reflexivity that dialogue fosters, but moreover because republican and territorial expansionism is composed of distinctly imperialist qualities. These qualities threatened to burden the new nation and its global politics with the exact traditional, ‘Old World’ practices of empire that the first independent republic of the New World, according to its public rhetoric, had sought to renounce and replace.

The transnationalism of Jefferson’s time can therefore be described as one of the original contradictions of the early republic. On the one hand, the United States was an anticolonial nation that embraced a cosmopolitan celebration of universal rights and a global mission of liberation and freedom. On the other hand, the new nation justified expansionist and imperial politics that depend fundamentally upon the subjugation of other people. In this way, U.S. national discourse differs from that of other former settler colonies, as its inaugural anti-colonialism was coupled with an insistence on the global spread of a democratic mission that is deeply ingrained in the country’s institutions, culture, and society. This contradiction is summed up by historian Peter Hulme, who describes the U.S.’s position in the history of colonialism as being “postcolonial and colonizing at the same time” (1995, 122). I argue that these founding contradictions in understanding nationhood gave rise to the expression of three forms of transnationalism in the travel writing of the period, which may, I suggest, be referred to as revolutionary cosmopolitanism, enforced cosmopolitanism,⁴⁵ and expansionist (or imperial) cosmopolitanism.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Bruce Robbins (1998) speaks of “actually existing cosmopolitanism” (e.g. slave narratives such as Olaudah Equiano’s *Narrative*, first published in 1789), see also Pheng Cheah (1998) in the same volume (21). On Equiano’s *Narrative*, see chapter 5.2. of this study.

⁴⁶ After the American revolution, Jefferson was not the only American to begin speaking of an American empire. Although many historians have used the term imperialism only in reference to late nineteenth-century USA, recent scholarship questions the implied assumption that the USA only became an imperialist power at the time of the Spanish-American War. John Carlos Rowe’s *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism* (2000) addresses these issues referring to U.S. capitalism as expansionist and cosmopolitanism as a way to legitimize this expansionism (6, 15).

In addition to travel writers, poets provided further expression to these (pre-)national, transnational, and essentially creole ideas and ideals. American poets of the revolutionary period began to develop the shared theme of the “rising glory of America” that envisioned America as a place where men could begin the world anew, where humanity could realize age-old dreams. The first “rising glory” poems were written in the years leading up to the publication of the Declaration of Independence, with authors continuing to contribute to this poetic format throughout the revolutionary period. Among the best known examples are John Trumbull’s Yale University commencement poem in 1770, “Prospect of the Future Glory of America”; Joel Barlow’s “Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement” (1781); David Humphrey’s “The Glory of America” (1783); Timothy Dwight’s “America: or, A Poem on the Settlement of the British Colonies” (1780); and, most notably, Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Philip Freneau’s “Poem on the Rising Glory of America” (1771).⁴⁷ Elliott writes: “The ‘rising glory’ poems and the biblical-nationalistic epics of the 1770s and 1780s allowed the poets to demonstrate their patriotic fervor, social usefulness, and commitment to the future glory of American industry, religion, and arts” (1982, 22). This prospective poetry, argues Elliott, can be understood as an articulation of the republic’s earliest self-image. As Elliott further notes, the nationalist ambitions of this genre were often far-reaching and offered “a prospect in which various forms of republicanism, peace, and empire spread from the U.S. across the western hemisphere, and often over the globe” (160).

Writers and poets of the time also aspired to demarcate the New World from the Old World. Joel Barlow’s epic poem *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) – and his later *The Columbiad* (1807) – provided contemporary readers with a description of America’s history, a poetic topography, and a vision of the future that were hemispheric in their historic and imaginary scope while also emphasizing divergences between the Old and the New World.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See Emerson (1977), 15.

⁴⁸ In his *The Americas: A Hemispheric History* (2003), the historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto uses the phrase “Pan-American patriotism” when referring to Barlow and Jefferson’s notion of the Western hemisphere (120).

Rising Glory poetry, however, was not the only literary form to employ a national imagination alongside transnational references and imagery. Such elements also played central roles in the poetry of writers as different as Timothy Dwight and Phillis Wheatley, and furthermore in the first American novels, including the work of Susanna Rowson and Charles Brockden Brown. Therefore, together with statesmen and political commentators, the poets of the new nation understood America in relation to the globe while also probing its unique significance for world history and humankind. Indeed, in very broad terms, the discourse of the nation drew on cosmopolitan and imperialist ideas and politics that attributed a transnational significance to the United States that transcended any strict sense of regional borders.

Scholarship on early republic cosmopolitanism and imperialism generally centers on Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine. In their respective political writing, these figures each contributed to framing an Enlightenment view of cosmopolitanism.⁴⁹ At the same time, especially in relation to Jefferson and Hamilton, scholars have remarked on the use of the term ‘empire’ as distinct from cosmopolitanism. This distinction is particularly relevant in connection with the concept of the nation and with modes of global identification. The political historian Karl-Friedrich Walling, for example, comments on Hamilton’s notion of “American empire”:

As revealed in the first paragraph of *The Federalist*, Hamilton regarded the American “empire” as one of the “most interesting” in the world because Americans were attempting to establish it in an entirely new way, through popular “reflection and choice” rather than through the traditional modes of sheer “accident” and military “force” (Federalist 1:3). (1999, 95)

Walling notes that Hamilton’s sense of empire did not mean imperialistic “in the modern sense of ruling by force alone” (97).⁵⁰

For a comparative view of the efforts to establish “cultural independence” in Hispanic America and in the U.S. (101–158).

⁴⁹ See Mendieta (2009), 242.

⁵⁰ Gerald Stourzh, in *Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government* (1970), takes the opposite view to Walling.

Such correlation between cosmopolitanism and expansionism has similarly been read as controversial in Jefferson's political thinking and practice. Sean Goudie (2006), for instance, juxtaposes Hamilton's "empire for commerce" to Jefferson's "empire for liberty" as a means of indicating the discursive overlap of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and national-imperial desire.

The following chapters will present travel writing as a tool in the nation-building process of the United States: a tool that *reflects* the mindset of the time, a tool that *imagines* a national community, and a tool that *shapes* the mindset of a people. The study maintains that travel writing, as a literary format, *negotiates* the triangular relationship between American post-revolutionary nation-building, continued European colonial expansion in the Americas, and the ongoing existence of indigenous nations. This historical moment, therefore, is characterized by discourses of anticolonialism alongside new, internal colonization of native peoples and territories. The historical moment is further characterized by emerging expansionist and imperialist practices of the young republic that Goudie has described as "paracolonialism" (2006, 4). Underlying each of my readings is a common thesis that travel writing defines and negotiates borders, limits, and territorial expansion, and that it does so within the parameters of the identity-generating discourse of nation-building. My readings therefore argue that nation-building must be understood as product of complex, entangled, and contradictory practices and ideas.

Chapter two, "Early American Travel Writing," begins by outlining the theoretical and methodological parameters of this study. In section 2.2, I move to provide an overview of the history of travel writing in colonial British North America, the period immediately preceding this study's historical focus. In 2.3, I introduce generic characteristics and historical aspects of travel writing during the early national period, when a distinct national imagination emerged in the writing of authors who understood themselves as Americans. Finally, in 2.4 I discuss critical approaches to early American travel writing.

Chapter three, "Creolizing America," examines the contribution of authors based in North America to the Enlightenment

project of knowledge production. Here I suggest that writing by these colonial American authors incorporated structures and tropes drawn from European natural history. More specifically, I argue that these travelogues appropriate natural history in ways that mark a transatlantic difference (as a form of creole sensibility) that foreshadows the development of a more explicitly national imagination in American travel writing to come. This chapter provides readings of travel reports by Jonathan Carver, John Bartram, and William Bartram. These three reports on journeys of exploration illustrate the complexities of national identification and authorship in relation to colonial influence during the revolutionary period.

Chapter four, “Framing the Expanding Nation,” moves to trace the national discourse of expansion in topographical descriptions (Thomas Jefferson and Gilbert Imlay), narratives and descriptions of the interior (John Filson), and reports of domestic travels in early nineteenth-century urban American society (Anne Newport Royall). Chapters five and six examine how the new nation is represented in writing about journeys abroad. These two chapters concentrate on Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, regions that became highly relevant in discourse of national emergence, as well as in the articulation of imperialist ideas that favored further expansion.

Most of the primary texts examined in this study reflect on the new nation’s significance for humanity and world history. The writing, therefore, does not only show the U.S. as a new nation among other nations, but furthermore presents the nation as a complex, and at times contradictory, set of ideas: as exceptional, as a promise to mankind, as the leading power of the Western hemisphere. This study’s conclusion shifts to link these readings to the later nineteenth century, a time when the initial challenges of nation-building had been overcome, when the United States had established itself as a powerful player in Western hemisphere affairs, and when, on the global scene, the country was becoming respected as an emerging world power. I conclude by noting how patterns of national self-definition and worldview identified in travel writing of the first fifty years after independence indeed reverberate in a period when U.S. global

engagement grew significantly more controversial. To do so, I examine how publications by Richard Henry Dana Jr., Herman Melville, María Ruiz de Burton, and José Martí continue the complex tradition of exploring the multi-faceted nexus that is nationalism, expansionism, and imperialism in the Americas.

II. Early American Travel Writing: History and Concepts

2.1. Travel Writing as Genre and Discourse

The term travel writing encompasses a wide variety of texts. Many scholars have contributed to the debate on the definition of travel writing as a genre. As most critics agree, due to its heterogeneous structure, generic boundaries of travel writing are difficult to define. This has inspired critics to speak of the “undefinability”¹ of travel writing and to propose not seeing travel writing as a genre but rather as a “collective term for a variety of texts, both predominantly fictional and non-fictional, whose main theme is travel” (Jan Borm 2004, 13). Mary Baine Campbell (2002) and Zweder von Martels (1994) refer to travel writing as a specific literary genre but at the same time indicate the broad textual spectrum embraced by the genre:

Travel writing seems unlimited in its forms of expression, but though we may therefore find it hard to define the exact boundaries of this genre, it is generally understood what it contains. It ranges from the indisputable examples such as guidebooks, itineraries and routes and perhaps also maps to less restricted accounts of journeys over land or by water, or just descriptions of experiences abroad. These appear in prose and poetry, and are often part of historical and (auto)biographical works. Sometimes we find no more than simple notes and observations, sometimes more elaborate diaries. (von Martels 1994 xi)

¹ See Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (2004), 3.

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In writing about travel, the emphasis on different conventional modes varies, even within historical periods and often from author to author. Writers may employ literary, journalistic, autobiographical, historiographical, or ethnographical modes of representation. Thus, major literary genres and textual formats overlap in travel writing; among them are the autobiography, the novel, the letter, and the diary.

Among the many possible distinctions to be made between different kinds of travel writing are non-fictional and fictional narratives, texts written for publication and those merely written for private use, book-length accounts (sometimes many volumes) and brief sketches (such as newspaper articles or letters); thematic distinctions consist of different regional foci, or content-based categories such as narratives of discovery, captivity, and shipwreck; structural distinctions can also be based on narrative time, spanning from a day-trip to a lifetime. When approached in its narrower sense as non-fictional travel writing we have to distinguish between the guide book and the travelogue, and, particularly in the latter case, between different stylistic conventions such as diary, chronology, and epistolary writing.

Studies of travel writing from different historical periods and from (and about) different regions have shown that the travelogue, when seen as a travel narrative,² should be defined as a hybrid format, as a combination and mixture of different literary conventions and of different kinds of knowledge production such as the poetic mode, sociology, natural history, ethnography, and autobiography. In this sense, Borm (2004) understands travel writing as a “mixed” and “hybrid” format (17).³ The heterogeneous stylistic characteristics have aptly been described as “amalgamations of the lyrical and the pragmatic.”⁴ Critics particularly interested in the literariness of travel narratives, such as Kowalewski (1992), also employ the term “literature of fact” (2) for highlighting the literariness of non-fictional writing.

² On the narrative character of travelogues see Borm (2004), 18.

³ See also Gilroy (2000) and Mills (1991).

⁴ Kowalewski (1992), 8. Butor (1992) proposes a typology of travel in modernity based on different aspects such as economic, psychological and literary factors of inspiration. His approach to travel and travel writing examines the triangular relation between reading, writing, and traveling.

In terms of fictionality, the scope of travel writing ranges from travel guides (that are structured on the absoluteness of giving non-fictional information) to such travel reports that offer themselves explicitly as fictional, for example, in the form of short stories, novels, epic poems, or drama. While some scholars maintain that all travelogues can be seen as genuinely fictional,⁵ others emphasize that the fictionality of travel writing in general depends on the implied form of reception, or in other words, on an agreement between author and reader.⁶ Borm (2004) describes this agreement as a “referential pact” (15), established by the narrative and its framing.

Most critics of recent years agree that elements of fictionality play a role in all texts claiming to focus on issues of travel. However, throughout history, authors have been blamed for producing what has been referred to as inauthentic reports, for fictionalizing their experiences, or for inventing episodes, characters, or entire journeys.⁷ One reason for questioning the authenticity of the assumed ‘documentary’ quality can be seen in the strong tendency of intertextuality as well as plagiarism. As von Martels (1994) notes, “travel authors borrow much of their material from predecessors” (xii). However, von Martels emphasizes that we have to remember that conventional distinctions between fiction and non-fictional observation vary in different historical eras:

In our age, the gap between observation and scholarly discovery, on the one hand and fiction and literary tradition on the other seems greater than ever before. Both observation and discovery are connected with originality and reality, with truth and sparkling results; fiction and literary tradition rather with fancy, with imagination and the world of books and the mind. But any sharp division between these terms is artificial and becomes untenable as soon as we look closely at the examples where authors rely on their observations. (xiv)

Hence, notions of such categories as truth, reality, fancy, and deception depend on historical constellations of knowledge

⁵ Cf. Korte (2000), see also Stammwitz (2000), 5.

⁶ See Pfister (1997), 273.

⁷ On the issue of fictionality and travel writing, see Percy Adams’ *Travelers and Travel Liars* (1962).

production, cultural customs, and literary conventions. In the light of such variable categories, travel writing – as understood in this study – includes various kinds of textual formats focusing on, and being structured by, the description of journeys and movements of individuals, or the descriptions of landscapes, nature, and society. This broad definition acknowledges that such descriptions include imaginary elements of which the authors are themselves not always conscious.

The lack of normative generic rules explains the subordinate status of travel writing in literary studies. Travelogues are often approached merely as pre-texts or contexts of fictional renderings of related topics.⁸ Among the most well-known examples in American literary history is Amasa Delano's chapter on his experiences in Chile as a source for Herman Melville's novella "Benito Cereno".⁹ The diverse cultural, social, and economic functions have also rendered the literary value of travelogues (and other forms of travel writing) doubtful in the eyes of literary critics. After all, throughout its history, the travel book has been, as Steve Clark (1999) puts it, "unabashedly commercial" (2), a tendency that added to the diminished recognition of the aesthetic value of this literary format: "Although there has been no shortage of first-rate writers choosing to operate within the form, its force is collective and incremental rather than singular and aesthetic" (2). Readers of travel writing, such as Clark, are interested in the genre precisely because of these characteristics which most obviously and often explicitly run counter to assumptions of disinterestedness as an element of aesthetic value. Contrary to dismissive treatment of the genre, Pfister (1996) observes that the undefined and hybrid generic status may have preserved an openness for experimentation. This structural and thematic openness, he goes on, makes travel writing particularly valuable for literary studies (13). Similarly, Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (2004) see travel writing's indefinability as a bonus rather than a weakness for its potential success among readers (3).

The wide spectrum of formal characteristics – what has been referred to as "the impurity" of the form (Clark 1999, 14) –,

⁸ Pfister (1996) highlights this aspect.

⁹ I discuss "Benito Cereno" in more detail in the conclusion.

also appears to be an expression of the very direct entanglements of many of the authors and their writing in social, political and economic projects of their time. Acknowledging such entanglements, in the past decades the focus of a major part of critical attention has shifted to the involvement of travel writing in various processes of international and intercultural communication and conflict. Hence, more recent critical studies of travel writing have addressed the ‘collaboration’ and ‘complicity’ in processes of colonization, territorial expansion, imperialism, and nation-building.¹⁰ For example, the essays in *Landscape and Empire, 1770–2000*, edited by Glenn Hooper (2005), illustrate how similar strategies of colonialist writing were employed in different parts of the anglophone world, such as New Zealand, South Africa, North America, and Ireland. Similarly, the contributions in Kristi Siegel’s *Issues in Travel Writing: Empire, Spectacle, and Displacement* (2002) address the relation between travel writing and ideologies of empire-building in different regional and historical contexts. Thus Amanda Gilroy (2005), in Hooper’s volume, identifies travel writing as one of the most crucial genres in the development of Britain’s colonial project. Regarding American travel writing, Edward Whitley (2002) analyzes imperialist discourse in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century American writing, arguing that Theodore Roosevelt and Ernest Hemingway construct Africa as America’s ‘primitive’ past and cultural Other, thereby claiming superiority.

Considering such colonialist and imperial exploitation of the genre, throughout the whole of its long history and in its various forms, travel writing can be seen as part of discourses describing the outside world to those who stayed home.¹¹ In this sense it has always functioned as an important tool in intercultural and international communication and exchange. These functions are often explicitly highlighted by the texts or characterize their marketing.

¹⁰ The following studies were precursors of this post-colonial rereading: Pratt (1992) and David Spurr (1993), also Campbell (1999) who writes: “complicit in the inception and expansion of imperial colonialism” (2), also Peter Hulme (1986).

¹¹ This aspect of the communication of knowledge about unknown parts of the globe has been stressed by many scholars, among them von Martels (1994).

But the relation between Self and Other also points to deeper levels of textual communication and discursive entanglement. From such a viewpoint of the construction of cultural alterity, Hagen Schulz-Forberg (2005) defines travel writing as a “complex cultural practice” (15): “Travel writing thus is an interpretative text striving for the unravelling of a foreign civilisation to its readers” (14).¹² On such levels of cultural signification, travel writing – as understood in this study – functions as pivotal manifestation in discourses of Self and Other.

In the tradition of reporting experiences and observations for a readership ‘back home,’ many travelogues and other forms of factual travel writing have claimed an immediacy of experience.¹³ Steve Clark (1999) refers to this aspect and notion of the travel report as “the testimony of the eyewitness” (2). However, it has long been acknowledged in scholarship – particularly in the debate on ‘writing culture’ and the theorizing of the relevance of mobility and travel for cultural formations¹⁴ – that parts of the supposedly descriptive quality of travel writing and its documentary style, are in fact not only employing imaginary elements but also involve the invention of other cultures, societies, peoples, communities, and landscapes. Thus, travel writing does not only describe and reflect cultural otherness, but equally creates conceptions of Otherness, and of the Self. Such reflection on, and imagining of otherness retroacts on national self-descriptions and self-definitions. Thus, in the following readings, early U.S.-travel writing is understood as a mixed genre fulfilling a cultural purpose within the nation-building process. It is conceptualized as a forming discourse of national selfhood and its otherness.

2.2. The Genre in History: From Colonial to Creole Voice

Travel writing was of foundational significance for transatlantic social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history as the

¹² Taking up Tzvetan Todorov’s theory of fiction and truth, Schulz-Forberg stresses the “assertive” character of travel writing: “the author usually takes responsibility for the meaning of the text” (14).

¹³ See Bohls (2005), xx–xxi, also Barbara Korte (2000), and von Martels (1994).

¹⁴ See my remarks in the introduction (1.1).

Americas initially became known to the European public – and eventually the global public – through travel reports. The first explorer reports of the New World were written either as letters to those who financed the expeditions – starting with Christopher Columbus – or in diary format as chronologies.¹⁵ Soon, longer narratives about discoveries, adventures, and particularly captivity were to follow, such as the well-known Spanish report by Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca about his 9-year-long wandering across the North American continent from today’s Galveston almost to the Pacific coast between 1528 and 1536.¹⁶ English reports about the New World set in with Richard Hakluyt the younger, Humphrey Gilbert, and Sir Walter Raleigh in the late 16th century.¹⁷ Such early reports on discovery, conquest, settlement, and captivity established transatlantic patterns of describing and imagining, for example, the metaphoric of newness, exoticism, biblical associations, the promotion of potential material gain, and the dichotomy of civilization and wilderness that merged into American pre-national mythology in the subsequent centuries, as Frederick Jackson Turner (1996 [1893]), Henry Nash Smith (1950), Leo Marx (1964), Richard Slotkin (1973) and other scholars have shown. In this context, Slotkin (1973) highlights the symbolic significance of violent interactions on the North American continent and argues that after the establishment of the first Puritan settlements, “[t]he Indian wars became the distinctive event in American history, the unique national experience” (78). Travel writing on the Americas during the colonial period did not just make readers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean familiar with such events, it furthermore established imagery and metaphorical language for transmitting ‘New World’ experiences.

¹⁵ On Columbus’s writing see Cecil Jane (1988), Samuel Eliot Morison (1983 [1942]), and Todorov (1992 [1982]).

¹⁶ After exploring the Gulf of Mexico from today’s Tampa Bay to Galveston, Cabeza de Vaca was shipwrecked. He was the first to report on this region of North America. Cf. Ferrando (1984). Goetzmann and Williams (1992) provide instructive maps of this journey (32–33) and other early explorations of North America.

¹⁷ The Italian John Cabot is considered the head of the first English venture across the Atlantic Ocean. He sailed by order of the king of England and reached Newfoundland in 1497. However, there are no written documents of this journey (Cf. Goetzmann and Williams 1992, 15).

In the seventeenth century, the variety of narratives about North America in anglophone travel writing increased. Slotkin (1973) comments on the advancement of different treatments of American experiences in written texts:

[...] the literary genres of the Colonial period developed around particular kinds of colonial experience. Most prominent among the secular genres were narratives of travel and exploration, of Indian fighting, of captivities (with the closely related genre of religious literature that concerned missionary efforts among the Indians), and of attempts to establish new settlements. Between 1620 and 1750 each of these narrative genres developed particular conventions through repeated and various usage. (242)

Many of the seventeenth-century narratives about North America, from John Smith's *A Description of New England* (1616) and *The General History of Virginia* (1624) to John Josselyn's *New England's Rarities Discovered* (1672) and *An Account of Two Voyages to New England* (1674),¹⁸ were promotional in purpose and endorsed the stimulation of settlement and trade, as Slotkin (1973) shows. In contrast to sixteenth-century reports, much seventeenth-century writing started to employ modes of scientific descriptions of landscape, climate, resources, and portraits of Native Americans as they became more conventional in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, Josselyn's account (1672) of his journey to the province of Maine to visit his older brother mixes botanical descriptions with accounts of exotic adventure and what Greenblatt (1992) refers to as "wonder." In order to satisfy the curiosity of an English audience, Josselyn not only depicts encounters with lions and sea serpents but also with mermaids. In addition to such fantastic elements, his reports are pervaded by expressions of royalist sympathies. The promotional conventions are met by lists of supplies to be brought from England, catalogs of flora and fauna, and portraits of Native Americans.¹⁹

¹⁸ Both of Josselyn's reports are reprinted in John Josselyn. *Colonial Traveler: A Critical Edition of Two Voyages to New England*. Ed. Paul J. Lundholdt. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1988.

¹⁹ However, the promotional attitude of Josselyn's reports is somewhat subverted in a counterproductive way by Josselyn himself, as he gives an

In the eighteenth century, as Charles Batten (1978) outlines, readers turned to travel accounts either as a source of pleasure or in order to gain knowledge about places, regions or countries which were considered as foreign and exotic. Critics and general readers expected travel narratives to adhere to certain conventions and forms, such as limited personal information about the writer.²⁰ These stylistic and narrative conventions were part of a reception of travel writing as literary artefact. As Batten (1978) highlights: “[...] unlike subsequent centuries, the eighteenth century quite consistently saw the factual travel account as being of distinct literary merit” (24). Essential for being considered as *literary* was the narrative ordering of details: “the eighteenth century considered as ‘literary’ only those books written by travelers who employed a narrative organization” (36).²¹ According to Batten, eighteenth century authors applied two techniques for organizing their travel accounts as narratives: First, the form of a journal, either as chronology or in chapters, and, second, the epistolary form (38).

Apart from these structuring conventions, different *descriptive conventions* characterized the eighteenth-century travel narrative (82). Batten distinguishes two principal conventions: observation and reflection. While observations are descriptions of what the traveler saw, reflections are thoughts prompted by what the traveler saw; while observations aim at achieving objective accounts, reflections introduce subjective assessments. Although observations are essential in any travel account (84), an exclusive concentration on observation results in encyclopaedic travel accounts. Batten (1978) and Wisneski (1997) underscore the importance of literary conventions for eighteenth-century travel writing. Accordingly, texts have to be understood as constructs

unadorned description of the political and domestic hardships of seventeenth-century New England. Paul J. Lundholdt, the editor of the 1988 reprint, writes that Josselyn’s reports failed to draw settlers because he so candidly describes the social life in colonial America (xxxvii).

²⁰ On the issues of personal and biographical information in travel narratives see Batten (1978), 38–41.

²¹ Batten (1978) stresses the role of conventions structuring travel narratives: “what is said in a travel account is less expression of personal feelings, but rather of conventions” (14–16).

that comply with conventions and their potential readers' expectations. Writers were supposed to give descriptive accounts of places, trade, and commerce, as well as customs and manners of the population they interacted with during their journeys. In the late eighteenth century, writers started to concentrate more on the beauty of nature. They also reflected more on what they encountered. Events, experiences, and observations were assessed by the traveler-narrator.²² However, as Wisneski (1997) explains, restrictions applied to how writers conveyed opinions: "general observations should not be too numerous, they should arise naturally out of places described, they should be original, and they should not conflict with accepted moral or political opinions" (110).

In addition to generic conventions, other literary contexts influenced the structure of eighteenth-century travel writing. As Percy Adams (1983) and Bruce Greenfield (1992) have shown, travel accounts were written with these contexts quite consciously in mind. Adams emphasizes that travel writers were influenced by the rise of sentimental fiction (13). He shows how writers borrowed from other texts, sometimes describing places they had never visited and people that they had never encountered. In this respect, Wayne Franklin (1979) notes that such important activities of narratives of exploration as "naming" and "ordering" confronted the "problem of inexpressibility" (19) which tended to approximate such narratives to fiction, the rising literary genre of the late eighteenth-century anglophone world.²³

Colonial Travel Writing in British North America

Critics point out that the popularity of travel books is difficult to quantify.²⁴ However, it is generally acknowledged that travel books were among the most popular genres of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Batten (1978) states, by the end of the eighteenth century they "won a readership second only to novels" (1).²⁵ For the British market Peter James Marshall and

²² See Batten (1978), 49–58, also Wisneski (1997), 98–110.

²³ On this issue also see Wisneski (1997), 9 ff.

²⁴ See Nigel Leask (2002), 11.

²⁵ Leask (2002) notes that "Batten perhaps overlooks the enormous currency of popular theology" (11), another popular format.

Glyndwr Williams (1982) characterize the publication of travel books as “reaching flood-tide proportions”.²⁶ Travel books written in other languages were translated rapidly into English and were distributed in Britain and America.²⁷ The popularity of the genre in the anglophone world was primarily driven either by curiosity for the unknown and the exotic, or a demand for knowledge about certain regions that were of interest for a domestic readership in educational or economic terms. In the North American colonies, travel writing acquired popularity later than in England, where travel reports had already been best-sellers in the Elizabethan period.²⁸ The reasons for the popularity of the genre in eighteenth-century British North America structurally do not seem to differ much from those that critics have outlined for the colonial motherland: travel writing provided pleasure and gave instruction, it fulfilled entertaining and educational functions.²⁹

In the eighteenth century, anglophone travel writing mainly concentrated on three types of regions: (1) Regions considered as qualifying for the Grand Tour or as ‘classical’ (e.g. ‘Europe,’ ‘the Orient’), (2) colonial settlements with a promising economic prospect (e.g. British North America), and (3) regions potentially to be conquered and settled (e.g. the North American ‘interior’). Starting in the mid-eighteenth century, and even more so at the end of the century, the interest of travel writers shifted to regions providing scenery in aesthetic terms of the picturesque and the sublime (e.g. Italy and the Home Tour³⁰ – that is, the Lake District, the Scottish Highlands).

A few topics, themes, and aspects clearly differentiate writing about North America from writing about Europe and other parts of the Old World: the discovery, exploration, conquest, and land surveying of territory formerly unknown to Europeans and their American, creole descendants. Such a topical focus on discovery influenced the popularity of travel writing about America as it often provided groundwork for land speculation

²⁶ Quoted in Leask (2002), 11.

²⁷ See Leask (2002), 11.

²⁸ See Elizabeth A. Bohls (2005), xv, also Charles Batten (1978), ix and 1–3.

²⁹ See Batten (1978), 7 and 27, also Pfister (1997).

³⁰ See Hooper and Youngs (2004), 6, and Hagglund’s essay in the same volume.

and other economic exploitation of the ‘wilderness.’³¹ Most of the accounts of journeys in North America were authored by visitors from the British Isles or other parts of Europe.³² Reports on exploratory journeys to what was called ‘the American interior’ were written and published throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³³ Josselyn’s late seventeenth-century reports on his journeys to Maine – *New England’s Rarities Discovered* (1672) and *An Account of Two Voyages to New England* (1674) – are characteristic of this kind of promotional and exploratory writing, and can be seen as precursors of eighteenth-century frontier writing.

The English Samuel Hearne (*Journal*, publ. 1791) and the Scottish Alexander Mackenzie (*Voyages*, publ. 1801) travelled as explorers through the Northern parts of the continent. As their reports were published after the American Revolution, these texts are documents of colonial exploratory writing but their reception falls into a later period – a characteristic of many mid- and late eighteenth-century travel reports. Thomas Pownall, for example, who came to North America as royal governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1757, published his *A Topographical Description of Such Parts of North America as are Contained in the (Annexed) Map of the Middle British Colonies in North America* in 1776. The author wrote the text after his return to Great Britain in 1759. Although Pownall’s account concentrates on the topographical description of New England and the Middle colonies, the appendix includes brief travel journals and travel accounts of other colonial travelers in the northeastern part of North America which describe “Indian customs” (154–190). Between 1779 and 1784 Pownall prepared a second edition, now under the altered title *A Topographical Description of the Dominions of the United States of America*, although the map included was still the one

³¹ As in John Filson’s and Daniel Boone’s case (see chapter 3.2. of this study).

³² Downs (1987) highlights preferred travel routes and topics that travelers from abroad were mainly interested in. An overview of visitors from abroad is provided in Blow (1989).

³³ Such narratives are collected in Reuben Gold Thwaites’ monumental collection *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846* (1966).

based on his research in colonial America, dated 1776,³⁴ founded on observations made between 1757 and 1759. Hence, quite a few British travel writers published their accounts of North America without much regard to social and political changes that had taken place between the actual journey and the date of publication.

Only a small portion of the travel writing sold and read in colonial America was written by authors who presented themselves as British Americans. However, such ‘domestic’ travel writing by British North American authors in colonial America between the early seventeenth and the late eighteenth centuries displays a move from a narrative voice showing the colonist as an outsider, alien to the world encountered and described, to a voice that positions the narrator as being at home in the British North American landscape, culture and society. Wendy Martin (1994) speaks of a “chronological shift from colonist as outsider to colonist as resident” (viii). British American colonial travel writing continues, appropriates, and transforms earlier colonial conventions, which range from the jeremiad and the religiously-framed Indian captivity narrative to reports on exploratory journeys to the American interior (the ‘wilderness’).

As one of the most noted narratives of seventeenth-century America, Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative (first published in 1682) is not based on a voluntary but on a coerced journey which, as such, is already the expression of distance between narrator and the world encountered during the removal from what is represented as home (Massachusetts). Her narrative is structured within the parameters of the jeremiad,³⁵ in three steps shaped as removal from civilization, testing, and return. The circumstances and experiences are explained through biblical references, marking the journey as an act of providence.³⁶ The account of her captivity combines elements of such diverse topics as, on the one hand, piety and divine inspection, and, on the other hand, adventure and heroism. It became one of the most popular prose works of the seventeenth century. Critics have emphasized that one explanation for the popularity of Rowlandson’s narrative is that the

³⁴ See “Editor’s Preface” to the 1949 edition, p. xiii–xiv.

³⁵ Cf. Emory Elliott (1994), 263.

³⁶ Cf. Martin 1994, x–xii.

rewards of afterlife are shown as being more central than worldly experiences of individuals in America, a constellation that justified the reading of this autobiographical text in seventeenth-century America.³⁷ But the narrative is also structured in line with the conventions of colonial travel reports on life in the New World. From this perspective, Rowlandson's account describes a journey into the wilderness. Her description corresponds to earlier narratives of exploration and discovery which are structured by the opposition of civilization and wilderness. When reading Rowlandson's account in the context of travel writing, the narrator's relation to the land described appears distanced, maintaining a boundary between her British colonial self and the alien outside world. Apart from being anchored in Puritan New World imagery, the captivity narrative does not yet express creole sentiments, nor does it emphasize transatlantic cultural differences or stress regional attachment as we find them in the travel writing of a few decades later.

Sarah Kemble Knight's travel diary,³⁸ based on a journey made in 1704–05, 29 years after Rowlandson's captivity of 1675, geographically and structurally follows a very different path. She undertook a journey from Boston to New Haven in order to settle a matter of family inheritance.³⁹ In her journal she provides some insight into the regional, cultural and social issues that characterized settled British North America. Her narrative is conveyed in the voice of a self-confident observer and commentator. She presents herself as a persona of genteel manners. But in many ways, Knight's journal contradicts conceptions of femininity idealized in earlier captivity narratives and the sentimental novel of the eighteenth century. Although her journey is shown to be complicated by her gender, the narrator is far from representing herself in terms of victimhood, domesticity, or genteel passivity. Rather, the reader of the journal encounters a woman managing her way outside of the domestic sphere, in public spaces which were not commonly

³⁷ Cf. Wendy Martin (1994), ix.

³⁸ *The Journal of Madam Knight*, reprinted in Wendy Martin (Ed.). *Colonial American Travel Narratives*. London and New York: Penguin, 1994. 49–75.

³⁹ Spengemann (1989) reads Knight's *Journal* as an expression of the increasing literariness of travel writing.

attended by solitary females, unaccompanied by men. Certainly, Knight's social status as a member of the emergent colonial merchant class helped to legitimize her activities and her writing.⁴⁰ As the journal was only published in 1825,⁴¹ it had no influence on creole anglophone travel writing of Knight's time. However, as a historical document, it marks a shift in the colonial populations' creole self-positioning and the status of secular worldviews in the very early eighteenth century. Knight's focus on regional differences and on secular cultural issues indicates the subtle shift from colonial British to creole identification and writing strategies.

William Byrd (1674–1744) describes his participation in a survey of the boundary between two colonies in North America in his *History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (written from a journal he kept in 1728–29, probably finished in 1738, published in 1841). A local boundary survey like the one jointly commissioned by North Carolina and Virginia marked a new era in colonization, for, in the survey, the colonists created a new legal document deriving its authority from its relation to the American land, as against the royal legitimacy of the overseas patents. This transformation at the basis of land possession was not made explicit by the survey commission, of course, for it would then constitute a challenge to royal prerogative. But Byrd's account of walking the line illustrates that the two colonies, in the process, take possession of the territory in their own names. By himself becoming active in land acquisition, Byrd individualizes this enterprise and thus distances it even further from royal control. The fact that Byrd actually kept a second journal, his *Secret History* – which was not published until 1929

⁴⁰ On the topic of Knight as a “genteel persona” see Boesenberg (2003), 325. Boesenberg reads the journal in terms of the distance between the “experiencing I” and “the narrating I” (or the narrator-I and character-I), the latter reinforcing and intensifying Knight's supremacy due to her social status and the connected cultural capital. While the experiencing I goes through moments of inferiority and insecurity, the narrating I, commenting on the experiences, employs strategies such as humor, irony, or cultural knowledge to lift the experiencing-I onto a level superior to those individuals encountered. Hence, Knight's writing as a woman traveller is strongly informed by, or even legitimized by, her social status.

⁴¹ On the history of publication, see Wetzel-Sahm (2003).

– in which he comments on the events described in his official version, accentuates the independent air of the project even more.⁴²

A further transformation of the colonial representation of American landscape and society is performed in *The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton*.⁴³ This travel diary shows a positioning of the narrator in an environment which is considered as neither alien nor hostile, nor to be conquered or taken possession of in any other way. Hamilton's account covers a journey in the year 1744, from Annapolis (Maryland) via Albany (New York) to Boston, Salem, and New Hampshire.⁴⁴ The narrator provides a "recreational perspective" (Martin 1994, xv) and appears to be in control of social and cultural environments, even if they were unknown to him up until then. The traveler's activities, such as exploring neighboring colonies and discovering cultural idiosyncracies, discarded the 'uncivilized' and threatening sides of the North American wilderness. Instead, these activities are shown in a humorous mode, primarily based on personal curiosity and the quest for education, entertainment and pleasure. Hamilton moves around in settled territory and his attitude to the encountered world, similar to Sarah Kemble Knight, is characterized by an acting and writing stance of social privilege. His humor in particular reveals his aristocratic sentiments.⁴⁵ Although unpublished until the early twentieth century – and thus without intertextual influence on travel writing of either the colonial period or the early republic – Hamilton's *Itinerarium* indicates a major step toward more touristic and self-exploratory travel writing as can be found more frequently a few decades later, in the early nineteenth century – the period the following chapters of this study will concentrate on.

Despite the fact that the narrator is referring to himself as a Scotsman, his descriptions and observations of the American

⁴² See Jehlen (1994), 103. Jehlen notes Byrd's obsession with dividing lines which can be seen as expression of his creolizing maneuver. Pisarz-Ramírez (2010) reads the report in terms of processes of transculturation.

⁴³ Reprinted in Wendy Martin (Ed.). *Colonial American Travel Narratives*. London and New York: Penguin, 1994. 173–327. See also Robert Micklus (1988).

⁴⁴ For details of Hamilton's biography and the history of his journal, see Martin (1994), xxxii and 174–177.

⁴⁵ Cf. Martin (1994), xv.

colonies are not framed from the perspective of a foreign visitor, but rather as being authored by a native of Maryland. His travels and his writing about his travels are neither inspired by discovery, nor conquest or captivity (as would be more characteristic for the colonial period), but rather by leisure and physical recovery. As such, Hamilton's viewpoint can be described as touristic. This indicates a change in attitude toward the settled regions of British North America. This shift of British American writers toward a creole voice and perspective of New World rootedness is continued by writers of the revolutionary period, such as Johnathan Carver and William Bartram whose writing will be discussed in the following chapters.

Colonial Americans Abroad

Apart from 'domestic' travel writing, that is, reports by colonial British American subjects about North America, a few colonial Americans wrote and published accounts of their experiences in other parts of the world. In the eyes of the colonials, Europe was the center of learning and culture – which made it particularly attractive for different kinds of journeys. Wealthy American families sent their sons to London for education, and a few colonial Americans, similar to the British aristocracy, traveled to other parts of Europe, mostly France and Italy, for reasons of education and recreation. Despite the founding of colleges in British North America, advanced education, particularly in law and medicine, required studies at British and European institutions of higher education. In addition to education, transatlantic trade meant that Americans crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Trade with England was well established, direct links with other parts of Europe, however, were much less numerous as – due to the Navigation Acts and the mercantile theory in general – the colonies had to ship their products to the continent via London.⁴⁶

Between the end of the Seven Year War (French and Indian War) and the start of the Napoleonic Wars, British aristocrats took extended journeys on the continent for their cultural education. Influenced by this fashion of the Grand Tour among English gentlemen, a few Americans also traveled to Europe. The

⁴⁶ Cf. Sarah Jackson, 20–22.

Philadelphian Samuel Powel, for example, kept a journal during his time in Rome (which remained unpublished until 2001 when edited by Sarah Jackson). The author concentrates entirely on the artwork and architecture encountered in the city. Jackson names a few other wealthy men from Philadelphia who travelled to Italy and other parts of Europe in the 1760s and 1770s. The journals kept by colonial American travelers that Jackson refers to, were apparently not written for publication and were without exception only published posthumously, often centuries later. Jackson argues that colonial American travelers to Italy in the 1760s and 1770s were influenced by British travel books which were available in Philadelphia, as for example, Thomas Nugent's four volumes of *The Grand Tour: Or a Journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France*. London, 1749 (27).⁴⁷

Among the most prominent travelers from colonial America to Europe were the painter Benjamin West and the politician, scientist and diplomat Benjamin Franklin. West studied painting in Italy before settling in London. He was probably the first major American-born artist to travel to Italy.⁴⁸ However, West did not publish any writing about his journeys and his time in Europe. Franklin's *Autobiography* (1791), partly completed before the American Revolution in 1771, gives an account of his transatlantic mobility (he crossed the Atlantic Ocean eight times during his lifetime). In the sections written before the Revolution we find a distinction between "Americans" and "Englishmen," and a focus on regional differences in British North America. As such, it expresses creole attitudes and sentiments. However, the treatment of the topos of traveling remains within the conventional structure of autobiography, not stressing the act of traveling as a major topic. Only minimal attention is devoted to observations of, and reflections on, issues such as landscape and customs – aspects which characterized travel writing of the time. But Franklin's *Autobiography* indicates – similar to Carver's output – the general shift in 'creole' British American writing toward literary discourse

⁴⁷ Thomas Nugent (2004). For a general discussion of early South Carolinian travel to Italy, see Maurie D. McInnis et al. (1999), 23–38.

⁴⁸ Cf. Jackson, 26.

that emphasizes American specificities not only in religious ways but in secularly cultural and national terms.⁴⁹

2.3. The National Imagination: New Boundaries, New Authorship

The gradual shift of the narrative stance in colonial American travel writing from distanced and alien observer of an unknown New World to the voice of an offspring of the New World with creole gaze and subjectivity, occurred within the broader context of emergent literary and intellectual culture. After all, writing and publishing were of immense importance for the dissemination of ideas, eventually leading to American national independence and the subsequent nation-building process. Creole sentiments were articulated prior to the Revolutionary War. In political statements as well as in literary texts notions of anticolonialism and anti-royalist positions can be found more frequently after the French and Indian War. Then conflicts between the English crown and the North American colonies intensified due to a firmer colonial grip on economic activities in the territory. The most significant ‘pro-to-nationalist’ expression in poetic language can be found in the so-called “Rising Glory poetry” or “prospect poetry”.⁵⁰

The shift from religious and colonialist perspectives toward secular descriptions and reflections of American natural phenomena and cultural idiosyncrasies, as indicated in late colonial and creole travel narratives by John Bartram, Jonathan Carver, Jean de Crèvecoeur, and William Bartram, was connected to broader transatlantic discourses and social transformations in British North-America. Travel writing of the revolutionary period and the following decades provided a format for national, and in that sense, as Mignolo (2000) highlights, anticolonial knowledge production. In this period, as Spengemann (1977) shows, travel writing is imbued with two cultural and intellectual discourses

⁴⁹ Sachse (1956) studies colonial Americans traveling abroad, with a particular interest in motives for going to the British Isles. He shows that even after the American Revolution a pervasive attraction for the “old country” persisted (207).

⁵⁰ For more details see the introduction to this study (1.4).

that each developed specific aesthetic concepts and poetics: The Enlightenment and Romanticism.⁵¹

Literary Context and Book Market in the Early Republic

Intellectual and scientific progress was articulated in such projects as Adam Smith's economic theories, the publications of the *encyclopédistes* in France, and Carl von Linné's systematic classification and natural history. These enlightened projects influenced the writing about exploration, discovery, and diplomatic travel in various ways. In the course of the eighteenth century, as Batten (1978) puts it, a "thirst for knowledge" (6) joined the older lust for gold in motivating journeys and writing about traveling.⁵² Knowledge production for scientific reasons became an incitement for travel writing in America and by Americans.

Next to this scientific mode, one of the major contributions to the aesthetic discourse that later inspired the Romantic turn in travel writing was Edmund Burke's "The Sublime and the Beautiful" (1757). In the late eighteenth century, William Gilpin's theory of the picturesque influenced British writing about travel and exploration. These aesthetic models determined stylistic conventions of travel writing,⁵³ which in the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries underwent a transformation from the so-called plain style toward more subjective perceptions and assessments of landscape, cultures and people. This subjective and aesthetic reflection probes the boundaries of the genre. With an eye on fictional elements in travel writing, Percy Adams (1983) emphasizes that the more subjectivity we find in the narrative voice, the more travel writing approaches the novel (97).

American travel writing published between 1770 and 1830 combines different styles such as elements of neoclassical didactic tradition, Enlightenment discourse, and Romanticism. As

⁵¹ Spengemann (1977) comments on the way contradictions between the two concepts of ideas are expressed in travel writing (51). On romantic expression in travel writing of the eighteenth century, see Parks (1964).

⁵² See also Pratt (1992).

⁵³ Batten (1978) highlights the generic focus: "Thus, in describing picturesque beauty, the eighteenth-century travel writer largely responded to the conventional demands of his genre, demands that were not necessarily dictated by a pervasive change in the century's aesthetic taste" (116).

Batten (1978) and Gifra-Adroher (2000, 86) emphasize, the travel writers of the time aim at both, enlightening and delighting. Both these narrative functions make use of different modes of literary communication, such as factuality, autobiography, and aestheticized landscape description. Although picturesque travel became popular in early nineteenth-century America, as Beth Lueck (1997) shows when referring to guidebooks, post-Independence travel reports of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by American authors cannot be categorized as being primarily interested in an aestheticizing approach to landscape scenery. American authors were less preoccupied with the search for picturesque beauty.⁵⁴

Until the close of the eighteenth century, the book market was still relatively small in the U.S., and the demand for domestic literature – that is, non-fictional and fictional texts written by American authors – was not yet an issue that would affect the publishing market profoundly. According to Growoll's (1956 [1898]) assembly of books published in the year 1800, a total of 693 new English titles (of any topic) were brought on to the U.S. market.⁵⁵ As Growoll writes, American books could only be sold with difficulty: "It was almost sufficient to insure the condemnation of a book to have it known that it was of domestic origin" (xii).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ On the role of picturesque travel and Gilpin's aesthetic concept in American late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travel writing, see Lueck (1997), 18–23.

⁵⁵ Of these new books, according to the numbers cited by Growoll, 40 were novels, 68 poetry, 42 dramatic and 13 biography, 20 Voyages and Travels, and 9 Natural History.

⁵⁶ Interestingly, as Growoll emphasizes, the English readership did not have the same kind of prejudices against American authors. Growoll quotes from the *Port Folio* of June 4, 1803:

Elegant editions of the 'Algerine Captive,' of 'Edgar Huntley,' and 'Arthur Mervyn,' have been re-printed in England. It is a fact, that more attention is paid to American productions abroad, than at home. These books are candidly criticised in some of the Literary Journals, and a strong disposition is manifested by the British Critics in general to treat American Literature with delicacy and respect. The contrary has been asserted in many of our vulgar papers, but it is a gross misrepresentation. (quoted in Growoll, xii)

On the *Port Folio* see Martin Green (1973) and William C. Downing (1999).

A major part of the books sold in America in the late eighteenth century was of European, mostly of British, origin.⁵⁷

In these times of intense social and political disruption, particularly information on all aspects of life in the new political and social union, but also on the immense and mostly unexplored territory surrounding the United States, was in demand in Europe as well as in North America itself. Quite a few new publications of the time consisted of reports by Europeans on their experiences in the New World. This kind of writing in many ways continued transatlantic discourse as it had started with the European projects of ‘discovery’ in the late fifteenth century. In much of this travel writing by Europeans, the focus is primarily on European perceptions of the New World, and less on a deeper engagement with American idiosyncracies, culture, sensibilities, and world views.

European Writing on Journeys in the Early U.S.

Among the most popular of such travel narratives by European authors who report on their journey to continental North America, published in the first decades after American independence, are *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America* (1804) by the French philosopher and historian C. F. Volney and *Travels in the United States* (1812) by the Scottish mapmaker John Melish whose maps of North America received recognition by Thomas Jefferson. As Adams (1962) notes, after the Revolutionary War, British travelers were often antipathetic to America and purposely represented the new nation in negative

⁵⁷ Cathy Davidson (1986) explains that until the first quarter of the nineteenth century printing and publishing were still very much dominated by technologies, companies, and authors from Britain:

[...] the book business in the early national period was strikingly small and localized [...]. The supplies of the trade (and especially type) had to be obtained from England; most books in America were imported rather than published at home; and only a limited number of books (chapbooks, almanacs, Bibles, and a few other steady sellers) were readily available to the populace at large. Although the Revolution had officially ended that world, almost half a century would elapse before American publishing would be consolidated into large dynastic houses and cheap books would become big business. (16)

terms (90–191).⁵⁸ *Travels in America performed in 1806* (1808) by the English-Irish novelist and author Thomas Ashe certainly is most representative of this kind of British representation. As in Ashe's case, such reports by British authors aim less at accuracy than at giving expression to political agendas or at achieving popularity among British readers. Ashe provided a "very unfriendly English account" (Horsman 1970, 234) which employs the epistolary form to convey a disparaging view on the early American republic. The derogatory mode characterizes the entire report which suggests that the author had a readership in mind which demanded such representations of America. In the first of Ashe's letters we already find anticlimactic observations such as:

Dear Sir, The American States through which I passed, are unworthy of your observation [...]. For the Southern States, nature has done much, but man little: society is here in a shameful degeneracy. [...] Dr. Johnson was never more solicitous to leave Scotland than I was to be out of the Atlantic State [Pennsylvania]. (Letter 1)

Another British travel account of the early nineteenth century, Francis Baily's *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 and 1797* includes a depiction of the Mississippi Valley in its Spanish days. Baily's journal contains comments on the Black Legend, such as: "anger of a Spaniard is so implacable and malicious" (14). A frontier narrative by a British author is provided by John Long's journal *Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader, describing the Manners and Customs of the North American Indians; with an account of the posts situated on the River Saint Lawrence, Lake Ontario, & c; April 10 1768 – Spring 1782*. Long lived among Native American tribes and during the Revolution fought as a loyalist with different tribes against American colonists. Later he became a fur trader, going to the West of Canada. First published in London in 1791, it became quite popular as a depiction of frontier life.⁵⁹ It contains a dictionary of native languages, with vocabulary from "Esquimeaux, Iroquois, Algonkin, Mohega and familiar phrases

⁵⁸ See Wisneski (1997).

⁵⁹ Thwaites (1966), 13.

in the Cheppeway language”.⁶⁰ Another type of travel report was provided by British captains’ journals commenting on North America, such as Samuel Gamble’s *A Journal of an Intended Voyage by God’s Permission, from London towards Africa from hence to America in the good ship Sandova by me Samuel Gamble Commander (1793–1794)*.

Travel Writing by Americans

Until the revolutionary decade the literary exchange between America and Europe, particularly regarding travel writing, was dominated by European perspectives, predominantly European men. This exchange slowly became more reciprocal when American representations of native flora and fauna, as well as social, political and cultural life in different regions of the young American Republic broadened the perspectives on America in travel writing. American comments on British and European societies also started to get published.⁶¹ Even in the decades prior to Irving’s and Cooper’s successes, American authors commented on disparaging accounts of the New World by European writers. Christian Schultz Jr., as Timothy Spears (1989) writes, obviously “a patriotic New Yorker,” published his *Travels on an Inland Voyage* (1810) in order to refute the, as is explained in the preface, “mistakes, misrepresentations, and fictions” (ii) he had found in the travel account by the Englishman Thomas Ashe.⁶² Schultz revised some of Ashe’s observations and, as Spears argues, “[f]iercely, if somewhat humorously, Schultz mapped the topographic features of a new nation and stressed the importance of seeing it correctly” (35). A few decades later, Cooper’s reactions to European travel accounts made the long history of dismissive representations of the U.S. and of the New World a topic.⁶³

⁶⁰ A German translation was provided by Georg Forster in 1792.

⁶¹ This tendency of American authors, mostly male authors, commenting on British representations of U.S. society became more significant after the publication of Frances M. Trollope’s *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), see Thomas Clark (2009).

⁶² Timothy Spears (1989) shows that Schultz traveled the same route as Ashe.

⁶³ James Fenimore Cooper. *Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor* (1828).

However, the lack of copyrights made authorship financially little attractive in America. Many British reprints did not give American authors the chance to get printed or to become professional writers.⁶⁴ For American publishers, it was often more profitable to pirate English texts than to pay native authors for their work. However, despite these obstacles, in the years after the revolutionary war, the number of American publications increased, and quite a few contemporary ‘domestic’ travel accounts were published in follow-up editions in America. *The Catalogue of all the Books Printed in the United States*, published for the Booksellers in Boston in 1804, lists 27 titles that can be defined as travel writing.⁶⁵ Among these are such English fictional best-sellers of the time, as Laurence Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* (1768), but also rather famous American non-fictional travel writing of different formats such as Carver’s *Travels* (1778), Gilbert Imlay’s *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (1792) and Filson’s *History of Kentucky* (1784), Mackenzie’s *Voyages from Montreal* (1801) and Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), as well as lesser known reports, such as John Foss’ *Journal of Captivity and Sufferings at Algiers* (1798).⁶⁶

Readers and the book market in the early republic embraced the format of travel writing and its various genres for different reasons. Three aspects are particularly noteworthy for characterizing the historical significance and the function of American travel writing in the early discourses of nation-building:

First of all, scepticism toward fiction persisted into the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ In the last decade of the eighteenth century, when the first novels by American authors were published, fiction was attacked in magazines and newspapers which by then appeared in greater numbers. The theologian and president of Yale College, Timothy Dwight, for example, opposed

⁶⁴ See Spencer (1957), 67–68, and Davidson (1986).

⁶⁵ The *Catalogue* uses neither the ‘travel’ nor ‘fiction’ categories, instead, respective book-titles are listed in the category “miscellaneous.”

⁶⁶ The *Catalogue* is not comprehensive as today many more travel accounts, published in the U.S. are archived and accessible (see *Early American Imprint Collection*). See also Warner (1990).

⁶⁷ See Ziff (1991), 6–8.

fictional writing.⁶⁸ In contrast to fiction, travel writing, often relating experiences and adventures in faraway places, came close to the potential sensations of fiction but, at the same time, was justified in that it provided factual accounts and served educational purposes, and hence was seen as being morally acceptable.

Secondly, continuing a much older tradition of New World writing, reaching back to Christopher Columbus's diaries and letters, or even to medieval and early modern travel accounts such as those of Marco Polo and Mandeville, contemporary travel reports – particularly accounts of discovery and exploration – satisfied the curiosity of the new national subjects. Accounts of journeys in North America fulfilled very practical functions by informing about the infrastructure, such as waterways, and the dangers of frontier life that potential settlers had to face – most characteristically represented in the so-called topographical descriptions. But even accounts of journeys to other parts of the globe were partly written to provide practical information such as trade routes or geographic, political, and historical information – most characteristic in reports by diplomats, captains, and other maritime travelers.

Thirdly, travel writing explored the relation of the new nation to the rest of the world – an aspect which has been undervalued in most studies of the literature of the revolutionary period and of the early republic. The political and cultural insecurity caused by the “republican experiment” (Joseph J. Ellis 2000, 4), but also the persisting attachment to the former colonial motherland (at least culturally), and the new challenges of the fledgling nation are among the topics either addressed explicitly or commented on implicitly in travel reports of the period.

After the revolutionary war, not only *domestic* travel writing but also reports on travels *abroad* acquired a new quality, as authorship and implied readership adopted post-revolutionary national American standpoints. In the decades following the Declaration of Independence, authors increasingly supported ‘national’ viewpoints and were searching for adequate topics and forms of expression. Although the representational patterns of such accounts in many respects often differ little in fact from

⁶⁸ See Cowie (1948), 5–6.

earlier European writing or from colonial American writing, this post-revolutionary American travel writing as such reversed the traditional perspective of early modernity: now American travelers wrote about their experiences and observations and were able to publish these reports; American perspectives on the New World and the Old World, as well as interactions of Americans with other peoples and cultures, became of interest to a domestic readership as well as a readership abroad. The new national perspectives and speaking positions slowly established an up-to-then unknown American authorship in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century transatlantic world.⁶⁹

There were many reasons why individuals travelled and wrote about their journeys in North America, to other regions of the Americas, and abroad. Although individuals who travelled were male and female, those who wrote about their observations and experiences were mostly male.⁷⁰ Among the motives for journeys are exploration, settlement, trade, education,⁷¹ and diplomatic business. Those who travelled and wrote about it were – among other professions – politicians, diplomats, scientists, surveyors, captains, journalists, poets, and clergymen. Among the most common generic types of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American factual travel writing are narratives of discovery, exploration and captivity, diplomatic travel, natural history and topographies, and, to a lesser extent, tourism and travel for reasons of physical recovery.⁷²

⁶⁹ On the relation between constructions of identity and authority in colonial contexts see Melanie R. Hunter (2002) and Siegel (2002), 3.

⁷⁰ Among the first published travel reports authored by American women are Anne Newport Royall's *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States* (1826) and Abby Jane Morrell's *Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, in the Years 1829, 1830, 1831* (1833). In chapter 4.4 I discuss Newport Royall's writing.

⁷¹ Jefferson was opposed to traveling as a way of educating young men. In the letter to John Banister Jr, of Oct. 1785, he considers it unwise and even destructive to send young American men to Europe for education (2006, 56–58).

⁷² Although the term 'tourist' came into use in the late eighteenth century, tourism as a concept, in the English-speaking world, has its roots in the Grand Tour as an educational tool for young male aristocrats that started

2.4. Early American Travel Writing: Critical Approaches

Until the 1990s, mid- and late-nineteenth-century literature has received more critical attention than literature of the earlier national period. Apart from the work by Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, and a few other authors, critics for a long time regarded prose and poetry of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as mainly epigonic, as not equivalent in literary value to British and European pre-Romantic and Romantic standards. In American studies – concentrating its analytical focus on national mythology –, early American prose literature received some attention quite early on (for example, the work by Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx). But even in these influential studies the major part is devoted to the literary giants of the mid-nineteenth century, Hawthorne, Whitman, Thoreau, and Melville. Richard Slotkin's (1973) influential study of the emergence of the mythology of the American frontier and of the transformation of the history of expansionism into myth, examines the intellectual and literary discourse of the early national period. Such work in the field of American studies underlines the “cultural work” (Jane Tompkins 1986) of literature and has helped profoundly in understanding the function of literature in the emergence of national mythology, notions of national character, and American patriotism.

In the past decades, however, interest in the literature of the early national period has been renewed. Culturally contextualizing approaches to the literature of the period range from interest in print culture, oral culture, and cultures of performativity (Fliegelmann 1998, Looby 1996, Richards 2004, Waldstreicher 1997) to the transnational study of the Atlantic world (Giles 2001, Bauer 2003), to gender perspectives (Burgett 1998), Orientalism and post-colonial studies (Schueller 1998, Watts 1998). It is particularly the entanglement of the writing of the early republic in discourses of anticolonialism, nation-building and territorial expansionism that is of interest to revisionist scholarship. For example, Edward Watts' *Writing and Postcolonialism in the Early*

to be fashionable in the seventeenth century, with a first guidebook by James Howell, *Instructions for Forreine Travel*, 1642 (see Bohls 2005, xix–xx, and Robert Munter and Clyde L. Grose 1986).

Republic (1998) approaches the literary period from a decidedly trans-Atlantic angle. Some scholars conceptualize the literature as “British-American” (Spengemann 1977 and Giles 2001). International and intercultural relations, exchanges, desires, fantasies, and projections have been explored, for example, in such studies as Malini Johar Schueller’s *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790–1890* (2004) and Sean Goudie’s *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (2006).

Postcolonial theory has been employed as an approach for highlighting political, social, and cultural power relations in the early republic as they are negotiated in the literature of the time. In postcolonial literary studies, however, American literature has occupied a controversial and ambivalent position. In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), one of the initial and most influential publications in postcolonial literary studies, the United States is characterized as “[t]he first post-colonial society to develop a ‘national’ literature,” and the authors go on: “In many ways the American experience and its attempts to produce a new kind of literature can be seen to be the model for all later post-colonial writing” (Bill Ashcroft et al. 1989: 16). From this perspective, the American Revolution is seen as the initial moment when the nation became ‘postcolonial.’ Critically commenting on such assessments, historians, such as Peter Hulme (1995), have emphasized that the U.S., due to its pre-history as a settler colony and its territorial expansionism, has to be understood as a country which is “postcolonial and colonizing at the same time” (122).⁷³ Engaging in this debate on U.S.-postcoloniality, Gesa Mackenthun (2003) specifies Hulme’s observation by referring to the U.S. as “a republic both postrevolutionary and colonizing” (12). Schueller (2004) tracks the debate concerning the relationship of postcolonial theory to American studies: “The major components of this debate are the applicability of the term postcolonial to the U.S., the suitability of the internal colonial model to describe U.S. postcoloniality as well as ethnic studies in general, and, more recently, the questioning of center-periphery models in view of

⁷³ On this debate on the ambivalent postcoloniality of the U.S., see Amy Kaplan (1993), 17, Mackenthun (1996), and Singh (2000).

globalization and transnational capitalism” (163). Schueller highlights that postcolonial approaches may help to show that “U.S. cultural history has always been a contradictory set of narratives” (171). Particularly in this respect, she reminds us of the relative neglect of the first two-thirds of the U.S. nineteenth century in postcolonial scholarship.

Texts written in this period, however, such as the canonized fiction of Edgar Allan Poe’s *Arthur Gordon Pym*, and many of Melville’s novels, make traveling and contact situations between the U.S. and other parts of the world central structural elements. Melville’s novella “Benito Cereno” is based on a chapter of captain Amasa Delano’s early nineteenth-century travel report. As Percy Adams has shown in his almost encyclopaedic study *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (1983), and in his *Travelers and Travel Liars* (1962) a close relation between travel reports and fiction can certainly also be found in other national literary traditions, such as the French novel and the English novel (Aphra Behn, Defoe). With regard to the circum-Atlantic world, some critics, such as Spengemann (1977), have claimed that “the development of modern literature cannot be explained apart from the writings of the New World discoverers, explorers, and settlers” (1).

Such assessments of Atlantic history and modern literature have been articulated from different perspectives, ranging from emphasis on the correlations between Romanticism and ‘discovery’ to *The Black Atlantic* and concepts of counter-modernity and to Latin American concepts of literary transculturation, Occidentalism and peripheral modernities.⁷⁴ These regionally based approaches stress the significance of transatlantic journeys, the symbolism of mobility for the literary imagination, and the function of travel writing in the emergence of national mythologies. In this sense, travel writing in different national and regional contexts has served as a pretext to fictional renderings of collective experiences.

Despite structural parallels between different literary traditions, the roles and functions that have been attributed to travel and travel writing in literary history vary. For example, the denotative meanings such as movement, exploration, and

⁷⁴ Pratt (2002), 21–48, and Paul Young (2012), 611–616.

discovery, and the connotations of travel, such as cultural mobility, progress, and freedom, differ in cultural and national settings of the circum-Atlantic world. As some of the founding figures of American studies (Leo Marx and Henry Nash Smith) illustrate, in the cultural and literary history of the U.S., travel and its symbolism of mobility and liminal experience acquired a particularly significant position. For example, some of the most factual, apparently non-literary accounts of travel – as we find them in late eighteenth-century topographies – acquired a figurative meaning as an expression of national sentiment, or as a manifestation of the glorious prospect of the nation. As Bruce Greenfield shows in *Narrating Discovery: The Romantic Explorer in American Literature* (1992): “the American military explorer kept in mind that he was an exemplary character, often portraying himself as a representative citizen of the nation” (81). The narrator, as well as his national community, are seen as being unified in an ongoing process of change, mobility, discovery, and progress.

However, it seems that it is less the narrative structure of American travel writing that differs from European travel writing; it is more the reception, popular and critical, that has attributed a special meaning to certain travel narratives about experiences in North America. Interestingly, a few forms of travel writing have been understood as being more characteristic expressions of American experiences and the national character than others. Although many of the canonized masterpieces of American fiction (e.g. by Poe, Melville, Cooper) depict ‘journeys abroad’ and are often based on reports about such journeys, it is less travel writing about abroad but rather writing on continental North America that has been celebrated as the expression of a characteristically American sensibility, quality, attitude, and individualism. However, in contrast to the frontier paradigm of westward expansion, “acts of reading, writing, and publishing,” as Kirsten Gruesz (2002) writes, established not only “transamerican encounters” (14) but also transatlantic and global contacts and contact zones. In this transnational sense, travel narratives “mediate between local and global spheres of culture” (15); they perform the de- and re-territorializing tensions between the national and the global as categories of affiliation and identification; and they perform border constructions of emerging national discourse.

Travel Writing and American Fiction

Two studies, published before the inception of the more recent critical interest in travel writing, have been particularly influential in examining the relation between travel writing and fiction: Percy Adams' *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (1983) and William C. Spengemann's *The Adventurous Muse: The Poetics of American Fiction, 1789–1900* (1977). Adams illustrates structural similarities between travel writing and fiction, from European antiquity to postmodernism. Adams' study of the relationship between travel writing and fiction is only slightly interested in the function of travel writing in specific social and cultural contexts. Spengemann, in contrast, contextualizes travel writing in literary and intellectual history. He concentrates on American travel writing and the figurative meaning of travel in American fiction. He argues that travel writing influenced the forming of a poetics of American fiction in decisive ways, particularly stressing the influence it had on American Romanticism. Not only does Spengemann highlight the connection between the writers of the American Renaissance and such influential travel narratives as Crèvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer* (1782) and Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years before the Mast* (1840), but he also leads the genealogy of New World writing back to Columbus' accounts of his journeys West of Europe.

In Spengemann's understanding, Columbus' letters and his diary are not only documents of the first contact between the Old World and the New World, but are furthermore documenting a decisive epistemological shift of modernity: a shift from a medieval world view of stability toward a modern consciousness of potential change, brought about by humankind itself. Columbus' journeys and their textual documentations, as Spengemann argues, were directing European cultures – and, after all, eventually also indigenous American cultures – into a state of modern epistemological insecurity.

From such a perspective, Columbus' writing stands as the initial indicator of the figurative meaning of traveling in modernity – signifying the broadening of horizons, learning, mobility, and personal flexibility. It shows men as being exposed to and part of an ever changing, unpredictable world. In Spengemann's view,

Columbus' letters and diary initiated a narrative mode emphasizing that "individual experience can reshape the world" (138) and suggest "that travel beyond the known world can uncover totally unsuspected truths about the world and the traveler's place in it" (138). Spengemann refers to this relationship of the individual to the world as the "adventurous muse" and the "poetics of adventure" (139).

In eighteenth-century America, Spengemann goes on, this "adventurous muse" came to stand in opposition to the domestic romance which "den[ies] both to experience and to art the power to discover anything new" (138–39). According to Spengemann, a poetics of American fiction evolves out of this opposition and tension between the domestic and the adventurous. Spengemann analyses four sub-genres that were transported across the Atlantic Ocean: the sentimental novel, the picaresque novel, the gothic novel, and the historical novel. Using such examples as Susannah Rowson's popular sentimental novel *Charlotte Temple* (1791), Spengemann shows that the American novel up to the 1840s was struggling to fill an "imported form with native material" (88). In this process, according to Spengemann, a poetics of American fiction evolves from the tension between the domestic romance and the poetics of adventure. Spengemann's approach accentuates the role of travel and travel writing in American literary emergence: "When the novel came, belatedly, to America, travel-writing alone could claim any distinction as a native literary genre" (121). From this point of view, travel writing evolves as the quintessential American genre.

Spengemann's opposition of adventure and home, and his conclusions concerning a specific American poetics, are at once an exploration into artistic and intellectual identity formation, and an inspection of the status of mobility, change, and truth in American culture. What, however, Spengemann's understanding of travel writing in America deemphasizes, is the fact that the modern search for new ways and new worlds – in which, for the Atlantic world, Columbus' travels are unquestionably incipient moments – were ideologically and materially embedded in the history of European colonialism and, since the post-revolutionary period, American nation-building and the early cosmopolitan

discourse of, and expansionist desire for, securing an empire for the new nation.

Thus, Spengemann's history and theory of the poetics of travel writing and early American fiction, as convincing as they are from a structural and canonical perspective, lack a critical conception of the interrelation between literary production and colonialism.⁷⁵ Apart from the ignored gendered connotation of the opposition of adventure and home (very much reproducing the frontier fiction of the male hero leaving home for the wilderness), a more encompassing historically contextualizing approach raises questions such as the following: What happens to the assumption of the American adventurous muse if we consider topics such as territorial expansionism, slavery, imperialism, and genocide as being related to, and interwoven with literary production? What kind of conceptual redefinitions might be necessary if we acknowledge that travel writing did not only contribute to the discourse of nation-building in terms of justice, freedom and democracy, but also in terms of imperial politics and territorial expansion? Such an approach renders it controversial to simply characterize post-Columbus travel writing as a metaphor for individualism in modernity. Travel writing evolves, at the same time, as part of processes of colonization, nation-building and empire-building – with many different strategies and measures of denying individualism to major parts of the American population (through political oppression, economic exploitation, genocide, racism, and slavery) and precisely not granting space for self-realization and individual freedom. Travel writing expresses individual perceptions of the landscapes, societies, cultures, and peoples encountered while often, and at the same time, it is complicit in such projects as territorial expansionism and empire-building.

⁷⁵ In a later essay, Spengemann (1989) distances himself from approaches that identify North American colonial literary history primarily as centered in New England and that identify “literature with belles lettres” (32). Instead, he emphasizes that the history, particularly the literary history, of early America should be written from a perspective including the complexity of colonial setting in the Americas, “with Barbados and Virginia the most highly prized and New England considered among the least important among” (32) the British colonies. Also quoted and discussed in Mackenthun (2003), 7.

Research on American Travel Writing of the Early Republic: An Overview

In the past few decades, travel writing from, and on, different regions of the globe, has been approached particularly for analysing specific discourses of colonial expansion and different forms and expressions of regional, national and transnational affiliations. Topics that are relevant here are colonial power relations, alterity, racial and cultural difference, literary strategies of dissociation and of symbolic transgression. The complicity of travel writing with imperialist expansion and rule has become a major topic in studies of travel writing from different periods and about different regions. Such approaches explore the function of travel writing and the figuration of traveling: What kind of individual and collective, cultural, political and social desires did it satisfy? What forms and styles did writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century employ in order to make travel accounts play a role in the intellectual, popular and symbolic communication of the time and place? What significance did collective identities (linguistic, ethnic, religious, racial) and the formation of national cultures have for the development of the content and form of travel writing in the period? To what extent was American travel writing discursively collaborative in projects of territorial expansionism, colonization, or racist oppression? How does American travel writing relate to anticolonialism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century world? How do reading, writing, and publishing of travel narratives contribute to performing border constructions in the period of nation-building?

An interest in questions of American identity formation, anti-colonial and colonial discourse, as well as westward expansion and empire-building has inspired studies of the genre that contextualize the writing historically and include theories of colonial and postcolonial subject formation and intersectionality of different subject positions. However, there are only a few studies of American travel literature written *before* 1830. In view of the postcolonial turn in the study of travel literature, this lack of studies is surprising. One explanation for the focus of more recent studies on the writing of the second part of the nineteenth century is that after the 1830s the ideology of manifest destiny became

more widespread in society, politics and literary discourse. Hence, for the study of imperialist aspirations and for postcolonial methodology, the mid- and late nineteenth centuries seem to provide a greater wealth of texts.⁷⁶ But such a perspective appears to be blind to the fact that questions of national identification, empire-building, and cosmopolitan sensibilities were already prevalent in travel writing of the early national period. The writing from this period provides rich material for studying the emergence of national and patriotic modes of writing. After all, concepts of national identity and nationalism, as Anderson (1991) outlines prominently, emerged in the Americas even before the restructuring of the European cultural and social geography in terms of the nation-state which started during the nineteenth century.⁷⁷

Pratt (1992) is particularly interested in *criollo*, or *creole*, appropriations and transformations of the writing of European travelers in Latin America. She highlights the significance of the writing of Alexander von Humboldt. But she does not include North American anglophone and post-revolutionary writers in her analysis. Pratt's neglect of American writing of the revolutionary and early national periods is rather characteristic for studies of travel writing. One explanation for the few studies of travel writing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as I already indicated above, can be seen in the transitory character of the period. However, as I will show in the following chapters, it is exactly this transitory, emerging, and transformative character of the period and its discourses of affiliation that seem to make the study of the period's travel writing particularly promising for studying the emergence of the national imagination.

⁷⁶ Steadman (2007) examines intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality in American women's travel writing of the nineteenth century, including black and white authors, but including few references to early nineteenth-century writing. Similarly, Farah Griffin and Cheryl Fish's (1998) anthology of accounts of foreign travel by African Americans is an important contribution to research on travel writing – but due to the given historical circumstances no reports on voluntary travel in the early nineteenth century are included.

⁷⁷ In the preface to the second edition, Anderson (1991) explains: "It had been part of my original plan to stress the New World origins of nationalism" (xiii), and in chapter 4 ("Creole Pioneers") he concentrates on the emergence of nationalism in the Americas (47–65).

Following Slotkin's (1973) and Spengemann's (1977) important studies of American travel writing, a few studies with a focus on the travel writing of the revolutionary period and the early republic have been published. Mary Helen Dunlop (1995) refers to writing about the American interior in the nineteenth century as constituting a "literature of public life and the visible landscape" (5). Relating to the first decades of the nineteenth century, Dunlop emphasizes that North American territory was successively incorporated into a national narrative. This process, she argues, initiated the discursive transformation of embattled territory into 'domestic' space. While such reading of American landscape and culture may aptly represent historical discursive constellations, it deemphasizes – similar to Spengemann's concept of the "adventurous muse" – imperial entanglements of writing about North American territory and landscape.

Most studies of early American travel writing concentrate on either travel in North America, mainly the territory that would eventually become part of the United States (Spengemann 1977, Dunlop 1995, Cox 2005, Imbarrato 2006), or travel abroad, that is, travel writing by Americans in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world (Foreman 1943, Caesar 1995, Gifra-Adroher 2000). This distinction between North America and abroad is quite consistent in most studies. Caesar (1995) and Gifra-Adroher (2000) depart from understanding early American travel writing mainly in terms of continental exploration and discovery, as they examine aspects of national identification by concentrating mainly on accounts of travels outside the United States. Studies of writing on travels to the interior are more numerous than studies of writing about abroad. This seems to be justified by the number of reports on different kinds of journeys on North American territory in the early nineteenth century. The closer studies approach the mid-Nineteenth century, the more emphasis is put on narratives about travels abroad. This is partly due to the dramatic increase of reports about traveling abroad after the Civil War, among which are the celebrated and canonized narratives by major American writers and intellectuals such as Mark Twain (*Innocents Abroad*, *Roughing It* and *A Tramp Abroad*) and Henry James.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Caesar (1995), 21–22.

However, this shift in focus from ‘domestic’ travel (of the early nineteenth century) to international travel (of the late nineteenth century) in the scholarship, and in the chronologically divided scholarly interest in ‘home’ and ‘abroad’ seems to correspond to historiography that pictures the U.S. as an isolationist society until the late Nineteenth century when it entered the international stage as an emerging world power. Such an understanding of American history seems to neglect the fact that the U.S., from the earliest post-revolutionary moments – as any other nation – was acting in international networks and conflicts, and was pursuing expansionist policies on the American continent. Furthermore, the division between the early and later periods of nineteenth-century writing implies that during the early national period Americans were not going abroad. However, Americans were actually traveling the world, writing about their journeys and publishing travel narratives long before the mid-nineteenth century.

Scholars have assessed the divide between writing about domestic and foreign travel very differently. John D. Cox’s *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (2005) highlights the importance of travel for the formation of American culture and society. Travel was, he argues, central to the emerging American national identity (“travel made the United States,” 1), as – among other aspects – manifested in the protection of the right to travel in the Articles of Confederation. Cox (2005) focuses on travel within the national boundaries (5) claiming an overemphasis in the scholarship on writing about traveling abroad and international relations. The internal struggle within the thirteen colonies to “forge a national identity” (1), Cox argues, is neglected:

[...] many studies of early America have looked primarily at accounts of Europeans in America or by Americans in Europe to understand the culture of early America. But this international focus fails to appreciate the central role of “travel” itself in American national identity; in fact, far from simply constituting a leisure activity enjoyed only by the wealthy, travel has been one of the defining characteristics of the American people and their nation since its very creation. (1)

Cox's study of narratives of journeys to the South shifts critical attention to early-nineteenth century domestic travel within the borders of the early United States. His typology of travel narratives, however, operates with an unclear notion of the domestic. In this period of national expansion, it is particularly difficult to distinguish between the nation-state and abroad on the American continent.⁷⁹ Terms such as 'the South,' 'the West' and 'the frontier,' are geographically unstable and carry different cultural connotations compared with mid- and late-Nineteenth-century America.⁸⁰ But Cox is definitely right in emphasizing that travel writing and its negotiation of boundaries – unstable as these boundaries might have been – are a valuable, but neglected, source for studies of nationalism in the formative years of the United States (Cox, 5).

A few studies explore the relation between the writing about domestic travel and the writing about travels abroad. Caesar (1995) concentrates on the national imagination in early American travel writing, and stresses the tension between concepts of identity that are at least partly spatial: "An American traveler experiences anything at all only as a culturally mediated being, caught up in the dualism of home and abroad" (6). Despite acknowledging the symbolic significance of notions of belonging, Caesar places more weight on the generic conventions that structure travel accounts: "American travel writing has more to do with narrative form, epistemology, and cultural inheritance than particular historical shapings" (1). Still, Caesar's readings discuss the importance of writing about journeys abroad for the forming of a national imaginary.⁸¹ In travel books about abroad, for example, the writing sustains its coherence by transforming the external divisions into internal unity. In this sense, American travel writing functions as a national practice.⁸²

⁷⁹ See also Reginald Horsman (1970), xii.

⁸⁰ M. H. Dunlop (1995) highlights that the boundaries of the South, the East Coast and "the interior" have been the subject of argument (9).

⁸¹ See Caesar (1995), 8.

⁸² See Caesar (1995), 16.

The concepts of domestic and abroad (foreign) have been discussed by Eric Cheyfitz as being entangled in discourses of imperial expansion from early modern times to the late twentieth century. In his study of English and American fiction, *The Poetics of Imperialism* (1991), Cheyfitz discusses the complex negotiation between domestic and foreign which he shows as being centered around the issue of property distribution. The language of property distribution reconnects the writing with earlier colonial and imperial forms of communication. The first European writing about what became to be known as the New World already established patterns that would persist for centuries to come. Among these are the intermingling of the discourse of conquering and the metaphoric of discovery, newness and civilization.⁸³ While the discourse of conquering is structured on the logic of property acquisition, the metaphoric of discovery emphasizes forms of knowledge (and language) acquisition. The overlapping of these discourses started with the first European reports about the New World. As Stephen Greenblatt (1991) argues, in these very early accounts, the central figure is wonder; it registers a response to what is “at once unbelievable and true” (21).⁸⁴

In the seventeenth century, as Michelle Burnham (2007) illustrates in the case of New England writing, the discourse of wonder was displaced by the discourse of investment, in so-called promotional writing (37). Wonder, as Burnham argues, in seventeenth-century New England would have discouraged investment (35). Hence seventeenth-century travel writing to New England seems “virtually evacuated of wonder” (35). These promotional seventeenth and eighteenth-century narratives are written in what Campbell (1999) calls “mundane matter-of-factness” (23)⁸⁵ and what Burnham refers to as “plain style.” In travel reports on colonial New England this plain style is “characterized less by

⁸³ Cheyfitz here contradicts Spengemann’s assessment of the significance of Columbus’s activities and his writing.

⁸⁴ See also Greenblatt (1991), 14, and Michelle Burnham’s (2007) reference to Greenblatt (32). On figurations of wonder see Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park (1998).

⁸⁵ Qtd. in Burnham (2007), 36.

its transparency or antifigurality or neutrality than by the rather surprising force of its claims to be ideologically divested” (28).⁸⁶

Both kinds of travel writing, the earlier one based on ‘wonder’ as a structuring element, and the later ‘plain style’ of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century economic expansion, serve to illustrate the complex entanglement of language and property, as well as the imbroglio between imagination and imperialism, in travel writing. Such modes of perception and representation that at the same time are negotiating such categories as the ‘unbelievable’ (wonder) and ‘truth’ continue to have an effect on post-revolutionary American travel writing and its specific factual and imaginative negotiation of domestic and abroad, of home and its outside, of the familiar and the alien.

There are stylistic and thematic correlations in the sense of Cheyfitz and Burnham between earlier European New World travel writing and late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American accounts. But in many respects – as I will show in the following chapters – the writing by American authors (late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) differs from earlier colonial accounts. Thematically, Europe and the Old World continue to figure prominently in American travel writing of the period examined in this study. But travel writing and its assertion of national identity in many ways can be understood as a response to prior European constructions of Americans and American realities, a response that emphasizes national self-determination.⁸⁷ Earlier European observations and reflections are taken up, either in an affirmative way or for distancing from Europe and for establishing a distinct American perspective. Authors writing about domestic travel, or travel to the interior of North America, faced the challenge of describing a landscape and society which in terms of geographic boundaries and social parameters were very much in flux. However, even narratives of exploration, describing journeys by Americans in

⁸⁶ Spengemann (1977) stresses that travel reports encouraged readers to associate plainness with veracity: “The presumed or apparent truthfulness of plain style depends on its imported fantasy of a future profit that effaces and offsets present risks” (29). Josselyn’s reports deviate from the seventeenth-century plain style as they obviously attempt to satisfy the curiosity of the English audience by reporting about lions, sea serpents and mermen.

⁸⁷ Caesar (1995), 36.

previously unknown territory are unable to avoid earlier European conventions of exploratory, promotional, or imperial travel writing.⁸⁸ Thus, authors and texts that I am going to discuss, *reacted* to the traditional European privilege of defining America.

Writing about their journeys, American authors had to deal with literary conventions established over a long history of travel writing by European authors. As Mary Helen Dunlop (1995) emphasizes, many American authors frame traveling to the American interior as a journey into the future of a society emerging on an unfamiliar landscape; however, traveling to Europe, in contrast, is represented as traveling back in time (2–3), back to antiquity.⁸⁹ While most travellers to the American interior face an extraordinarily mobile settler population and represent themselves within a wilderness still to be civilized, most American travelers to Europe, Asia and Africa comment on historical aspects and regional cultural traditions. This conception of the Old and the New emerges from transatlantic and colonial American patterns and traditions of reporting. The revolution and the establishment of a new republic add a dimension of newness which is not only based on discovery but also on enlightened notions of freedom, independence, and knowledge production.

The primary texts examined in this study contribute to the transatlantic enlightened project of knowledge production. Even if a major part of travel reports of the period is ‘description’ – as critics have often referred to the genre in general –, it is intertwined with discourse of identity. American travel writing – about journeys within U.S. territory, to the North American ‘interior,’ and the American ‘abroad’ – is characterized by two discursive projects: (1) the idea of civilizing the ‘wilderness’ and the indigenous population (the ‘savage,’ the ‘primitive’⁹⁰) and (2) nation-building that counters English and European dominance⁹¹ in the contemporary

⁸⁸ This transatlantic and intertextual dimension of travel writing was inescapable as travel accounts by Europeans had influenced ideas about geography, science, and human nature for centuries. Batten (1978) highlights the significance of Locke, Hume, and Jefferson (2) in this context.

⁸⁹ See Ziff (1991), 52.

⁹⁰ On this discourse see Cheyfitz (1991), xx.

⁹¹ Concluding his discussion of the influence of metropolitan European culture on artistic and intellectual life until the Declaration of Independence,

world, and which, at the same time, articulates emerging desires of empire-building in the first independent republic of the Americas. The reports show American authors exploring the American continents, *framing* the emerging nation and *claiming* the Western hemisphere for the emerging empire.

Travel Writing in this Study

The strict distinction between domestic travel writing and travel writing about regions outside the nation, limits the understanding of the “cultural work” (Tompkins) of American travel writing in the early national period.⁹² Instead, this study approaches American travel writing as a mode of constructing Americanness that is characterized by the dynamic of the imagery of home and abroad. The involvement in the project of territorial expansion in different regions of the American continent, is taking place in cultural and intertextual relation to such post-revolutionary paradoxes as the simultaneity of continuing *interactions* with, and intellectual and cultural *disengagement* from, England and the Old World. Travel writing of the period – as understood in the following chapters – performs a testing and questioning of the boundary between home and abroad, between domestic space and the world beyond the nation’s borders. Both kinds of travel writing – ‘domestic’ and ‘abroad’ – are entangled in contradictions within the project of transatlantic Enlightenment⁹³ such as the concurrent accentuation of nationalism and universalizing concepts (cosmopolitanism), anticolonialism, and empire-building. Such concomitance provokes tensions and contradictions which will be discussed in the readings that follow.

Jack P. Greene (1993) writes: “In both America and England, then, the continuing authority of European culture operated powerfully to prevent observers from developing a fully positive identification of the societies of colonial British America during the first-three quarters of the eighteenth century” (129).

⁹² Bohls (2005) comments on the distinction of domestic and exotic writing (xxvi).

⁹³ On the American Enlightenment, see Henry Steele Commager (1977) and Frank Shuffelton (1993).



Franklinia alatamaha. A beautiful flowering Tree.
discovered growing near the banks of the R. Matamaha in Georgia.

Will^m Bartram Del.
1782

Figure 1: William Bartram, *Franklinia alatamaha*.
License: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

III. Creolizing America

3.1. Natural History and the Dispute of the New World

In the late eighteenth century, maritime travel writing about exploration and discovery was superseded by travel accounts of interior exploration and scientific travel.¹ This kind of travel writing was very much part of the new knowledge production project of natural history, initiated most prominently by Carl von Linné and Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon. In his *Systema Naturae* (*The System of Nature*), first published in 1735, the Swedish naturalist Linné “laid out a classificatory system designed to categorize all plant forms of the planet” (Pratt 1992, 15). The first three books of Buffon’s *Natural History of the Earth* (*Histoire naturelle*) were published in 1749, followed by seven books on quadrupeds (published between 1753 and 1767), nine books on birds (published between 1770 and 1783), followed by another five books on minerals together with seven supplements, the last of which was published posthumously in 1789. During the eighteenth century, the *Histoire naturelle* influenced the rise of natural sciences in the Western world decisively. Its impact on Enlightenment thinking has been compared to the *Encyclopédie*, being considered as “one of the great intellectual monuments of the French Enlightenment” (Farber 1975, 63).²

Natural historians, such as Buffon, who did not go on research journeys themselves, often based their descriptions and theories on

¹ See Pratt (1992), 24.

² See Meisen (2008), 11.

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reports of exploratory journeys.³ Hence, throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, close ties existed between different types of travel reports and the science of natural history. A reciprocal exchange of content and structure characterizes natural history and different forms of eighteenth-century travel writing. Research in natural history, particularly Linné's classification and systematizing project which formed botany and zoology after 1735,⁴ and Buffon's 'literary science' profoundly affected the practice of all kinds of travel writing. After the publication of *Systema Naturae* and *Histoire naturelle*, natural history became an influential structuring mode of European and American travel writing. From this point on, categorizing descriptions of landscape, natural phenomena, and species played a part in many travel reports written for publication in European languages around the globe, even if the author was neither a botanist nor belonged to any other scientific profession or community.⁵

The main procedures employed by natural historians were collecting and observing, from rocks and fossils to living animals. Artefacts as well as living creatures, including humans, were sent to Europe where they were collected by individuals for various reasons, among which were botanical gardens, scientific research, curiosity, investment and trade. Natural historians were often acting in international networks of individuals focusing on such scientific disciplines as meteorology, botany, geology, ethnology, zoology, and anatomy. Those involved in such networks were individuals either engaged as scientists, collectors, so-called 'plant hunters,' or artists. Natural historians were participating in most of the famous expeditions to the non-European world of the eighteenth century, such as Cook's first expedition to the South Sea in 1769. In Cook's first expedition, as well as in his later expeditions, botanists and natural historians such as Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander participated. Some of the reports and chronicles of these expeditions were, at least in part, written in the descriptive and

³ See Lepenies (1976), 139, and Meisen (2008), 20.

⁴ See Meisen (2008), 16.

⁵ Meisen (2008), 27.

categorizing mode of natural history and became international best-sellers of the time.⁶

A few disciples of Linnaeus came to America, such as Peter Kalm who traveled between Philadelphia and Niagara in the years 1748 to 1751 and who published his observations in *Travels in North America* (1770, English translation). Alexander von Humboldt certainly counts as one of the most famous and influential authors of exploratory travel writing in the style of natural history. In America, Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1799 [1785]) exerted influence on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travel reports. Many authors of the period comment on Jefferson's published writing. Probably the most famous American expedition conducted within the parameters of natural history after the Declaration of Independence is Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's search for the Northwest passage which took them right across the North American continent (1804–1806). Thus, throughout the entire second part of the eighteenth century and during the early nineteenth century, natural history remained an important mode for framing travel reports. However, due to intellectual trends, scientific progress, and changing literary styles, this kind of exploratory travel writing underwent various transformations and fulfilled changing functions in transatlantic intellectual exchange.

With natural history, a new 'frontier figure' was added to the narrators, authors, and protagonists of European travel writing: in the eighteenth century the known travel figures, such as the settler, the sefarer, the conqueror, the captive, and the diplomat, were joined by the solitary collector and observer, also referred to as plant hunter. In the particular case of travel writing about journeys in the Americas, the constellation often consisted of Old World-patrons and New World-plant hunters: collectors and financiers were located in Britain, those gathering species were Americans traveling in North America. Some of these plant hunters published reports about their journeys and explorations. Natural history as such, and the specific transatlantic constellation

⁶ For example, reports by Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1771) and Georg Forster (1777).

of collectors and financiers, bear imperialist implications that Michel Foucault and Pratt extrapolate.

In *The Order of Things* (2002 [1966]) Foucault explores the transformation of modes of knowledge production through history. He locates eighteenth-century natural history in the discursive logic of a “science of order.” Linné’s universalist system of ordering nature and society, in Foucault’s terms aims at a “description of the visible” (35), attempting to bring language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and things observed as close as possible to words” (28). In this sense natural history, as a structuring mode in American travel writing between 1770 and 1830, speaks in the voice of scientific universalism and Enlightenment rationalism when working on categorizing the visible world. However, such rationally structured projects of universally oriented knowledge production were intertwined with, and complicit in, structures of coloniality. Thus the universalism of natural history exposes contradictions of Enlightenment thought: it promotes forms of universalism that are at once characterized by imperialist tendencies⁷ and global social hierarchies.

Apart from ideological entanglements in Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and European colonialism, natural history was of formative significance for American nationalism. As scholars in American intellectual and cultural history have shown, ‘nature’ acquired a compensational function in transatlantic discourse and a central position in American identity discourse. Paul Semonin (1992) convincingly argues that in the first decades after the Declaration of Independence the emergence of American nationalism was decisively supported by and was based on the new intellectual interest in, and trend of, natural history:

[...] from Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s seminal essay *Nature* (1836), natural history became a central metaphor for American nationalism. Scenic views, stuffed birds, prehistoric bones, and botanical specimens from a tourist’s nature were substituted in the

⁷ Walter D. Mignolo’s *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures. Decolonial Options* (2011) and his earlier *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (1995) analyze the entanglements of knowledge production and European colonial expansion.

nationalist's eyes for the country's missing ancient history, replacing the unacceptable antiquity of Native American civilization. (6)

Semonin goes on to highlight that natural history also was a core element in the emergence of the American cultural mythology of exceptionalism:

Under the guise of natural history, American nationalism made itself a universal creed, creating in the process the myth of a transcendent America, a nation, in Perry Miller's apt words, that was "Nature's nation." (6)

Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) and Jefferson's draft of the *Declaration of Independence* legitimize the new nation by referring to the laws of nature. Jefferson's *Notes*, written during the revolutionary war and first published in 1785, conflates discourses of natural history and of American national identity. His famous description of the "natural bridge" in terms of the pastoral and the sublime, speaks to the apparent lack of medieval ruins in America: "The Natural Bridge, the most sublime of Nature's works" (26, Query V). The "natural bridge" is not just a sign of the grandiosity of American natural landscape but also a sign of a sophisticated history equivalent to European antiquity: "It is impossible for the emotions, arising from the sublime, to be felt beyond what they are here: so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing, as it were up to heaven" (26). Jefferson indicates that, as Slotkin (2000 [1973]) remarks, "the American 'ruin' was not man-made but God- or nature-made" (246).

The paradigm of natural history had far-reaching implications for the emergence of American nationalism, not just in terms of natural imagery but particularly in terms of racial distinction. Jefferson's "sudden plunges from his civilized republican rhetoric into the lowest depths of natural history to explain the aesthetic appeal of white skin to the Negroes themselves" (Semonin, 21),⁸ not only illustrates further contradictions of Enlightenment thinking but also the way in which American nationalism amalgamated discourses of nature, aesthetics, and 'race.' The natural historical method had the unfortunate consequence of categorizing

⁸ See also Shuffelton (1996), 257-277.

and describing humans as if they were nothing but another type of natural product which, as a result, led to forms of Othering of people of African descent and of Native Americans on the basis of phenotypical appearance and cultural practice.

One of the transatlantic debates most often referred to, and commented on in reports of the period, is the so-called Dispute of the New World. The manifold references to this debate indicate how significant travel writing and natural history were for knowledge production of the time. The Dispute is anchored in one of the core questions of Enlightenment thought: the sources of social progress.⁹ In the early eighteenth century, when the two American continents had long become part of European colonial empires, a debate over the value of these territories divided the literature of exploration and transatlantic scientific discourse.¹⁰ In the debate, one side offered a ‘degenerationist’ argument to the effect that nature in the New World wilderness had fallen from its proper level, which could only be maintained by cultivation. In this view, the New World’s natural givens were inferior to those of the Old World. The opponents of such rationale countered that American nature had been remarkably fertile from pre-Columbian days and that cultivation was only bringing out, not creating, its inherent fertility.

The dispute began with the publication of Buffon’s volumes on the quadrupeds as part of his *Histoire naturelle* (1749–1788). The book is one of the texts most referred to across the range of eighteenth-century philosophy, history, and literature, as well as, of course, science. Gathering reports on both animal and plant life in the explored territories, Buffon organized them into a theory of anthropocentric but secular evolution, anticipating Darwin’s theory of evolution. His secular order of nature implies a hierarchy of both plants and animals. America is located very low on this hierarchy, as passages such as the following illustrate:

The horses, donkeys, oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, all these animals, I say, became smaller [in the New World]; [...] those which were not transported there, and which went there of their own

⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* (1762) sparked off a debate on social progress.

¹⁰ Myra Jehlen (1994), 110.

accord, those, in short, common to both worlds, such as wolves, foxes, deer, roebuck, and moose, are likewise considerably smaller in America than in Europe, and *that without exception*.¹¹

Buffon also classifies humans and cultures by comparing native indigenous Americans to animals. He emphasizes that Native Americans were incapable of subjugating either animals or elements. Hence, in Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, Native Americans appear as being helpless, as lacking intellect, and as being characterized by all-encompassing apathy.¹²

As Myra Jehlen (1994) emphasizes, the Dispute and its central issue, the relation of civilization and nature, erupted not only from Enlightenment discourse but just as much from the experience of colonization (110). By the early eighteenth century, European empires had fully annexed the Americas. These imperial projects inspired scholars, writers and explorers of the time to query the function and role of colonization. Continuing the tradition of writing about European exploration, both sides of the Dispute agreed on the general necessity of colonizing the New World. However, different positions were taken regarding the means of civilizing and of bringing about improvement and progress. While the *degenerationists*, such as Buffon, understood colonizing as opening new territories for annexation to the existing European world, the *defenders of American nature* saw the newly annexed continents as constituting a world of its own and, in a form of creole appropriation, as 'their own' world. The latter position stressed the assumption that the Western hemisphere might even surpass Europe in future times. A progress, as was argued, partly based on America's natural resources. Thus, from a New World perspective, the Dispute can be seen as an initial moment of proto-nationalist expression and of creolizing discourse.¹³

¹¹ Buffon quoted in Gerbi (1973 [1955]), 5.

¹² See Meisen (2008), 90–97, 104–106, and 133. Another influential defender of the degeneracy thesis was Guillaume Thomas François Raynal who published *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* in 1770. Raynal was impressed by political and economic developments, especially in the English colonies and reflects on ways how Europeans improved America. See Jimack (2006).

¹³ On the Dispute's influence on the emergence of national sentiments in the Americas and the emergence of the idea of a Western hemisphere unity,

The contemporary transatlantic significance of the Dispute was intensified by the fact that the degenerationists were largely Europeans, the most prominent being Buffon, Cornelius de Pauw, and Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, whereas most of the defenders saw themselves as Americans. This discursive opposition certainly increased the far-reaching significance in intellectual circles of the time.¹⁴ In the Dispute, intellectuals negotiated ideas of America and Europe that had already had a long tradition. Whereas in earlier centuries America was shown in terms of *utopian* thinking by Thomas Moore (1515) and in Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1627), in the Dispute of the New World, America appears in *dystopian* terms. Anti-pastoralism is a structuring mode of Buffon's references to America's flora and fauna.

Although travel writing of the late eighteenth century continued to be strongly formed by patterns established through centuries of European writing about the New World, we find an increasing sense of transatlantic distinction in the literature of the revolutionary period that complicates common patterns of New World realities and experiences. Travel writing of the time contributed to the literary framing of America as an independent country. As I will illustrate in my following readings, American travel reports participated in this transatlantic discourse in different ways. With their travel accounts American writers reacted to the scientific theories, to the anti-pastoralism of European writers and to the implied degeneration of American nature. Some of the travel writing appropriated and redefined imperial and metropolitan rationales (as, e.g. the degeneracy thesis and the European privilege of naming). This appropriation and redefinition initiated early forms of American literary nationalism.

Colonial American authors, such as James Adair (1775) and Jonathan Carver (1778) already used methods and rhetoric of new

see Arthur P. Whitaker. "The Origin of the Western Hemisphere Idea" (1954), 326.

¹⁴ See Jehlen (1994), 121. A few European scholars disagreed with the degeneracy thesis of Buffon and de Pauw. For example, in 1770 the Benedictine monk Antoine-Joseph Pernety revived the legend that once there were giants living in Patagonia (see Jehlen 1994, 119), thus contradicting Buffon's claim of restricted growth due to the New World climate.

scientific approaches to studying history.¹⁵ However, as Pamela Regis (1999) has shown, three authors of the revolutionary period were particularly well informed about “the intellectual mainstream of natural history” (5): J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, William Bartram, and Thomas Jefferson. Against criticism that reads the major works of these authors in terms of aesthetic concepts such as the sublime, the picturesque or the emergence of the novel in America, Regis (1999) argues that their writing should be understood in the same way as works of science: “The rhetoric of each of these texts – from its organization to its sentences and diction – is governed by the way natural historical investigators did science” (xi). Regis reads these texts as an expression of a “literature of place” (133) that set in with colonial American authors such as Robert Rogers, William Stork, James Adair and Jonathan Carver. Such texts, according to Regis, use the “description of physical detail to delineate not wilderness but a territory, not mere land but a country” (4).

In the following, I examine Jonathan Carver’s, John Bartram’s, and William Bartram’s ways of seeing and framing America as a distinct cultural space and national landscape, and their contribution to the formation of specific American national patterns of travel writing. The reports analysed in this chapter, as critics such as Regis have emphasized, can be read as expressing the authors’ very different attempts to bypass social history (Regis 1999), that is, to represent the Americas as if removed from the political struggles, contradictions, and tensions of their time. One way of doing this is the method of writing in a universal tone of enlightened knowledge production; another way is the production of America in mythical terms. Despite such escapist tendencies, however, the texts are very much entangled in the webs of history: Crèvecoeur still imagined America as a place of aristocratic and patriarchal harmony which, in the end, he has to leave because of his loyalist sympathies; William Bartram’s journey and his writing of the first report were taking place during the struggles for independence,

¹⁵ On James Adair’s *History of the American Indians* (1775) see Charles Hudson (1977). Jonathan Carver (1778) will be discussed in the following subchapter.

his final pastoral account was reworked in the early years of the American republic.

In each case, the narrative structure appears as struggling with the apparent contradictions within the authors' framing of New World realities and ideas of America. In different ways, Carver's and the Bartrams' texts illustrate the formation of national imagery before the nation was established as an independent republic, that is, a way of framing America in terms of pre-independence transatlantic distinction. My readings suggest that the texts are an expression of 'creole sensibility' not only intent on describing America in universalist terms (natural history) but also on marking transatlantic differences in distinctly national and American terms.

Crèvecoeur's pre-revolutionary imagery of America's freedom in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782 [2012]), fictionalizing the traveler and narrator, is framed by British loyalism.¹⁶ Such loyalist celebration of America similarly appears in John Bartram's and Carver's narratives of exploration. But in the writings of these two authors, we also find first intimations of a 'creolizing' discourse – in the sense of articulating an American position distinct from colonial metropolitan determination. Continuing such a creole move in American travel writing, William Bartram's "literature of place" attempts to avoid positioning in contemporary pre-revolutionary and revolutionary anticolonial struggles and transatlantic distinction. Finally, Jefferson's contradictory nationalism – both pastoral and imperialist – superseded the cautious creole perspective of the earlier writers. In *Notes* – not a travel report in the strict sense but an epistolary report that leads the implied European reader through nature, society and history of Virginia, as if traveling – the national discourse appears as a structuring element and emphasizes transatlantic differences in a new self-assertive manner.

¹⁶ The original full title: *Letters from an American Farmer; Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners, and Customs . . . and Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America*. London, 1782. When residing among the Native Americans, he articulates an anxiety becoming 'racially' different (see Regis 1999, 126), indicating that he fears Americanization.

3.2. Jonathan Carver's Transatlantic Affiliations

Jonathan Carver's *Travels Through America* is considered one of the most famous travel reports written by a colonial American about the unsettled continental interior. Norman Gelb (1993), editor of the 1993 edition of Carver's *Travels*, writes, that it was "the first genuinely popular American travel book" (1).¹⁷ *Travels*, first published in 1778, indicates a general shift in the narrative voice of American travel writing. Although Carver's frontier narrative is explicitly written from a British loyalist perspective, the narrator at the same time clearly marks his own Americanness. In this respect Carver's popular narrative indicates an important shift in colonial self-positioning toward creole perspectives.

After the French and Indian War (1754–1763), when France ceded a vast expanse of continental North America to Britain, new territory was provided for British subjects to explore as part of their empire. Explorers provided reports for readers in Britain and the colonies. *Travels* is based on an expedition the author took part in, exploring the Great Lakes region, in the years 1766 to 1768, immediately after the end of the French and Indian War. Carver's narrative illustrates an incipient moment of collective identification. On the one hand, Carver continues the tradition of the European explorer as conqueror of – what was perceived as – uncivilized peoples and land; on the other hand, he takes on board the conventions of natural history – the more 'modern,' Enlightenment-inspired approach of his time – without being trained in the field. While he highlights the unchartedness and wilderness of the territory, he also locates his traveling self and his narrating self in conflict zones of European colonial empires. Writing explicitly in the voice of a loyal British subject, the promotion of the newly acquired territory also gives voice – although yet little pronounced – to the provincial pride of the American who presents North America to British readers unfamiliar not only with the territory recently cut off from the French colonial empire but also with America as – in Carver's eyes – a rising civilization.

Carver was born in Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1710, at a time when the land to the west of the Appalachian Mountains

¹⁷ See also Gelb (1993), 46.

was unknown and mysterious to the inhabitants of the British colonies along the eastern coastline. According to Gelb (1993) and other scholars, little is known about Carver's early years. The years of Carver's adulthood were marked by the European contest for supremacy in the Americas which culminated in the French and Indian War. After the fall of Montreal to the British in 1760, the French officially surrendered with the Treaty of Paris of 1763. Until the end of the French and Indian War, many of the politicians and writers who, a decade later, were to act as supporters of the American struggle for independence, such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Francis Hopkinson,¹⁸ were fervent loyalists, defending the Crown against any kind of French and Spanish attacks.¹⁹ Carver served as a Massachusetts militiaman during the war and apparently took part in military actions at Fort Henry on Lake George in 1757.²⁰

After the war, Robert Rogers who had gained some fame as a war hero in British America and in Britain, commissioned men to take part in an expedition to the American interior in search of the North-West Passage which had long been a desired route for simplifying trade with Asia. Rogers' venture, and he himself as a personality, as Gelb (1993) puts it, "epitomized early American wanderlust" (14). He started heading west without receiving a positive answer from the Crown regarding his request for financial support and still waiting for the official authorization. Carver, by then 56 years old, was among the recruited men. One of the reasons why he qualified might have been his skills in map-making (cf. Carver's map of North America on the cover of this book).

¹⁸ Francis Hopkinson, was born in 1737 in Philadelphia and died there in 1791. As a delegate of New Jersey, Hopkinson attended the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in June 1776 and voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence. During the Revolution he served as chairman of the Congress's Navy Board, as treasurer of loans, and as judge of admiralty. Although he contributed much to the revolutionary cause and wrote patriotic poetry, through his family and acquaintances he was closely connected to loyalist circles. One way of contributing to the revolution was his writing of ballads and satires in verse and prose. His most famous ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs" (1778), is based on a real incident of war. In this eighty-eight line poem, Hopkinson satirizes the British feeling of superiority and success (See Elliott 1982, Emerson 1972 and 1977, Andrews 1977).

¹⁹ See Gelb (1993), 8. In the war, Spain was allied with France.

²⁰ Gelb (1993), 6 and 13, see also Parker (1995), 1.

Although Carver suggests that it was his loyalty to the Crown that prompted him to participate in the expedition, it might just as well have been the promised financial reward that lured him into the project.²¹ However, as it was to turn out, the expedition was neither successful in finding a transcontinental waterway nor in receiving the royal backing Rogers had claimed to have received when hiring the members of the expedition.²² Rogers was eventually arrested under suspicion of treason and Carver never received the money from the British government that Rogers had promised.

Sensing that there might be interest in the journal he kept during the expedition, Carver looked for publishers. However, he soon learned that he would need publication funds.²³ In 1768 Carver placed an advertisement in the *Boston Chronicle* in which he announced that he was seeking subscribers.²⁴ In this situation Carver decided to go to London in order to “petition the Crown for reimbursement for the time and energy expended on his westward trek” (Gelb 1993, 32). He might also have believed that it would be more promising to try to publish his journal in London. As Gelb notes, another scheme might have made going to England an auspicious opportunity: having spent a longer period among Native Americans of the interior “he considered himself well suited for an appointment as a Crown administrator of Indian territories” (32). Carver was eventually successful in receiving minor payments from the Crown. However, his attempts to publish his journal continued to be frustrated for a few more years.

Eventually, after rewriting the journal, the book was finally published in 1778. The title of the altered form of his journal was *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America In the Years 1766, 1767 and 1768*. Although the publication did not help to improve his desperate financial situation very much, he received some recognition from literary circles in London.²⁵ Two years after the publication Carver died in poverty in London.

²¹ Geld (1993), 18.

²² Gelb (1993), 26.

²³ Gelb (1993), 29.

²⁴ As Gelb (1993) explains, after rediscovery of this advertisement in 1909, its existence would be used for refuting the claim by historians that the entire narrative was written in London (46–47).

²⁵ Gelb (1993), 44.

A third edition of Carver's *Travels* appeared in 1781. This edition and the first edition published in the United States in 1784, were well received. Ever since these publications, Carver's *Travels* has been celebrated as having had influence on Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's documentation of their expedition. By 1809 twenty editions of Carver's narrative had been published,²⁶ including translations into German, French and Dutch.²⁷ The book and its reception document the interest in the land beyond the British settlements in the period after the French and Indian War. Despite the success with contemporary readers, early on it was questioned whether the account was authentic. Apart from claims of plagiarism, quite a few passages were suspected as being made up.²⁸ However, as critics emphasize, the book gave to English readers the first account in their own language of a vast portion of the American interior, territory that had been newly added to the British empire.

In many respects, Carver's *Travel* is structured according to the conventions of the European eighteenth-century New World narrative of exploration and discovery. Similar to the opening paragraphs of many contemporary reports, the narrator introduces himself as a "person [...] unused to literary pursuits" (62) but whose extraordinary observations and experiences in unexplored territory justify the publication of the narrative. Descriptions of landscape and people are followed by remarks on the country's potential riches, possible trade relations, and aspects that make the land a promising acquisition. The narrative of Part I covering the entire journey is followed by Part II, entitled "Of the Origin, Manners, Customs, Religion, and Language of the Indians," a Customs-and-Manners chapter as was frequently added to late eighteenth-century travel reports on the North American interior.

The title of the appendix highlights the promotional character of the entire book: "The Probability of the Interior Parts of North America Becoming Commercial Colonies and the Means by Which This Might Be Effected." Such strategies to promote the work are quite conventional in colonial narratives of discovery

²⁶ See Greenfield (1992), 216.

²⁷ See Parker (1995), 1.

²⁸ Gelb (1993), 43, see also Adams (1962).

and exploration. Famous forerunners of this kind are the reports by Christopher Columbus, Sir Walter Raleigh and John Smith who each intended to convince their royalty of the riches of the explored regions. Carver celebrates the outcome of the French and Indian War by representing the newly acquired territory of interior North America as a worthy gain for the British Empire. Carver concludes his narrative (Part I) with allusions to the economic potential of the North American interior:

[...] I doubt not but that the countries I have described will prove a more abundant source of riches to this nation than either its East or West Indian settlements and I shall not only pride myself, but sincerely rejoice in being the means of pointing out to it so valuable an acquisition. (107–108)

Carver highlights different exploitable resources:

This country likewise abounds with a milk-white clay of which Chinaware might be made equal in goodness to the Asiatic, and also with a blue clay that serves the Indians for paint. (96)

The economic potential of the region is taken up again in the appendix following Part II.

Interestingly, however, the promotional character of the narrative goes beyond the colonialist discourse of acquisition and material gain. Carver's descriptions of the natural formations he encounters do not only highlight economically exploitable aspects like the richness of the soil and the abundance of fowl. Rather, such economic discourse is complemented with aestheticized landscape descriptions:

The country around the Falls [of St. Anthony] is extremely beautiful. It is not an uninterrupted plain where the eye finds no relief, but composed of many gentle ascents, which in the summer are covered with the finest verdure, and interspersed with little groves, that give a pleasing variety of prospect. On the whole, when the Falls are included, which may be seen at the distance of four miles, a more pleasing and picturesque view cannot, I believe, be found throughout the universe. (84)

This takes on an Edenic character when describing Lake Pepin, an “extended part of the River Mississippi” (78), located in the

future state of Wisconsin, in terms exposing not only the abundance but also the natural composition:

In many places pyramids of rocks appeared, resembling old ruinous towers; at others amazing precipices; and what is very remarkable, whilst this scene presented itself on one side, the opposite side of the same mountain was covered with the finest herbage, which gradually ascended to its summit. From thence the most beautiful and extensive prospect that imagination can form opens to your view. Verdant plains, fruitful meadows, numerous islands, and all these abounding with a variety of trees that yield amazing quantities of fruit without care or cultivation, such as the nut-tree, the maple which produces sugar, vines loaded with rich grapes, and plum-trees bending under their blooming burdens, but above all, the fine River flowing gently beneath, and reaching as far as the eye can extend, by turns attract your admiration and excite your wonder.

The Lake abounds with various kinds of fish. Great numbers of fowl frequent also this Lake and rivers adjacent, such as storks, swans, geese, brants, and ducks: and in the groves are found great plenty of turkeys and partridges. On the plains are the largest buffaloes of any in America. (78)

Carver represents his encounters with the indigenous population by further exploiting images of peaceful abundance. Compliant with enlightenment imagery of the noble savage he repeatedly refers to the indigenous people of the regions he visited as “hospitable Indians” (89) and “friendly Indians” (93). On the first pages of Part II Carver informs the reader about his assessment of the indigenous people of the interior:

I must here observe that, notwithstanding the inhabitants of Europe are apt to entertain horrid ideas of the ferocity of these savages, as they are termed, I received from every tribe of them in the interior parts the most hospitable and courteous treatment and I am convinced that till they are contaminated by the example and spirituous liquors of their more refined neighbours, they retain this friendly and inoffensive conduct towards strangers. (66)

Thus, the colonialist discourse of exploitation is supplemented with an aestheticizing discourse of unspoiled nature and natural beauty. These two discursive lines of argument both contribute

to the promotional strategy of the narrative. But, at the same time, the two approaches – aestheticizing and conquering – to regions explored indicate the narrator’s split perspective.

The observing eye of Carver the map maker evinces shifting positionalities in discourses of identification. While Carver presents himself as devoting his journey, his mapping, and his writing to the service of the Crown, at times the narrative appears to slip into the discourse of creole perception and proto-patriotic pride. The praise of the natural beauty articulates an emotional attachment to North America that parts from the otherwise explicit orientation on a metropolitan British reader who – at least in Carver’s implication – maintains a colonialist notion of the world beyond the British isles. Carver’s switch between colonialist-promotional and creole-aestheticizing perspectives indicates the discursive shift in American travel writing toward what Pamela Regis (1999) refers to as “literature of place” (133).

In the introductory chapter of Part I, Carver takes up the idea of the Empire moving West and thus emphasizes the geopolitical significance of North America and the newly acquired interior parts of the continent:²⁹

To what power or authority this new world will become dependent, after it has arisen from its present uncultivated state, time alone can discover. But as the seat of Empire from time immemorial has been gradually progressive towards the West, there is no doubt that at some future period, mighty kingdoms will emerge from these wildernesses and stately palaces and solemn temples with gilded spires reaching the skies will supplant the Indian huts whose only decorations are the barbarous trophies of their vanquished enemies. (59)

Halfway through the narrative, he praises the exploitable riches of the country by comparing the newly acquired territory to other parts of the British Empire and to European colonial expansion in other parts of the Americas. However, this tendering of the territory by the representative of the peripheral colonial provinces to the metropolitan center features further elements of New World discourse: America as asylum for the persecuted as developed in

²⁹ On the topos of the “Empire moving West”, see Peter Freese (2002 [1996]).

the discourse of Puritan settlement; America as a place of future grandness as, for example, articulated by earlier New World explorers and American prospect and commencement poetry³⁰ of Carver's time:

Probably in future ages, this extraordinary range of mountains may be found to contain more riches in their bowels than those of Indostan and Malabar or what are produced on the Golden Coast of Guinea; nor will I except even the Peruvian Mines. To the west of these mountains, when explored by future Columbuses or Raleighs, may be found other lakes, rivers, and countries, full fraught with all the necessary luxuries of life and where future generations may find an asylum, whether driven from their country by the ravages of lawless tyrants, or by religious persecutions, or reluctantly leaving it to remedy the inconveniences arising from a superabundant increase of inhabitants; whether, I say, impelled by these or allured by hopes of commercial advantages, there is little doubt but their expectations will be fully gratified in these rich and unexhausted climes. (99)

Carver's narrative relates to various *discourses of the New World*. The map maker of Rogers' expedition does not only search for the Northwest Passage and does not only have an eye for natural resources but he is also susceptible to prospect imagery of America as asylum and an expanding empire. The narrative voice promotes the newly acquired territory by presenting it as of global significance. The double-voiced discourse (colonial and creole) implies that the worth, potential and future glory of America are not yet sufficiently recognized in the contemporary discourse of the British Empire.

Content and form of the narrative – anchored in the history and imagery of conquest, discovery and exploration – construct and present a fervent British subject, a loyalist whose aim, primarily, is the growth of empire. Some readers, such as John Parker (1995), have noted that empire-building is a topic that Carver is primarily preoccupied with as a travel narrator. However, the exposed emphasis of this British patriotism establishes a transatlantic distinction in the narrative. Since the narrator highlights

³⁰ On Rising Glory poetry, see my comments above.

his intention of being of service to the king of England, descriptions and assessments that evidently do not enhance this purpose, such as lengthy aestheticized landscape description, stand out and acquire particular significance. Thus in Carver's narrative, the topic of empire-building is closely connected to issues of affiliation and belonging. Such allusions go beyond British loyalism, indicating an American sensibility and creole marking of transatlantic differences.

In fact, Carver's *Travels* exhibits a fundamental preoccupation with discourses of belonging and identification. These topics structure the narrative of Part I as well as the manners and customs-chapter of Part II and the appendix. The narrative creates symbolic spaces of identification, less by addressing characteristics of Britishness or Americanness but more by positioning the narrative perspective in a conflict zone of interests. On the one hand, the explicitly localized narrative voice highlights transatlantic difference; on the other hand, references to the struggle against an adversarial 'outside' – made up of the recent war enemy France, continuing French conspiracies and the territorial claims of the Spanish empire in North America – mold a unity between narrator, implied reader and the Crown.

In the first lines, Carver introduces himself as being an ardent supporter of Great Britain – “my country” – who, after the end of the French and Indian War, is driven by the idea “[...] that Government should be acquainted in the first place with the true state of the dominions they were now become possessed of”:

To this purpose, I determined, as the next proof of my zeal, to explore the most unknown parts of them and to spare no trouble or expence [sic] in acquiring a knowledge that promised to be so useful to my countrymen. (57)

He presents his skills in map making as a means to combat the earlier French strategy of keeping “all other nations, particularly the English, in ignorance of the interior parts of [North America]” (57). Not just French maps but also French reports on the interior and the Indian nations were, as Carver the travel narrator claims, “misleading” and “false” (58). In contrast, an authentic representation of the land and particularly of the native inhabitants,

as Carver claims to produce, is announced as being carried out in the service of the British Empire. While “the discovery of the Northwest Passage” (58) is defined as one of the aims of Carver’s journey, the aim of writing the report is to rebut French and Spanish descriptions of land and people (75). Carver’s writing is therefore placed in an international competition for knowledge which is part of transatlantic colonial struggles and discourses.

The editing of Carver’s *Journal* took place in England during the early stages of the American revolutionary struggle. When Carver, after unsuccessfully trying to publish his journal, started to restructure his text to make it more appealing to a contemporary British readership, loyalist refugees had not only started to settle in the British provinces of Canada but also in London (England). It is not known whether Carver had contacts with either loyalist refugees or supporters of the revolutionary colonists in London. In the published version of his journals, he mentions the transatlantic ruptures as an impediment to the continuation of the exploration he had begun with his journey: “From the unhappy divisions that at present subsist between Great Britain and America, it will probably be some years before the attempt is repeated” (59).

It is unknown to what extent other editors contributed to the published version. However, in London Carver came in contact with important representatives of intellectual life of his time. Among them were Benjamin Franklin, the famous physician Dr. John Fothergill, and the president of the Royal Society Sir Joseph Banks. These individuals were not only well connected within socially influential circles but were also sponsors of journeys of exploration and backers of travel report publications.³¹ Comparing the original journal to the published *Travels* it is clearly noticeable that two different styles of reporting were intensified and were given more room in the narrative: Anecdotal sections (“more adventure, more excitement,” Gelb 1993, 43) and natural history. The latter might have been demanded by Banks as one of his potential supporters,³² the former seems to correspond to the longer tradition of New World writing that stresses adventure and

³¹ Fothergill was regularly in contact with American scholars and students who studied in Europe (Stapleton 1985, 11).

³² See Parker (1965), 14.

exposure to untamed wilderness. These two styles are significant regarding both the creole voice of the narrative and the international and intertextual entanglements of content and form.

Although natural history had certainly become a major influence on reports on the New World when Carver joined Rogers' expedition team as a mapmaker, the travel writer Carver seems to employ the mode in order to gain recognition by metropolitan scientific discourse. Considering such discursive positioning, it appears significant that Carver omits any mention of his experiences as a representative of a settler colony in England. Although the narrator presents himself as being located in London, the reader does not learn about his experiences there. However, the colonial metropolitan center and its imperial knowledge production structure the discourse of Carver's narrative. Affirming the colonial hierarchies, the loyalist narrator restricts his comments and assessments to the North American territories. Concordant with colonial geopolitical discourse, America is presented as a vast territory with promising riches that is constantly threatened by French interferences and conspiracies, and by the neighboring Spanish empire.³³ Carver's narrative appears split between the colonial-imperial (loyalist) and the creole perspective. However, his creole voice remains restricted to celebrating the North American continent, to expressing transatlantic difference and local identification. This creole narrator does not yet challenge his role of producing knowledge for the administrative and intellectual center, a role ascribed by transatlantic colonial discourse.

3.3. John Bartram and William Bartram: Toward Domestic Imagination

John Bartram

John Bartram (1699–1777) was one of the earliest practitioners of natural history in British North America. I will discuss how his work as a botanist influenced the expeditions and the writing of his son William Bartram. The discussion of travel reports by father and son intends to introduce the shifts toward a more explicitly national imagination in travel writing of the late

³³ On neighboring nations, see Carver (1993 [1778]), 63.

eighteenth century. Bartram, the elder, explored different regions of the eastern parts of the continent. He came to modest fame in the 1760s and 70s when quite a few European and American scholars, politicians, and writers visited his garden in Philadelphia, the first botanical garden in the British American colonies. Bartram started work on his botanical garden in 1731.

Bartram had undertaken exploratory journeys into the Carolinas and the Alleghenies in the late 1740s before he was commissioned by the British crown to explore the territory north of Lake Ontario. In 1764 Bartram contacted his friend Peter Collinson, a wealthy English merchant, gardener, botanist, and patron of Bartram's botanical work, who had close ties to the highest ranks in English society. Bartram inquired whether exploration of the colonies of East and West Florida would be of interest to the Crown. A year later Bartram "received instructions from George III [...] to identify and describe the flora of the newest colonies" (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 3). He was appointed botanist to His Majesty George III in 1765.³⁴ During his expedition to the Southeast of continental British North America in 1765 and 1766, Bartram kept a diary which was not published until 1942. His *Travels in Pensilvania and Canada*, the only book-length publication during his lifetime, appeared in 1751 [1966].

Bartram's writing is firmly based in the colonial mindset of his time and society. In his writing, Bartram is quite attentive to the presence and geopolitical interests of different colonial empires in North America. He explicitly supports the rule and expansion of the British empire. In *Travels in Pensilvania and Canada* Bartram comments on the history of European rule in North America and strongly emphasizes that North America belonged to the crown of England rather than the French (foreword and 51).

As a member of mid-eighteenth-century transatlantic intellectual networks, Bartram's botanical practice and his writing illustrate how ideas of scientific progress intersect with British loyalism and colonialist geopolitics. Although Bartram's colonial report lacks the creole tinge of Carver's writing of a few decades later, his nature writing as well as Carver's *Travels* paved the way for Bartram's son William's pre-romantic account of North America's

³⁴ See Francis Harper (1958), xvii–xviii.

nature, landscape, and cultures. John Bartram presents his writing as being firmly grounded in discourses of colonial geopolitical conflicts of European empires and in support of British imperial politics; in contrast, William – as I will show in this chapter – employs the discourse of natural history in an ambivalent way that subtly introduces creole and national symbolic markers.

Despite the scarce amount of publications, some contemporaries, among them Linné, considered John Bartram the most important botanist of his time in America. In the eleventh letter of Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782 [2012]) the narrator James presents a letter written by the Russian Iw—n Al—z in which the traveler describes his visit to the garden of the Quaker Mr John Bertram [sic], “the celebrated Pennsylvania Botanist.” The model for this, in the words of Crèvecoeur's fictional letter, the “first botanist in this new hemisphere” (187), was clearly Bartram. Crèvecoeur's narrator describes Bertram as “enlightened botanist” and “worthy citizen who united all the simplicity of rustic manner to the most useful learning” (197).³⁵

The celebrated American botanist also appears in another famous eighteenth-century report by a European traveler. The English version of Peter Kalm's *Travels in North America*, translated by Johann Reinhold Forster, was published in 1770.³⁶ In his travelogue the Swedish-Finnish scholar categorizes American flora and fauna according to Linné's system and connects his observations to a variety of contemporary natural history writings. The exchange with the Philadelphia-based Bartram is addressed in a few chapters (61–75). Although Kalm acknowledges the worth of Bartram's locally rooted knowledge, he at the same time reveals a patronizing attitude toward the experienced senior (18 years age difference), but self-educated natural scientist. Kalm introduces his interlocutor as a knowledgeable provincial who is rather disconnected from metropolitan scientific discourse:

Mr. John Bartram is an Englishman, who lives in the country about four miles from Philadelphia. He has acquired a great knowledge of natural philosophy and history, and seems to be born with a peculiar genius for the sciences. In his youth he had no opportunity of

³⁵ See Cox (2005), 42.

³⁶ On Kalm's travels in North America see Downs (1987), 19–23.

going to school, but by his own diligence and indefatigable application he got, without instruction, so far in Latin as to understand all books in that language and even those which were filled with botanical terms. He has in several successive years made frequent excursions into different distant parts of North America with an intention of gathering all sorts of plants which are scarce and little known. Those which he found he planted in his own botanical garden and likewise sent over their seed or fresh roots to England. We owe to him the knowledge of many rare plants which he first found and which were never known before. He has shown great judgment and an attention which lets nothing escape unnoticed. Yet with all these qualities he is to be blamed for his negligence, for he did not care to write down his numerous and useful observations. His friends in London once induced him to send them a short account of one of his travels and they were ready, with a good intention though not with sufficient judgment, to get this account printed. But the book did Mr. Bartram more harm than good, for, he is rather backward in writing down what he knows, this publication was found to contain but few new observations. It would not however be doing justice to Mr. Bartram's merit if it were to be judged by this performance. He has filled it with a thousandth part of the great knowledge which he has acquired in natural philosophy and history, especially in regard to North America. I have often been at a loss to think of the sources whence he obtained many things which came to his knowledge. I, also, owe him much, for he possessed that great quality of communicating everything he knew. I shall therefore in this work frequently mention this gentleman. I should never forgive myself if I were to omit the name of a discoverer and claim that as my contribution which I had learned from another person. (Kalm, 61–62)

While Crèvecoeur's narrator stresses the enlightened thoughtfulness and scholarly work of the fictional American naturalist Bertram, Kalm provides an assessment that is much more focused on the limited capacities of the self-taught New World scientist. Bartram is shown to be a backwoodsman neither capable of, nor even interested in translating the local knowledge which he acquired in the colonial periphery into a textual format which would qualify to be recognized as a valuable contribution to cosmopolitan enlightened scientific discourse. Rather, – as is suggested – the European, trained, metropolitan visitor, Kalm, himself

has to take on the task of converting Bartram's oral contributions and collected material into a scientifically approved written format. While Crèvecoeur's Russian visitor presents the botanist Bartram's love of nature and enlightened thought as representative of the modesty, not only of Pennsylvania Quaker society but of American society in general, Kalm attests limited faculties.

Kalm's relation to Bartram and his comments on the botanist's scholarly qualifications reveal a patronizing attitude and emphasize the superiority of European intellectual standards. Both ways of representing the botanist who is rooted in the peripheries of the British Empire fit *Eurocentric colonial discourse*. The French aristocrat and the Swedish-Finnish scholar produce an imagery of transatlantic difference that maintains hierarchical distinctions between center and colony, between intellectual sophistication and primitive peripheral lifestyle, between culture and nature. In both accounts, Europe-based authors set the standards, assess, judge, and communicate beyond the provincial local setting. Bartram does not reflect on this paternalistic – and ultimately colonialist – attitude in the reception of his work. Quite to the contrary, similar to Crèvecoeur and Kalm, Bartram the elder frames his botanical explorations in an affirmative colonial discourse, apparently internalized and unaware of, or indifferent to, the transatlantic intellectual hierarchies maintained and endorsed by Eurocentric authors.

William Bartram

William Bartram, John's son, was born in Philadelphia in 1739. Posthumously, Bartram received much praise as a writer, and has been considered, even more so than his father, as one of the major botanists of colonial British America and the early United States. Bartram has also been regarded as one of the most important American nature writers before Henry David Thoreau and, even more, on a par with John James Audubon as one of the most important American nature artists of his time. His reputation is mainly based on his only book-length publication *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws* –

An Account of the Soil and the Natural Productions of those Regions; together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians (1791).

The travel report, in the original consisting of 425 pages, is based on his journeys in the years 1773 to 1777 and combines ornithology, botany, ethnography and autobiographical narrative in the style of European exploratory writing. The narrative proceeds chronologically and, in the manner of a journal, cites day, month and year of the reported events.³⁷ The final version of *Travels* is based on Bartram's fieldnotes, his reports to his financier, his journals and his recollection.³⁸ It was written during the 1780s, after his return to Philadelphia, and was first published in 1791. The report includes Bartram's botanical and zoological drawings, plus a portrait of a Seminole chief.³⁹ Christoph Irmscher (1997) comments on the combination of various stylistic modes in Bartram's *Travels*: "Long passages of seemingly dry description and extensive lists of species are intermixed with moments of dazzling narrative power and high dramatic intensity" (17). William Hedges (1988) celebrates *Travels* as "[t]he most astounding verbal artifact of the early republic" and describes the text as "an unlikely mixture of scientific observation, lyric rapture, and religious meditation" (190). Bartram's description of an alligator fight has been noted as one of the most famous parts of *Travels* in illustrating the author's extraordinarily eloquent, lively, precise, and symbolic narrative style:

³⁷ Based on Harper's (1953) retracing of Bartram's tour, Waselkov and Braund (1995) emphasize that Bartram's *Travels* "is certainly not a precisely dated travel diary" (29). Waselkov and Braund offer the following explanation: "Part of Bartram's problem was the very nature of his adventure, for he, like the Indians and the traders who lived among them, was relatively free from the constraints of the Western world's rigid calendar" (29).

³⁸ The edited volume *William Bartram, The Search for Nature's Design: Selected Art, Letters and Unpublished Writing* (ed. Hallock and Hoffmann, 2010) provides a detailed discussion of different draft manuscripts (245-339).

³⁹ Gaudio (2001) provides an excellent contextualized reading of Bartram's drawings. Hallock and Hoffmann (2010) make valuable information and a selection of drawings from different editions of *Travels* available.

[...t]he subtle, greedy alligator. Behold him rushing forth from the flags and reeds. His enormous body swells. His planted tail brandished high, floats upon the lake. The waters like a cataract descend from his opening jaws. Clouds of smoke issue from his dilated nostrils. The earth trembles with his thunder. When immediately from the opposite coast of the lagoon, emerges from the deep his rival champion. They suddenly dart upon each other. The boiling surface of the lake marks their rapid course, and a terrific conflict commences. They now sink to the bottom folded together in horrid wreaths. The water becomes thick and discoloured. Again they rise, their jaws clap together, re-echoing through the deep surrounding forests. Again they sink, when the contest ends at the muddy bottom of the lake, and the vanquished makes a hazardous escape, hiding himself in the muddy turbulent waters and sedge on a distant shore. The proud victor exulting returns to the place of action. The shores and forests resound his dreadful roar, together with the triumphing shouts of the plaited tribes around, witnesses of the horrid combat. (117–118).⁴⁰

Bartram provides meticulous descriptions of regional flora and fauna which at that time were still pretty much unknown in the English-speaking world. Particularly East Florida (spanning more or less the territory of today's U.S. state of Florida) and West Florida (spanning parts of today's states of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi) which were lesser known and unexplored regions of coastal North America.⁴¹ The Floridas had become part of the British empire after the French and Indian War in which Spain had supported France. When the war had come to an end in 1763 Spain traded the region to Great Britain in order to reacquire control of Cuba which the British had captured during the war. Thus, the Floridas became part of the large expansion of the British Empire after the end of the French and Indian War.

At the start of British rule most of the Spanish population left Florida for Cuba. The British divided the territory into East Florida and West Florida, and attempted to attract settlers. During the War of Independence, the Carolinas and the province of Georgia

⁴⁰ See Waselkov and Braund (1995), 200.

⁴¹ Iannini (2012) refers to the region Bartram traverses as "The Greater Caribbean" (9–11).

revolted against British rule while East and West Florida remained loyal to the British crown. When Bartram, back in Philadelphia in 1778, started working on his report and when his book was finally published thirteen years later, the two most Southern provinces that he had explored in the late 70s, had meanwhile become Spanish again. While West Florida was annexed by the U.S. in 1810, East Florida remained Spanish until 1819 when it was purchased by the U.S.

For my discussion of the emergent white creole perspective in Bartram's writing, I will concentrate on how the upheavals of the time are reflected in the narrative and in the text's natural history discourse. My reading is less engaged in exploring how Bartram's actual political and religious positions developed over the years.⁴² Bartram's book publication was realised between two significant historical moments: (1) the broadest expansion of the British Empire in North America after the French and Indian War and (2) the closure of the constitutional debate, a moment when the United States was fully established as an independent republic. So, Bartram wrote the book during a time of intense social and political turmoil that brought about the first republic in the Americas. My reading discusses how the published report relates to its historical context.

Travels attracted readership in the U.S., Great Britain and other parts of Europe. After its publication in the U.S., several editions

⁴² The contributions in Hallock and Hoffmann (2010) contextualize *Travels* in a profound way in Bartram's life, including unpublished writing by Bartram (e.g. letters, private notes, political statements) and his correspondence with public figures later in his life. Robert Woods Sayre (2017), as a more recent example of Bartram research, concentrates on Bartram's representation of Native Americans and how this was influenced by his worldview. Similar to my approach, Sayre concentrates on *Travels* as a primary text (see chapter 7). However, while issues of colonial, national and regional identification only shape the report implicitly, Native Americans are *explicitly* addressed as a central topic in *Travels*. In contrast, topics like the nation, colonialism and expansionism – topics of my primary interest – are much less central in *Travels*. Hence my reading is more interested in how *the report as a published text* relates to common dominant discourse of Bartram's time. The author might often not even have been conscious of how his imagery affirms or rejects discursive positions on the nation, expansion, colonialism and imperial perspectives.

“promptly appeared in England, Ireland, Germany, Austria, and France” (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 31). Apart from readers who seemed primarily interested in the scientific value of Bartram’s work – that is, his contribution to botany and natural history –, among them Thomas Jefferson and some of the most acknowledged scholars in natural history,⁴³ the report was also rewarding to readers with literary interest. Mishra (2002) characterizes *Travels* as inhabiting “a liminal disciplinary space” (239). Although in its time received as a work of natural history, the literary and poetic inclinations of its author were noted early on, first in negative terms for criticizing the generic inconsistencies and the mismatched style of Bartram’s often rhapsodic writing, then, in positive terms, as an early expression of Romanticism. Some of the most famous readers were the English romantics, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Bartram’s observations in Florida in particular influenced their poetic imagination, as is clearly apparent in Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” and “The Ancient Mariner” which were both written seven years after the publication of *Travels*.⁴⁴ François-René de Chateaubriand refers to Bartram in his American travel writing. As Marjory Bartlett Sanger (1972) explains, Chateaubriand’s prose poem “Atala” might have been inspired by Bartram’s descriptions of the Altamaha river in Georgia (183–184). Critics have discussed *Travels*’ influence on Percy Shelley, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.⁴⁵ These readers praised the poetic imagery, the impassionate description of natural scenery, the moments of subdued exoticism and adventure.⁴⁶ The early reception of Bartram’s *Travels* established the general understanding of the report as an expression of pastoralism and early romantic nature

⁴³ See Harper (1958), xxiv.

⁴⁴ William W. Porter (1974) shows references to *Travels* in Coleridge’s poetry. Bartram’s description of the “roaring alligators” and “devouring alligators” in particular impressed Coleridge (514–516). Marjory Bartlett Sanger’s celebratory biography *Billy Bartram and His Green World* (1972) also highlights parallels of the imagery and reads them as indicating Bartram’s influence on the English Romantic poets (179–183).

⁴⁵ Cutting (1976), xi, and Sayre (2017), 212–213.

⁴⁶ On the history of reception of Bartram’s *Travels* see Waselkov and Braund (1995), 31–32.

writing in America. Some critics, such as Cox (2005), refer to *Travels* as “proto-Romantic” (21). For instance, the influential American romantic ingenuities on nature and solitude – as later proposed by Emerson and Thoreau – prefigure in Bartram’s verbal and visual account of the Southern frontier. Bartram’s early Romanticism, however, is anchored in the scientific project of natural history.⁴⁷ Bartram positions his exploratory project and his writing within the discourse of his contemporary transatlantic scientific community (e.g. by repeatedly referring to his English patron) and the cosmopolitan Enlightenment discourse of natural history (e.g. by valorizing systematic knowledge production on the globe’s flora and fauna).

My reading of *Travels* will concentrate on how Bartram’s expedition and writing process were linked to broader expansionist policies and to a colonialist economy based on slavery. Like almost all travel reports about the Americas of the eighteenth century, Bartram’s *Travels* is produced within what Pratt refers to as imperial perspective (*Imperial Eyes*) and calls the “coordinates of the text of Euroimperialism” (5) that structure Eurocentric meaning-making on the imperial frontier. After all, Bartram’s report, in different ways (in terms of production and of content), is linked to the expansionist enterprise: his descriptions, in long sections, can be read as mirroring European superiority back to the metropolitan reading public. Although much less directly involved in official imperial state projects than the earlier travel reports that Pratt refers to, Bartram’s *Travels* to a certain extent contributes to reproducing ideas of Europe as intellectual center, and doing so implicitly justifies expansionist politics. The most direct complicity in Euroimperialism is the financial one. Bartram’s expedition and eventually his writing were part of the geopolitical British project of empire-building. After all, he travelled in the company of surveyors who were involved in mapping and land acquisition in the new territories of Georgia and Florida;⁴⁸ and his travel report provided geographic and demographic data about a region that had only recently become part of the British Empire. Only

⁴⁷ See Irmscher (1997), Regis (1999), Iannini (2003 and 2012), Hallock (2003).

⁴⁸ See Cashin (2000).

few reports about the region existed in English, and – as Carver (1993 [1778]) highlights in his report on the Great Lakes region – the British were suspicious of French and Spanish accounts.

From such a perspective of knowledge production, Bartram's *Travels* is product of a legacy of explorative reports and continues earlier projects. Prior to Bartram's journey, for example, the British traveler Bernard Romans had published a description of the Floridas in 1775. *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* provides a systematic account of flora and fauna. Romans emphasizes the economic possibilities of the new British colonial acquisition. The extensive information about the economic potential hidden behind the tropic landscape and the section of advice to new settlers, quite obviously link Romans' *Natural History* to the politics of British colonialism after the French and Indian War.

Initially continuing the tradition of the imperial attitude of his father and similar to Romans' natural history of the region, Bartram's journey and reporting started out as a "British colonial venture" (Iannini 2003, 150). However, his report shows a complex and ambivalent relationship to British colonialism. *Travels* is definitely less explicitly inscribed in the colonial discourse of economic exploitation than the writing by his predecessors John Bartram, Romans, and Carver. His stylistic mix of natural history, pastoral landscape description, and Romantic imagery not only functions within colonialist parameters but also tests trans-Atlantic and intra-American differences and concepts of identity. Bartram's narrative scouts the most Southern regions of British North America and at times inserts a creole voice into the otherwise colonialist enterprise.

The Caribbean, economically the most powerful region of the late eighteenth-century Americas, figures in Bartram's *Travels* in ambivalent ways as being a remote and exotic, yet familiar and promising space. This colonial region disrupts Bartram's smooth transformation of the *colonialist* journey (taken in the 1770s) into a *post-Independence* textual account (published in 1791). Hence, although neither 'American nation' nor 'abroad' are part of the narrator's vocabulary, their innuendo contributes to molding the range of identification offered by this travel report: late colonial, creole, early national, and postcolonial. Demarcations

between these categories, as the following reading of Bartram's *Travels* (and, in fact, of most of the other selected primary sources of this study) will show, are fluid and blurred.

Bartram's *Travels*: Background

Bartram's book-length narrative was preceded by a report⁴⁹ written for his patron, the prominent physician and horticulturist Dr. John Fothergill, and a draft manuscript that, as Nancy Hoffmann (2010) remarks, "differs significantly from the 'Report'" (p. 285).⁵⁰ Bartram sent notes and species to his London-based financier until the revolutionary struggles made postal contact impossible. Fothergill belonged to the Society of Friends, the Quakers – like the Bartrams and John Bartram's earlier patron, Peter Collinson.⁵¹ Fothergill was based in London, and such prominent figures of transatlantic history as Lord Dartmouth and Benjamin Franklin⁵² figured among his patients. As Iannini (2003) puts it, he was a "wealthy botanical collector and colonial investor" (150). Fothergill traded exotic plants in Europe and "had found lucrative markets" (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 11). He first corresponded with William's father and suggested financing another excursion to Florida which John had visited in 1765 and 1766. In 1772 he gave Bartram instructions for the proceedings of the journey and the exploration. Fothergill wished for "collecting and shipping of plants and for making drawings of plants and shells" (Harper 1958, xix). Consequently, the setup of Bartram's expedition very much corresponded to the common colonial constellation of the 'plant hunter' who was positioned in the colonial periphery and the client who was located in the metropolitan colonial center. The Old World-client was, in the main, not only marketing the material but also acting as the more sophisticated interpreter of the newly provided data and species.⁵³

⁴⁹ See Bartram. "Travels in Georgia and Florida, 1773–74: A Report to Dr. John Fothergill," *Travels and Other Writings* (1996), 429–522.

⁵⁰ On the draft manuscript see Hoffmann (2010) and Hoffmann (1996).

⁵¹ On Fothergill's relation to the Bartrams see Waselkov and Braund (1995), 9–13.

⁵² Cf. Cashin (2000), 126.

⁵³ See Pratt (1992).

However, the colonial and expansionist quality of Bartram's *Travels* is caused by the published text's connection to two of Bartram's earlier projects: First, the earlier expedition with his father, and second, Bartram's involvement in the Southern plantation economy. William's journey is clearly connected to his father's earlier expeditions and can be seen as continuing his father's work for the King of England. Almost two decades before William started his tour to the British American South, John had taken his son along on his journey to the Catskills in 1753. In the years following this exploration, William showed extraordinary talent in making illustrations of plants and animals. After failing in his attempt to set up a trading store in North Carolina where his uncle resided,⁵⁴ William joined his father, then just appointed Botanist to His Majesty George III, for the journey to the Floridas in 1765. William became his father's assistant and, as in earlier journeys, provided drawings of plants and other species. When heading back north, William decided to stay on the river St. Johns in East Florida to cultivate indigo and rice on a commercial plantation. In February 1766 William was granted a warrant by the East Florida Council⁵⁵ to survey 500 acres of land. John supported his son financially in purchasing equipment and slaves. The investment in the economy of slavery manifests Bartram's participation in Southern society beyond his enlightened and innocent exploration of natural phenomena. Prominent South Carolinians advised the Philadelphia Quaker on such topics as "rice cultivation, slave management, and attracting mullets into canoes by the use of torches" (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 5). Bartram's settlement and plantation enterprise, however, turned out to be a disastrous failure and in 1767 William returned to Philadelphia.⁵⁶

Bartram's involvement in two economic enterprises in the South indicates that he was less of the detached "plant hunter" (Pratt 1992) and disinterested lover of nature than many readers

⁵⁴ See Waselkov and Braund (1995), 3–4.

⁵⁵ See Waselkov and Braund (1995), 5.

⁵⁶ For information on William Bartram's early life cf. Harper (1958), xvii–xx, and Iannini (2003), 150, Waselkov and Braund (1995), 2–7, Hallock and Hoffmann (2010), and Sayre (2017), 206–209.

have seen and portrayed him as. In fact, his early entrepreneurship mirrors the complex engagement with social and racial hierarchies in colonial British North America. After all, his investments in a plantation brought him into direct contact with the practice of slavery. Years before his plantation investment, Henry Laurens, at the time a prominent slave trader in South Carolina, had given John and William Bartram advice on their first journey to the Floridas in 1765.⁵⁷ Later, the same Laurens described William Bartram as living “alone among six negroes, rather plagues than aids to him, of whom one is so insolent as to threaten his life.”⁵⁸

Thus, before starting out on the exploratory journey that would eventually result in *Travels*, the Philadelphian Quaker had been engaged in different facets of the colonial economy of the southern regions of British North America. Sayre (2017) discusses how Quakerism influenced the Bartrams’ worldview and activities. While, according to Sayre, John supported a moderate form of “commercial Quakerism”, William’s perception of the world came closer to more radical Quakerism that gave particular worth to “the original ideals of Quaker faith, in particular the values of egalitarianism and the affirmation of the oneness of the human and natural community” (209). Sayre writes that the younger Bartram perceived nature in “quasi-pantheistic” (210) terms. This spiritual inclination and William’s form of living according to the original ideals of the Quaker faith clearly contradict his brief career as a master of a plantation. His activities as plant collector and his observations as explorer were less obviously commercial. But they definitely were embedded in a colonialist enterprise that, after all, supported ideas of territorial expansionism and economic exploitation. Considering this economic viewpoint, Bartram’s reflection on landscape, soil, and natural resources seems not merely to be the product of a radical Quaker’s perception and of an innocent enlightened naturalist gaze but may, just as much, be filtered by categories of surplus production within the parameters set by the institution of slavery and an economy

⁵⁷ On the Bartrams’ acquaintance with Laurens see Waselkow and Braund (1995), 4–5.

⁵⁸ John Bartram. *The Correspondence of John Bartram, 1734–1777*, ed. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothea Smith Berkeley (1992), 672, quoted also in Iannini (2003), 153.

of imperial territorial expansion. This reading of the implicit and possibly unknowing complicity in “Euroimperialism” (Pratt), does not want to indicate that Bartram’s sensible political, religious, and philosophical views were *consciously* either creole, patriotic, expansionist, or imperialist. Particularly his engagement with Native Americans proves the opposite, as Sayre (2017) explains:

[...] William Bartram’s life and worldview point clearly to a particularly favourable predisposition to encounters with Amerindians – what could be called an ‘elective affinity’ with their culture, directly related to his marginality to and estrangement from the civilization of modernity. The Bartramian vision of the intimate, nonhierarchical unity of living things – plants, animals, and humans – as equal incarnations of divinity has a strong resemblance to Amerindian systems of belief. (212)

Travels

Faithful to the style of promotional travel reports, William Bartram frequently comments on soil fertility and the prospective productivity of the land (213, 268) – implying potential economic exploitation. The botanist’s account thus functions as a ‘mapping’ of newly acquired, yet unexplored territory. Alongside this obvious ‘economic’ function, the report is shaped by the Enlightenment project of classification. Bartram collects, observes, and writes within the enterprise of what Foucault termed “*Taxinomia universalis*.”⁵⁹ Hence, while Bartram’s report follows an *enlightened universalist* agenda, at the same time it remains within the *colonialist* parameters of British expansionism. However, while in *Travels in Pensilvania and Canada* (1751) William’s father John is most explicit about his British and royalist identifications, William’s voice in *Travels* is much more detached from an endorsement of colonialist rhetoric. Bartram’s meticulous description of things perceived is part of what Pratt characterizes as “anti-conquest”-writing in which a strategy of innocence responds to earlier imperial rhetoric of conquest and exploitation, and in which the narrator appears as a *passive observer* whose

⁵⁹ Foucault (2002 [1966]), 84 and 113.

main activity remains limited to language itself.⁶⁰ However, as Foucault and others have shown, the assumed passivity of scholarship was in fact superimposed by a discursive participation in the Eurocentric imperial intellectual mapping of the globe. While John is outspoken about his support of British colonial rule, William avoids such commentary and observes nature as if detached from social environment and history.⁶¹

Bartram's *Travels* provides a particularly complex rendering of the colonial entanglements of travel reports. The various links to the colonial motherland that made Bartram's collecting, reporting, describing, promoting, and categorizing part of a colonizing economy and discourse, were eventually severed. This detachment occurred before Bartram finished the final version of *Travels*: his patron Fothergill died in 1780,⁶² and parts of the regions that had been explored gained independence from the British crown or became part of Spanish America while the text was in the making. Motivated by these social transformations, Bartram's published account of the journey is characterized by a double-voiced discourse, more pronounced than that of Carver. Bartram's double-voiced report articulates a specifically American conception of difference: The colonial British American perspective overlaps with the white creole positioning.

Bartram was particularly committed to the cause of the Native Americans, as is displayed in the title of the book itself. The title places the names of the British colonial provinces next to Native American territories and nations, implying an equal position within the geography and border discourse of the time.⁶³ The fourth and last part of the report seems to have been added, not only as a customs-and-manners chapter – as was common in eighteenth-century reports on journeys of exploration⁶⁴ – but, additionally, for stressing the author's advocacy for Indian affairs

⁶⁰ Hallock (2003) highlights the contrast between expansionism and “anti-conquest” writing in Bartram's *Travels* (164).

⁶¹ Sayre (2017) describes Bartram's general attitude as showing a “strong romantic resonance” (214). This is even more emphasized in the unpublished manuscript, as Hoffmann (2010) and Sayre argue.

⁶² See Waselkov and Braund (1995), 19.

⁶³ On the issue see Mishra (2002), 246.

⁶⁴ See Regis (1999).

and his engagement in the fate of the remaining Native American nations. Sayre (2017) assesses Bartram's encounters with Native Americans: "[...] Bartram maintains an extremely positive attitude toward the Indians, often taking their side in disputes with whites" (216). In one of the earliest reviews of *Travels*, in *The Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine* (Philadelphia), of 1792, an anonymous critic did not only find "fault with the style" but also writes that Bartram "magnifies the virtues of the Indians, and views their vices through too friendly a medium."⁶⁵ Such contemporary assessment of Bartram's commitment in "Indian politics" highlights the Noble Savage approach which is apparent in parts of *Travels*.⁶⁶ The criticism of Bartram furthermore indicates how sharply his travel report and natural history differ from the paternalistic and Eurocentric attitude toward indigenous groups in much of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travel writing. His father's comments on Native Americans, as exemplified in a letter to Peter Collinson, are characteristic for the attitude of superiority: "[the] most probable & only method to establish a lasting peace with [...] barbarous Indians is to bang them stoutly & make them sensible that they are men whom they for many years despised as women."⁶⁷

Although William Bartram's natural history operates within colonial parameters of transatlantic difference by providing local knowledge as natural history for the metropolitan center, his representation of Native Americans does not coincide with the common European descriptive patterns of exploratory travel reports (outlined by Pratt). Apart from paternalistic attitudes, we find landscape and nature descriptions in travel reports of the time that do not separate landscape from the natives inhabiting it (such as, according to Pratt, Alexander von Humboldt's approach). Colonial discourse of the time, Pratt argues, did not attribute

⁶⁵ Quoted in Harper (1958), xxiv.

⁶⁶ On the pattern of the Noble Savage in Bartram's writing see Waselkov and Braund (1995), 204–205. For a more complex analysis of Bartram's representation of Native Americans, see Sayre (2017), 205–234.

⁶⁷ John Bartram to Peter Collinson, October 23, 1763, printed in John Bartram, *The Correspondence*, Ed. E. Berkeley and D. Smith Berkeley (1992), 611–12. Quoted in Waselkov and Braund (1995), 17, also Harper (1953), 571.

temporality to the natives of the New World. While Bartram's representation is not free of discourse of an assumed essential difference of "Indian nations," his comments on the natives' cultural practices and history imply a genuine scholarly interest in North American indigenous civilizations and their specific history. Bartram, for example, writes: "As moral men they certainly stand in no need of European civilization" (391). He goes on to explain in more detail:

How are we to account for their excellent policy in civil government; it cannot derive its influence from coercive laws, for they have no such artificial system. Divine wisdom dictates and they obey.

We see and know full well the direful effects of this torrent of evil, which has its source in hell; and we know surely, as well as these savages, how to divert its course and suppress its inundations. Do we want wisdom and virtue? let our youth then repair to the venerable councils of the Muscogulges. (393).⁶⁸

Waselkov and Braund (1995) write about Bartram's notion of Native Americans and their culture: "Unlike most of his contemporaries, Bartram did not simply assume that the 'white' way was best, nor did he presume that the Indians were inferior intellectually or morally" (12). In fact, his engagement with Native American cultural habits and remnants of earlier tribal life grants native groups historical development and temporality. Apart from expressing his "attraction to Indian culture" (Sayre 2017, 225), this indicates – particularly when considering the discursive context of the Dispute of the New World – Bartram's intention of strengthening the position of New World history in transatlantic hierarchies of historical significance.

Despite his preoccupation with Native American habits and customs, Bartram's approach still is characterized by severe contradictions in patterns of representation. His descriptive perspective and his categories of assessing, in many respects adhere to, as Mishra (2002) puts it, "Europe's attempt to impose its universalist taxonomy on the rest of the world and to bring the world under its colonial orbit" (242). This is most obviously expressed in Bartram's

⁶⁸ The Muscogulges were "commonly known as the Creeks and Seminoles" (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 1). For Bartram's comments on Indians also see *Travels*, 183–185.

refusal to adopt Native American names of plants and natural phenomena. Instead, he categorizes in Latin. Another significant strategy which contradicts his otherwise implied historicizing of American space: Bartram almost entirely excludes the colonial history and contemporary presence of European powers from his report. Thus he de-historicizes the regions he explores. We merely find a few brief references to European colonial empires and their conflicts and struggles in the Americas. Indirect references to past military conflicts, in such brief phrasing as “Spaniards who formerly fixed themselves at this place in hopes of finding silver” (261), “a strong fortress and garrison of Spaniards” (351) and an “ancient French fortress” (369), are included in the narrative as if part of the description of the natural landscape. Such markers of difference and remnants of historical change are apparently of much less interest to Bartram.

His de-historicizing, however, does not include Native Americans. Bartram writes about the history of movement and settlement of Native American tribes across the continent, such as the Creek migration legend, he mentions conflicts and wars between tribes and even concentrates at length on topics such as contemporary “Indian affairs,” and Indian conferences and treaties with white settlers. He also repeatedly reports that he came across Indian mounds,⁶⁹ “ancient ruins”, remnants of antiquity.⁷⁰ Bartram obviously works on reconstructing the Southeastern Indians’ past, not only by using archeological evidence but also by considering the natives’ mythology and oral traditions.⁷¹ Such a perspective on the Southeastern indigenous tribes suggests that one of Bartram’s aims in writing was the scholarly strive to prove that the pre-Columbian American past could be seen as equivalent to European antiquity.⁷²

Such an engagement with the Native tribes’ past goes beyond the original assignment Bartram received from his patron Fothergill who was less interested in the Native American

⁶⁹ Waselkov and Braund (1995) assess Bartram’s observations of Native American cultural artefacts in the context of the history of the Southern tribes (199–213).

⁷⁰ See Sayre (2017), 226.

⁷¹ See Waselkov and Braund (1995), 207.

⁷² See Bartram’s *Travels*, 299, also 282, 278, and 267.

population. However, when contextualizing Bartram's writing in literary history, it appears rather significant that a desire to acknowledge the pre-Columbian history of the Americas characterizes some of the creole and post-revolutionary literature of the time; most prominently we find this tendency in the so-called Rising Glory Poetry that became popular in the early 1770s, but also in later texts such as Joel Barlow's epic poem "The Vision of Columbus" (1787). Hence, in this respect, Bartram's account of America's original inhabitants seems to be part of the forming of an American "domestic imagination" (Wayne Franklin)⁷³ – which certainly accelerated in the decades after the revolution. Bartram's passages on the history of the Native American tribes of the Southeast provide a creole response to The Dispute of the New World and, as Waselkov and Braund (1995) suggest, to Buffon's claim of the New World's lack of history: "Bartram's litany of massive mounds, avenues, and artificial lakes, numerous abandoned fields and townsites, and Indian myths of lost tribes and ancient battles endowed the American landscape with an unsuspected antiquity" (209–210).⁷⁴

Despite the colonialist tradition in which Bartram frames his report and despite the complex social contexts in which he wrote it (affected by the practice of slavery and by the difficult relation to British plant collectors), only a few scholars discuss Bartram's mindset and the stances he took in transatlantic politics. This is rather surprising as the two dominant styles of Bartram's travel narrative – natural history and Romanticism – appear, in different ways, to be closely intertwined with discourses of collective belonging, the nation, and nationalism. Taking political and intellectual debates of the late eighteenth century into account, Bartram's narrative marks discursive intersections most relevant for the revolutionary period: Bartram's *Travels* interweaves discourses of natural history, British colonialism, and the concept of the nation. Moreover, the narrative marks a decisive moment in

⁷³ Franklin (1988) ends his chapter on "The Literature of Discovery and Exploration" in the *Columbia Literary History* by referring to the literary products "of an increasingly domestic imagination" (23) of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁴ See also Regis (1999), 36–37.

American travel writing: the emergence of creole appropriation and transformation of these discourses.

While the origins of natural history are located in Enlightenment Europe, with Linné and Buffon as leading representatives, much of the data collection for the project took place in the Americas. While, for example, Jonathan Carver's use of elements of natural history in his landscape descriptions and his manners and customs-chapter merely help to inscribe the text in a British and European New World discourse, Bartram's natural history indicates a tendency of seizing the enlightened, scientific mode of describing and categorizing in order to forge modes of New World identification, creole North American discourse and a domestic imagination.

The entire process of traveling, writing, and publishing took place during the period of colonial as well as anticolonial conflicts, a period of emerging U.S. patriotism and of initial nation-building. However, the revolutionary events and the establishment of the independent republic are not mentioned explicitly in the narrative. Considering the social upheaval of the time, it appears significant that a descriptive text published in 1791, and written between 1773 and the late 1780s in North America, evades the Revolution as a topic and is silent about political and social changes that took place in these years. Particularly as Bartram travelled through the British North American South in a time of intense political turmoil. The North American British colonial empire, which William's father had vehemently supported in his writing, and the world that William Bartram was educated in, fell apart while he was wandering through the woods and settlements of Florida, Georgia, and the Indian territories. In fact, it was taken apart by creole actors in the name of freedom and independence. As historian of the Southern frontier, Edward Cashin (2000) has shown, Bartram must have witnessed revolutionary violence and atrocities. He might even have been indirectly involved in anti-British action in the South. He must have been confronted with some of the revolutionary and military events during his journey, and as some historians, such as Harper (1953) argue, he even might have joined patriotic troops in Georgia.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Harper (1953) argues that in 1776, when staying with Lachlan McIntosh who had just been appointed colonel of a battalion of Georgia troops,

The detachment of the narrative from the social environment of its author is all the more remarkable when considering that when revising his notes and his original report, he lived in the immediate vicinity of Philadelphia, one of the most important urban centers of the revolutionary struggle. After all, John and William were elected members of the American Philosophical Society where some of the most influential figures of the new republic gathered. Although William apparently did not attend any meeting of the Philosophical Society, it is recorded that some of the leading members visited Bartram's Garden on the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia.⁷⁶

Interestingly, *Travels*⁷⁷ opens with a dedication to a representative of the new nation and independent republic: "To His Excellence Thomas Mifflin, Esq., President of the State of Pennsylvania, this Volume of Travels is gratefully inscribed, by his respectful friend and servant William Bartram." Mifflin was general in the revolution war, president of Congress (1783–1784), president of the State of Pennsylvania (1788–1790), and governor of Pennsylvania (1790–1799). Harper (1958), the first major Bartram scholar and editor of a modern edition of *Travels*, reads this dedication as proof of "Bartram's devotion to the Revolutionary cause" (xxiii). This reading is supported by the fact that "William signed an affirmation of 'Allegiance and Fidelity' to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania upon his return from the south" (Waselkov and Braund 1995, 201).⁷⁸ Harper (1953) concludes his research:

Bartram "made the momentous decision to join the Revolutionary cause" (573). This is based on an anonymous biography of 1832 which claims that "Mr. Bartram volunteered and joined a detachment of men, raised by Gen. Lochlan [sic] McIntosh, to repel a supposed invasion...from St. Augustine by the British" (quoted in Harper 1953, 573).

⁷⁶ Cf. Harper, xxviii–xxix.

⁷⁷ The report to Dr. Fothergill must have been written during or shortly after the excursion. Bartram apparently also kept a journal, which has been lost however (Harper 1958, xx).

⁷⁸ According to Harper (1953) quite a few members of the Bartram family, despite their Quaker pacifism, were outspoken about their opposition to King George III. Three of his brothers and his twin sister were disowned by the Quakers for their support of the Revolution (572). On the topic also see Waselkov and Braund (1995), 201.

[...] it is evident enough that William Bartram had no enthusiasm for war nor any faith in its general efficacy as an instrument for the settlement of sectional or international disagreements. It may be safely considered that his enthusiasm was for the spiritual freedom fostered and safeguarded by the Revolution rather than for the actual war that achieved American independence. (577)

Acknowledging the anti-British patriotic stance taken by the author of *Travels*, it appears remarkable that apart from the dedication, the United States, as a nation, government, or society, is only mentioned a very few times throughout the narrative. Bartram does, for example, refer to the new independent nation when articulating his hope that the “legislature of the United States” would assist Indian tribes “to form [...] a judicious plan for their civilization and union with us” (25).

However, as Harper (1953 and 1958) and Cashin (2000) emphasize, it appears impossible that he was unaware of the events, even in the remote South-East. After all, the revolutionary actions brought Bartram’s expedition to an end as the communication with Fothergill and the financial support must have terminated after the outbreak of military action. According to Harper (1958), Bartram sent his final shipment of specimens from Georgia in 1776 (xx). In the report, Bartram might not have mentioned the political events taking place during his journey simply because Fothergill had not asked for such information. Bartram might have perceived his journey and the report in terms of a business transaction between the British doctor and the American explorer. But such an agreement to focus on natural history does not explain why Bartram hardly mentions the events and social and political changes in his *Travels*. After all, this book was composed entirely independently of Fothergill’s influence as Bartram’s patron passed away in 1780.⁷⁹

The historian of the Southeastern frontier, Edward J. Cashin picked up such questions as the starting point for his book-length study *William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (2000). Cashin reconstructs Bartram’s journey from correspondence, setting Bartram’s travels in the context

⁷⁹ See Harper (1958), p. xx.

of historical events between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution; Cashin examines Bartram's involvement with individuals during his travels or before and, in part, speculates about possible encounters. Cashin's book is tremendously helpful for illuminating the historical context, Bartram's acquaintances with people who were very actively involved in the Revolution and other military and political events in the region. Cashin's findings are groundbreaking contributions to Bartram scholarship. Cashin's research reveals, as he himself summarizes in the preface, "that Bartram became closely acquainted with movers and shapers of events in the course of his travels" (xi).⁸⁰ Despite the overwhelming information that Cashin's study provides, the book lacks an evaluation of Bartram as a political person and, even more importantly, it lacks a textual analysis of the travel narrative and a contextualizing approach in the literary and scholarly production of the time.

The thematic evasion of the revolution, the republic, and nationalism as topics of the report has only been commented on by a few Bartram critics. Waselkov and Braund (1995) comment on the issue:

Bartram clearly attempted to expunge political bias from his book. Patriots and loyalists play approximately equal roles, with little or no mention of their later partisan activities in the war. (202)

Myra Jehlen (1994) and Thomas Hallock (2012) argue that his pastoral view on nature implies a social and political ideal in which revolutions have no place. This pastoral view not only explains Bartram's ignoring of the war but also his inconsistent natural history. Considering *Travel's* exposed foundation in Natural History it is quite striking how little Bartram's narrative and his observations are structured by a systematic scientific method. His naturalist science remains restricted to descriptions and sketches scattered throughout the narrative. While categorizing plants and listing Latin names emphasize the aim of producing a scientific description of a wanderer detached from social context,

⁸⁰ Cashin even argues that Bartram might have got involved in revolutionary actions: "More interesting than that, this Quaker actually participated in a military adventure!" (xi).

the overall scheme organizing the narrative, observations, and implied worldview emerges from imagination. This imaginative trait manifests itself in strikingly visual descriptions, literary constructions, romantic rhetoric, and metaphoric of the sublime:

How gently flow thy peaceful floods, O Alatomaha! How sublimely rise to view, on thy elevated shores, yon magnolian groves, from whose tops the surrounding expanse is perfumed, by clouds of incense, blended with the exhaling balm of the liquidambar, and odours continually arising from circumambient aromatic groves illicium, myrica, laurus, and bignonia. (63)

As Jehlen (1994) argues, Bartram celebrates the wilderness within the parameters of pastoralism (128). The new British colonial territory he explores is represented in “ethereal” terms, as Jehlen puts it: “Bartram’s world appears to exist beyond history” (131). This emphasis on Bartram’s quasi-mythical representation of Euro-American history appears to be an apt reading if we consider that he proceeds differently and quite exceptionally with the history of Native Americans, as I have discussed above.

Readers such as Mishra (2002), Cox (2005), Hallock (2003), and Iannini (2012) examine the complex relation between pastoralism, natural history and national emergence. Cox argues that Bartram, like Crèvecoeur, participated in the nation-building process “through the construction of a narrator who becomes representative of American national identity” (20). Cox’s reading of Bartram in terms of national identity highlights an important aspect of the narrative structure of *Travels*. But, at the same time, Cox’s notion of nation-building and national identity appears to reproduce ideas of U.S. exceptionalism when claiming freedom and movement as central characteristics of Americanness. In Crèvecoeur’s case this notion appears to be justified as *Letters* is explicitly dealing with the topic of American idiosyncracies seen in contrast to Europeanness. However, to claim that “[f]or both Crèvecoeur and Bartram, travel is constitutive of national character” and that “the travel in which Americans participate further broadens their views and provides them with a variety of perspectives that together form the American character, so travel not only serves as an indication of American freedom but

also creates the freedom that Americans enjoy” (20), seems to de-emphasize the entanglement of both authors and their narrative perspectives in imperialist discourse. Surprisingly, Cox supports his thesis of Bartram’s narrative persona as “a representative national figure” (56) precisely by stressing the colonial dynamics of the narrative. Cox’s very important analysis of colonial (48–53), national (56–62), and political (55) aspects of *Travels*, illustrates the significance of the category of ‘abroad’ for this text. While Cox (2005) reads *Travels* as constructing a narrative persona representative of the new nation, I suggest that Bartram articulates a perspective on America that remains caught up in the colonial paradigm while testing the borderlines of what could be defined as American. The text thus becomes a creole statement shifting between different logics of identification (scientific, literary, historical, Romantic, colonial, national) in which imaginary notions of home and abroad are tested.

A few more recent readings of *Travels* focus on Bartram’s understanding of the nation, international relations, and cosmopolitanism. Mishra (2002) situates Bartram’s *Travels* in the transnational discourse of natural history:

The genre of natural history emerged as a quintessential discipline of the Enlightenment and colonial modernity, a discursive site that combined travel, ethnography, science, and journalism to form a nexus between the colonies and the metropolis, between the nation and its transnational, transcultural forces. (238)

Mishra interprets *Travels*’ silence about the social context and the establishment of an independent republic in relation to Bartram’s use of the categories of nature and nation (240). Bartram’s creole identification thus appears within international entanglements. Bartram’s pastoralism and his Quaker pacifist detachment from social conflicts,⁸¹ are contrasted by a simultaneous discursive engagement in global geopolitics.

Despite social and political turbulences and many transatlantic and cross-cultural encounters accompanying Bartram’s writing, he succeeds in providing a narrative that appears almost timeless and beyond violent interaction. Bartram moves and writes

⁸¹ See Jehlen (1994), Hallock (2003), and Sayre (2017), 216.

within territory that only recently changed colonial dominion, he travels along the Atlantic coast, travels with surveyors and Indian traders, comes into contact with the “West-Indian market,” visits slave plantations (258, 132), observes illegal Indian trade with Cuba and the Bahamas (195) and other places in the Spanish Caribbean, and he witnesses the revolutionary conflicts, and he writes during the establishment of a new political system. Yet, despite these social turbulences, the turmoil, and the experienced transformation of his customary social environment, his narrative provides a mythical image of America. Except for the history of Native American tribes, America is portrayed in terms of a garden, cultivated by the Creator and his servants:

The prospect from this station is so happily situated by nature, as to comprise at one view the whole of the sublime and pleasing.

At the reanimating appearance of the rising sun, nature again revives; and I obey the cheerful summons of the gentle monitors of the meads and groves.

Ye vigilant and faithful servants of the Most High! ye who worship the Creator morning, noon, and eve, in simplicity of heart! I haste to join the universal anthem. My heart and voice unite with yours in sincere homage to the great Creator, the universal sovereign. (101)

The myth produced by the man of the Enlightenment, Bartram, however, is neither the Puritans’ Second Paradise, nor a New Eden, nor the New Israel, nor the Spanish fabled land of gold, as we perceive American myth-making from earlier colonial literature originating in European fantasies;⁸² instead, Bartram appropriates ideas of enlightened knowledge production, particularly Linné’s categorizing project of natural history, for imagining, constructing, and codifying a mythic-scientific America. His representation of North America shows an environment replete with harmony and beauty both in nature and society in which the possibility of mutual understanding between Native American tribes, Europeans, and Euro-Americans appears to be part of an organized community of species.

⁸² On religious foundations of myths of America, see Bercovitch (1988), 35–38.

Considering Bartram's imagery of America, the report is marked by a distinct perception of transatlantic difference. This was certainly inspired by Bartram's commissioned project of botanical exploration. But it also reveals a creole New World sensibility. Accordingly, Larzer Ziff (2001) reads *Travels* as embedded in an American culture that is future-oriented. He argues that the widespread interest in natural history, and botany in particular, in America functioned as a New World opposite to the Old World rage for ruins (52). Bartram's creole New World sensibility also finds expression in the prideful representation of American species. This is, for example, manifested in his naming of the Bartrams' "discovery," the "beautiful flowering tree," in honor of Benjamin Franklin.

In the border regions between Georgia and Florida he and his father had first spotted a tree of particular beauty during their first journey to the newly acquired territories in 1765. Although they initially referred to the plant as part of an already identified genus *Gordonia pubescens*, in the early 1780s Bartram was informed by one of the botanists working for Fothergill that it was a unique flower, deserving a new genus. Thus, in *Travels* Bartram highlights the fact that the plant was specifically honored by being named *Franklinia Alatomaha* (cf. Bartram's illustration of the plant, figure 1, p. 74):⁸³

On first observing the fructification and habit of this tree, I was inclined to believe it a species of *Gordonia*; but afterwards, upon stricter examination, and comparing its flowers and fruit with those of the *Gordonia lasianthus*, I presently found striking characteristics abundantly sufficient to separate it from that genus, and to establish it the head of a new tribe, which we have honoured with the name of the illustrious Dr Benjamin Franklin, *Franklinia Alatomaha*. (375)

While the rhetoric of natural history provided a method and perspective for avoiding explicit political positioning, in a few instances Bartram's socially detached nature writing discreetly and obliquely interferes in discourses of social order and of the new

⁸³ See Harper (1953), 575. On a more detailed history of Bartram's 'discovery' and naming of the *Franklinia Alatomaha* see Gayther L. Plummer (1977).

nation. Such breaks in Bartram's focus on nature appear to mirror the representational patterns of his Linnean natural history. As Michael Gaudio's (2001) analysis of Bartram's drawings illustrates, "Bartram's scientific ambition was to exhibit the self-evidence of nature, to set the full presence of its surfaces before the reader" (2).

Bartram's focus on the external characteristics of nature, however, is repeatedly disrupted and troubled by non-transparent, impenetrable, and inaccessibly dark phenomena that bring his descriptive enthusiasm to a halt and invite imaginary speculation. In this way, as Gaudio highlights, *Travels* is characterized by a preoccupation and obvious fascination with the "imagery of mouths, swallowing, and voids" (2). This imagery and the implied preoccupation with and handling of "the struggle between visibility and invisibility" (6) can be read as a sceptical interrogating (either consciously or unconsciously included) of Enlightenment optimism and of Bartram's own project of natural history. His descriptions of alligators and other animals do not go beyond the darkness of the threatening mouth, the roaring and swallowing organ. Actions below the muddy waters of Southern rivers and lakes are left to the imagination of the reader.⁸⁴

Social relations when addressed by Bartram appear to be equivalent to the non-transparent, impenetrable aspects he finds in nature. Apart from "Indian affairs" that I have already discussed, the narrative treatment of the issue of slavery in particular manifests a break in the neutral, universalist scientific detachment of the author. At one moment, toward the end of his narrative, when Bartram encounters a group of African Americans, his Linnean and Quaker myth of America as the Garden seems in danger of collapsing. Personal disturbances are becoming imaginable, disturbances by things Bartram observed but could not, or did not want to, translate into his universalist "science of order" (Foucault). As Bartram remarks somewhere in passing, there are "events, perhaps not altogether reconcilable to justice and humanity" (265), events that he avoids to describe in his narrative report.

On his way back to his father's house in Philadelphia, Bartram encounters a group of African Americans in South Carolina. He virtually 'discovers' them in the American landscape, just

⁸⁴ See the quote of the description of the alligator fight above.

like plants and other species in earlier paragraphs. Here, it is noteworthy that his way back to Philadelphia is not only a way back to his family's home, it is at the same time a way back to the urban center of British North America which, since Bartram left it, had become one of the central places of revolutionary struggle for a new political system and independent nation. The description of the encounter with the African Americans in 1777 seems to be an expression of the eruption that was just taking place in Bartram's colonial world. The paragraph starts in the laconic, diary-like style, with the abbreviated syntax of the natural historian, "Observed a number of persons coming up a head", just like two paragraphs before: "Observed, [...], Ponpon, *Aster fruticosus*, growing plentifully in good moist ground ..." (378). However, in this case, the observation takes on an unusual tone. Bartram suddenly feels threatened by what he perceives – and the narrative departs from its natural history tone, and takes on the tone of a suspense generating travel report:

[...] whom I soon perceived to be a party of Negroes. I had every reason to dread the consequences; for this being a desolate place, I was by this time several miles from any house or plantation, and had reason to apprehend this to be a predatory band of Negroes; people being frequently attacked, robbed, and sometimes murdered by them at this place. I was unarmed, alone, and my horse tired; thus situated every way in their power, I had no alternative but to be resigned and prepare to meet them. As soon as I saw them distinctly a mile or two off, I immediately alighted to rest, and give breath to my horse, intending to attempt my safety by flight, if upon near approach they should betray hostile designs. Thus prepared, when we drew near to each other, I mounted and rode briskly up; and though armed with clubs, axes and hoes, they opened to right and left, and let me pass peaceable. Their chief informed me whom they belonged to, and said they were going to man a new quarter at the West end of the bay; I however kept a sharp eye about me, apprehending that this might possibly have been an advanced division, and their intentions were to ambuscade and surround me; but they kept on quietly, and I was no more alarmed by them. (379)

As if replacing the alligators of the famous earlier passage, the slaves are, at very first sight, perceived as threatening. This is, in

fact, the only time that he describes humans as threatening, none of the African Americans he had met earlier, none of the Native Americans were perceived this way. Although it is mentioned that Seminoles and others took part in massacres, the general descriptive tone does not imply anxiety or threat. In the narrative, African Americans are mentioned repeatedly but only in benevolent terms and in side remarks, to illustrate the lives of plantation owners.

His anxiety is obviously connected to the widespread anxiety in the South of slave revolts, in 1777 even more so, as Royalists threatened to free the slaves. The passage is therefore an expression of Bartram's fear that the social conditions of his peaceful America might get disrupted by modern ideas of freedom and independence – which the African Americans might eventually claim for themselves. The passage seems to indicate that any possible future independent American government would have to take care of “predatory bands” and “attacking Negroes” set free in times of revolution, if Americans were not to end up “situated every way in their power”. Iannini (2012) reads the passage as reflecting on geopolitical contexts and the potential for revolutionary turmoil in the region: “The text confronts the possibility that the future of East Florida, as the new northern fringe of an interconnected social, economic, and environmental zone encompassing the Greater Caribbean, may be determined, not by the enlightened management of sensible and pious planters, but by the region's black majority” (217).

Significantly, harmony is re-established once the group names its master. The group is categorized and hence consolidated in its social position – a categorizing that takes place in analogy to the methods of natural history. Once clear categories are appointed, both, the Northern plant hunter and the potentially destructive slaves, proceed on their way in peaceful silence, re-established in their social position and acknowledging their specific ‘category’ in Bartram's eighteenth-century “description of the visible” (as Foucault 2002 [1966] refers to natural history).⁸⁵ It seems particularly significant that it is specifically the encounter with African Americans that leads him to address the politics and conflicts of revolutionary America. As Cashin and others have shown, he

⁸⁵ See Mishra (2002), 238.

must have witnessed violent acts between Royalists and Patriots in Georgia and other places he visited on his journey. The framing of the encounter with the African Americans discloses the narrator's very awareness of the political situation and of some of the contradictions of Bartram's American pastoral theme. Bartram's travel narrative envisages and dreads the consequences of the shedding of colonial and social restrictions in America – for Anglo Americans, for Native Americans (“Indian nations”), and for African Americans.

In the passage quoted above, very tellingly, without even a paragraph or other typographical break, the narrator continues “observing”, however shifting from “negroes” back to plants:

Next morning early I sat off again, and soon crossed Little River at the boundary; which is on the line that separates North and South Carolina: in an old field, on the banks of the river, a little distance from the public house, stands a single tree of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, which is said to be the most northern settlement of the tree. Passed this day over expansive savannas, charmingly decorated with late autumnal flowers, as *Helianthus*, *Rudbeckia*, *Silphium*, *Solidago*, *Helenium*, *Serratula*, *Cacalia*, *Aster*, *Lilium Martagon*, *Gentiana caerulea*, *Chironia*, *Gentiana saponaria*, *Asclepias cocinea*, *Hypericum*, *Rhexia pulcherrima*, &c. &c.

Observed likewise in these Savannas abundance of ludicrous *Dionaea muscipula* (*Dionaea*, Ellis epis. ad Linnaeum, miraculum naturae, folia biloba, radicalia, ciliata, conduplicanda, sensibilia, insecta incarcerantia. Syst. Vegetab. p. 335). (379)

The reintroduction of the universal language of natural history signals that the disturbance caused by the social world is overcome – a disturbance that momentarily made the narrator's place, his home, his America suspiciously a place of danger and disruption. As if trying to silence the implications of the encounter, he goes on ‘discovering’ the beauty of America.

These plant hunting activities textually silence the concurrent politics of America. Bartram is reluctant to engage in issues that are apparently insolvable, that open an abyss which might function in a similar way to the alligator's devouring mouth. The scene indicates his struggle with his own (unknowing) complicity with such American predicaments as the consequences of expansionism and

the economy of slavery. Gaudio (2001) emphasizes that Bartram was not just engaged in the institution of slavery earlier in his life (17) but that African Americans “made Bartram’s scientific work possible” (16), as he depended on their work when traveling in the South. Although Bartram repeatedly refers to black sailors, they all remain “absent identities” and “invisible laborers” (16).

Iannini (2003) highlights how “effortlessly Bartram arranges his notes from a British colonialist venture into a published text reflective of U.S. interests in the region” (150). Iannini argues that the early national vision of future advancement of the South correlated with the British colonial one. Here Bartram’s entrepreneurial vision diverges from the categorizing project of Natural History and reconnects the narrative to his earlier time as a plantation operator. When assessing the economic potential of the region, the Quaker flower hunter’s vision of the future of America seems to be “largely driven by the interests of the Plantation South” (Iannini 2003, 151). In the second part of *Travels*, Bartram writes about the region around Pensacola on the Gulf of Mexico:

This vast plain, together with the forests contiguous to it, if permitted (by the Seminoles who are sovereigns of these realms) to be in possession and under the culture of industrious planters and mechanics, would in a little time exhibit other scenes than it does at present, delightful as it is; for by the arts of agriculture and commerce, almost every desirable thing in life might be produced and made plentiful here, and thereby establish a rich, populous, and delightful region; as this soil and climate appears to be of a nature favourable for the production of almost all the fruits of the earth, as Corn, Rice, Indigo, Sugar-cane, Flax, Cotton, Silk, Cochineal, and all the varieties of esculent vegetables; and I suppose no part of the earth afford such endless range and exuberant pasture for cattle, deer, sheep, &c.: the waters everywhere, even in the holes in the earth, abound with varieties of excellent fish; and the forests and native meadows with wild game, as bear, deer, turkeys, quail, and in the winter season geese, ducks, and other fowl: and lying contiguous to one of the most beautiful navigable rivers in the world, and not more than thirty miles from St. Mark’s on the great bay of Mexico, is most conveniently situated for the West India trade and the commerce of all the world. (201)

Such extended comments on economic potential highlight Bartram's interest in the plantation South and its economic prospect.

Bartram's natural history creates a de-historicized image of the regions visited. His de-historicizing helps avoid an explicit positioning in the revolutionary struggles. On the one hand, Bartram shows the changes brought about by the anticolonial struggles as a threat to his pastoral notion of the natural and social life of America. On the other hand, his *Travels* engages in the history and present state of British North America. It does so in three ways: first, when commenting on and exploring the history of Native American tribes and their customs – hence, rather extraordinary for his time, acknowledging a history worth studying. Second, when reflecting on the issue of slavery and its menacing implications for social cohesion in North America. Third, when commenting on international relations in terms of geopolitics and trade, thus turning the promotion of British colonial interests into a reflection on the imperial desires of the newly independent republic.

While his father's reports on his exploratory journeys were still explicitly endorsing British rule in North America, William publishes a travel narrative in 1791 that transports contradictory assessments of colonial, revolutionary, and post-revolutionary North America. In *Travels*, Bartram struggles with issues of identification, affiliation, and political positioning. The book is based on an exploratory project of knowledge production for the colonial center. Although written during and after the revolutionary struggles, *Travels* does not articulate an anti-British or nationalist position. Rather, it provides creole imagery by giving expression to the idea of the Western hemisphere as a distinct geographical, natural, and cultural locale – less, however, a political and social locale – caught between the myths of America and the economy of empire-building. As such *Travels* functions as a transitional text, leading the way toward nationalist and expansionist perspectives in American travel writing.

THE
DISCOVERY, SETTLEMENT

And present State of

KENTUCKE:

AND

AN ESSAY towards the TOPOGRAPHY,
and NATURAL HISTORY of that im-
portant Country:

To which is added,

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING,

- I. The ADVENTURES of Col. *Daniel Boon*, one of the first Settlers, comprehending every important Occurrence in the political History of that Province.
- II. The MINUTES of the *Piankashaw* council, held at *Post St. Vincents*, April 15, 1784.
- III. AN ACCOUNT of the *Indian Nations* inhabiting within the Limits of the Thirteen United States, their Manners and Customs, and Reflections on their Origin.
- IV. The STAGES and DISTANCES between *Philadelphia* and the Falls of the *Ohio*; from *Pittsburg* to *Pensacola* and several other Places. — The Whole illustrated by a new and accurate MAP of *Kentucke* and the Country adjoining, drawn from actual Surveys.

By JOHN FILSON. 1787-1788

Wilmington, Printed by JAMES ADAMS, 1784.

Figure 2: From: John Filson. *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*. Wilmington, Delaware, 1784. Table of contents. License: Public Domain.

IV. Framing the Expanding Nation

When Bartram's *Travels* was published in 1791, a few exploratory descriptions of continental North America had been written and published employing an explicitly post-revolutionary national positioning and imagination. Hence, what Pamela Regis (1999) describes as "literature of place" (133) – as the expression of an emerging national imagination – continued, albeit in a transformed way, in the 1790s and during the first decades of the nineteenth century. This is particularly the case with topographical descriptions and narratives of continental exploration. The British acknowledgment of the independent republic and the constitutional debate added a new 'national' dimension to the efforts of "establishing the place" (Regis 1999, 133) through scientific descriptions and different formats of travel writing. American travel writing of the time, as I will discuss in this chapter, negotiates the search for the nation's boundaries, boundaries that are seen in the geographical as well as the cultural and symbolic sense.

During a time of initial discursive nation-building, when the first nationally tinged descriptions were produced, the topos of settlement in yet 'uncivilized' territory of the frontier achieved an exposed status. Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) argues very explicitly within a national and transatlantic framework. Jefferson writes with a partisan attitude. Further exploratory descriptions of 'the interior' combine topography, natural history, historiography, and ethnographic observations, often adding glossaries and dictionaries of American-Indian languages. A few, such as Filson's *Kentucke* (1784) and Imlay's *Topographical*

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Description (1792), include narratives about early explorers and settlers, which are framed in a mode of heroic adventure.

In contrast to such exploratory reports on the ‘interior,’ travelogues by American authors about journeys in the settled areas of the original thirteen colonies provide a rather different image of the U.S. and its geographical and symbolic boundaries. Anne Newport Royall, writing in the 1820s, concentrates on internal differences in society, regional idiosyncrasies, and local celebrities. Her style of travel narrative attempts to transcend the legacies of European colonialism and its dualisms of center and periphery, wilderness and civilization, culture and nature. As a successful female author in a traditionally male-dominated genre, her reports redirect the boundary discourse from the expansionist-imperial perspective to an exploration of internal boundary lines of gender, race, and class.

4.1. Thomas Jefferson: Imperial Cosmopolitanism

Thomas Jefferson contributed decisively to ‘Americanizing’ travel writing. His entanglements in the history of the genre illustrate the political and strategic use of the textual format of travel writing in the age of enlightenment, revolution and colonialism. As I will argue in the following, Jefferson’s notion of U.S. democracy and his strategic engagement in projects of exploratory reports are formed by the contradictory transnational concepts of cosmopolitanism and imperialism.

Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) influenced the advancement of the American travel report immensely. Although *Notes* does not include sections that report on a journey made by the author, the transatlantic epistolary report leads through time and space as if it were an imaginary journey. The description of Virginia served as a primary intellectual link to post-revolutionary transatlantic discourses of self-definition. The epistolary report provided a foil for descriptions of American nature, society, and history, emphasizing specificities of the Western hemisphere. It is one of the foundational expressions of the emerging national imagination. In addition to *Notes*, Jefferson impacted the shaping of American travel writing in different extra-literary ways,

through the funding of journeys of exploration, by instructing explorers and by commenting on reports.

The linkage between Jefferson and travel *writing* is not necessarily self-evident. Contrary to what was propagated in the aristocratic tradition of the Grand Tour, Jefferson does not support the idea of recreational traveling abroad as a way of educating young men. In his letter to nephew Peter Carr, sent from Paris in 1787,¹ he writes:

Travelling. This makes men wiser, but less happy. When men of sober age travel, they gather knowledge, which they may apply usefully for their country; but they are subject ever after to recollections mixed with regret; their affections are weakened by being extended over more objects; & they learn new habits which cannot be gratified when they return home. Young men, who travel, are exposed to all these inconveniences in a higher degree, to others still more serious, and do not acquire that wisdom for which a previous foundation is requisite, by repeated and just observations at home. The glare of pomp and pleasure is analogous to the motion of the blood; it absorbs all their affection and attention, they are torn from it as from the only good in this world, and return to their home as to a place of exile & condemnation. Their eyes are forever turned back to the object they have lost, & its recollection poisons the residue of their lives. Their first & most delicate passions are hackneyed on unworthy objects here, & they carry home the dregs, insufficient to make themselves or anybody else happy. Add to this, that a habit of idleness, an inability to apply themselves to business is acquired, & renders them useless to themselves & their country. These observations are founded in experience. There is no place where your pursuit of knolege [sic] will be so little obstructed by foreign objects, as in your own country, nor any, wherein the virtues of the heart will be less exposed to be weakened. (1984, 904)

In his letter, Jefferson distinguishes between traveling at home and traveling in foreign countries. He does not present going abroad as being of educational value. Instead, he suggests that staying “in your own country” influences personal development in a positive

¹ See Jefferson (1984), 900–906. On Jefferson’s letters to his nephew, see Brian Steele (2008), 26–27.

way. He does not value the idea of broadening one's personal horizon by being exposed to different landscapes and civilizations (as the practice of the Grand Tour suggested). Traveling as a form of education is clearly assessed in national terms: "useless to themselves & their country" (904).²

The link between traveling and national profit is a central theme in many of Jefferson's statements on traveling and expeditions as well as in his material involvement in projects of exploration. However, Jefferson himself neither wrote nor published a book-length travel report based on an actual journey nor one that had a first-person narrator taking the reader through events, observations, and assessments. He comments on his journeys and on the topic of traveling in his journals of European travels,³ his "epistolary communication" (as he himself describes it),⁴ particularly the letters written while in Europe,⁵ a few letters on journeys undertaken in North America⁶ and to a lesser extent *Notes on the State of Virginia*. This latter work picks up elements of the conventions of travel writing of his time, like topographical description and natural history. In fact, his *Notes on the State of Virginia* became a standard point of reference for subsequent topographical descriptions of North America.

Jefferson strongly supported the idea of knowledge production through scientific exploration. Until old age, he followed

² Steele (2008) highlights Jefferson's warnings that traveling and studying abroad might have a negative influence on American young men and eventually on U.S. society: "Jefferson worried that the bright young men America sent to Europe would be easily swept up in tormented 'intrigues of love' [...] and would begin to find virtuous and simple American women less desirable" (26).

³ See Jefferson (1984), 623–660.

⁴ On the term "epistolary communication," see Golden and Golden (2002), 121. As Golden and Golden write, he was "one of the most prolific correspondents in American history" (203).

⁵ As, for example, his letter to Lafayette of April 11, 1787 (Jefferson 1984), 893–895. During his time as Minister to France he wrote some of his letters not just for individual addressees but for the American public in order to inform them about European politics and social conditions. Some of these letters report on his journeys in Europe and were initially composed for later publication. See Anthony Brandt (2006), 3.

⁶ As, for example, his letter to Thomas Mann Randolph from Vermont of June 5, 1791 (Jefferson 1984), 979–980.

new publications, particularly on travels in North America, and commented on travel writing by American and European authors. Jefferson's thoughts on, and his engagement in, projects of travel and exploration as a politician and a public 'man of the Enlightenment' – albeit a contradictory titling because of his engagement in slavery and his blatant racism – bundle many of the methods and economic interests of travel writing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the exploration of unknown territory, knowledge production, international relations, the republican cause, and anticolonial nationalism.

Notes, Jefferson's only book-length publication, a history and description of his home-state, replies to the famous, earlier derogatory remarks by Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon about America and American species.⁷ The book consists of Jefferson's responses to questions posed to him in 1780 by François Barbé-Marbois who was the Secretary of the French delegation in Philadelphia. The 23 chapters, written as letters to Barbé-Marbois, combine elements of autobiography, historiography, political theory, and natural history. Although *Notes* lacks a traveler as narrator, the thematic chapters take the reader on a tour through the social history, topography, flora, and fauna of Virginia. Jefferson's narrative appears quite consciously interlinked with the transatlantic tradition of exploratory and promotional travel writing.

Notes provides a historiographic account of the New World. This perspective on Virginia counters European prejudices that situated historical development solely in the Old World and ignored such in the Western hemisphere. Thus, with *Notes*, Jefferson contributes to the Dispute of the New World and engages in natural history and its enlightened and cosmopolitan project of knowledge production (part of this certainly as racializing and racist ideology). Jefferson, for example, comments on the size of species in the New World: "Our turkey of America is a very different species from the meleagris of Asia and Europe; they are nearly thrice their size" (36). And he claims the mammoth to be

⁷ On the Dispute, see above and, with regard to Jefferson, see Leask (2002), 256–70, and Spencer (1957), 64.

extinct elsewhere but still to roam in the New World wilderness.⁸ Implying that, if size is to be accounted for the measure for fertility (as Buffon and others did) then the survival of the mammoth should weigh heavily on the side of America.⁹

With its emancipatory descriptions of parts of the newly independent U.S., *Notes* influenced the following wave of topographies during westward expansion. Although, after *Notes*, Jefferson did not publish any book that could be considered as travel writing, he instructed the explorers and botanists he sent out to the American West and to other parts of the world, and by doing so, indirectly influenced and formed American travel writing. Jefferson served as initiator and financial and intellectual patron of various journeys and expeditions on the American continent and to other parts of the globe (e.g. by John Ledyard). Among the exploratory initiatives supported by Jefferson, the Lewis and Clark expedition remains the most prominent. As president (1801–1809), he initiated this exploration of the Pacific coast undertaken in the years 1804 to 1806. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's diaries and notes were published after Lewis's tragic death, edited by Nicholas Biddle in 1814.¹⁰ The diaries were influenced by Jefferson who had instructed Lewis and had virtually trained him both as an explorer and in botany. To the distress of Jefferson, the journals of the leading figures of the expedition were published belatedly.

One of the inspirations for the expedition and the search for the Northwest Passage was economic interest. The discovery of such a route would have made the fur trade with China much more efficient and would have been important for establishing the

⁸ Buffon, contrary to Jefferson and most eighteenth-century naturalists, claimed that the mammoth was extinct (see Meisen 2008, 102–103).

⁹ As Myra Jehlen (1994) emphasizes, embracing American nature in an exposed way brought about a self-contradiction for the Americans countering the degeneracy theory. Beyond permitting Americans to claim independence, embracing an aboriginal America had some dubious implications. It meant that historical process was not to be part of the essential America. The 'nature's nation' that Jefferson implied the U.S. to be, appears to stand outside of social history. Although Jefferson's comments on American species eventually resolved the claims of the dispute of the New World, the resolution presented its own problem.

¹⁰ On the history of publication of Lewis and Clark's writing see Ambrose (1996), 479–80.

U.S. as a trading empire.¹¹ But apart from this motive of material gain, the expedition was structured as an Enlightenment venture: the planning, conducting, and analyzing of the expedition involved several representatives of the American intellectual elite: Benjamin Rush (medicine) and Benjamin Smith Barton (botany). After their return, one of the leading literary and intellectual figures of the early republic, Joel Barlow, praised the achievements of Meriwether Lewis.¹² The expedition was also intertextually linked to transatlantic Enlightenment thinking. Those involved had read reports on some of the most famous expeditions of the period, such as Alexander Mackenzie (Jefferson and Lewis read his *Voyages* after publication in 1801),¹³ James Cook's *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*,¹⁴ and Linnaeus' contributions to natural history.¹⁵ In addition to these texts and models of natural history, as historian Stephen Ambrose (1996) writes, the model for Lewis and Clark's report from Fort Mandan was Jefferson's *Notes*: "part guidebook, part travelogue, part boosterlike promotion, part text to accompany the master map" (204).

Jefferson's entanglements illustrate the political and strategic use of the format. The different ties between Jefferson and travel writing are embedded in the emerging patterns of identification that locate the newly independent nation in global contexts. Jefferson's relation to American travel writing is shaped by his contradictory political thinking and intellectual identification that can retrospectively be conceptualized as a blending of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and imperialism. In this sense, Jefferson personifies the process of American nation-building with its inherent contradictions. Most of the more recent works by Jefferson scholars and most of his biographers highlight his contradictory character and his apparently inconsistent positions in philosophical

¹¹ See Ambrose (1996), 154. For the significance of the search for the Northwest Passage in the eighteenth century, see Glyn Williams (2002) who, however, mainly concentrates on the Hudson Bay and on Captain James Cook's activities, and comments little on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

¹² See Ambrose (1996), 423.

¹³ See Ambrose (1996), 74.

¹⁴ See Ambrose (1996), 76.

¹⁵ See Ambrose (1996), 423.

and political debates, such as the simultaneity of blatant racist attitudes¹⁶ and enlightened cosmopolitanism, pacifist diplomacy, and territorial expansionism (“conquering without war”).¹⁷ Tucker and Hendrickson (1990) emphasize that Jefferson saw a close relation between democracy and territorial expansionism: “For it was through expansionism, he believed, that the republican character of the Union would be preserved” (162). Jefferson’s activities as a statesman, particularly his engagement in territorial expansion, such as the Louisiana purchase and the attempts to acquire West Florida, as well as numerous other geopolitical issues, and his political diplomacy illustrate his intense involvement in international politics.¹⁸ Such activities and ideas show how close patterns of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and imperialism lie together in Jefferson’s thinking and political postures.¹⁹

Apart from his Enlightenment-inspired notions of knowledge production, as Ambrose (1996) notes, Jefferson, like many of his fellow Virginia planters, was interested in land speculation; his personal, profit-oriented activities were driven by “land hunger” (57). Such rather private employment of mapping and geopolitics finds a parallel in Jefferson’s domestic and international politics. After all, his engagement in projects of travel and exploration was based on, and was legitimized by, strategic considerations. Although he strongly supported the idea of knowledge production through exploration, the expeditions he initiated have to be just as much understood within the parameters of international geopolitics. In this context, Michael Brodhead (1983) comments on the contradictions of many American expeditions when noting that Meriwether Lewis – supported by president Jefferson – is characteristic of the beginning of “a rich, almost uniquely American

¹⁶ On Jefferson’s position on slavery and on his personal relations with African Americans, particularly Sally Hemings, see Gordon-Reed (2000).

¹⁷ See Tucker and Hendrickson (1990), 18.

¹⁸ On his political diplomacy and his ideas of republican expansionism see Tucker and Hendrickson (1990).

¹⁹ Walter Lafeber (1993) writes: “A fervent believer in the manifest destiny of democratic government to overspread much of the world, he strongly advised that this destiny would best be realized by Americans staying at home – although his idea of home changed from state to continental to perhaps hemispheric proportions.” (370)

phenomenon: the military naturalist.”²⁰ Similarly, stressing the connection between knowledge production and international relations, Ambrose (1997) writes that Jefferson was “obsessed with securing an empire for the United States” (33). In fact, Ambrose characterizes Jefferson as an “imperialist” who “[f]rom the beginning of the revolution [...] thought of the United States as a nation stretching from sea to sea” (56). He highlights, however, the fact that the United States, in Jefferson’s mind, “would be an empire without colonies, an empire of equals” (57). In this sense, Jefferson’s notion of an “Empire of Liberty” has been assessed as a form of expansionism that aims at spreading republican democracy and securing the republicanism of the Union.²¹ As one of the earliest famous commentators, Henry Adams, describes Jefferson’s expansionism in his *History of the United States of America During the Administration of Thomas Jefferson* (1986 [1889–1891]):

Jefferson aspired beyond the ambition of a nationality, and embraced in his view the whole future of man. That the United States should become a nation like France, England, or Russia, should conquer the world like Rome, or develop a typical race like the Chinese, was no part of his scheme. He wished to bring a new era. Hoping for a time when the world’s ruling interests should cease to be local and should become universal; when questions of boundary and nationality should become insignificant; when armies and navies should be reduced to the work of police, and politics should consist only in non-intervention, – he set himself to the task of governing, with this golden age in view. (101)²²

Likewise, commenting on intersections of imperialism and cosmopolitanism, Julian Boyd (1948) declares in his essay “Thomas Jefferson’s ‘Empire of Liberty’”:

Though he called it an Empire of Liberty, it was to be neither an isolated political entity nor an imperialistic force for compulsory extension of ideals of liberty: its domain and compulsions would be in the realm of the mind and spirit of man, freely and inexorably

²⁰ Quoted in Ambrose (1996), 127.

²¹ See Tucker and Hendrickson (1990), 3.

²² Also quoted in Ambrose (1997).

transcending political boundaries, incapable of being restrained, and holding imperial sway not by arms or political power but by the sheer majesty of ideas and ideals.²³

Such understanding of Jefferson's expansionism has made scholars, such as Tucker and Hendrickson (1990) describe Jefferson's statecraft as a form of hemispheric republican nationalism (160–161) and “pacifist imperialism” (3).

With geopolitical reasoning in mind, Jefferson himself commented on the double-sidedness of journeys in the service of science. For example, in the 1780s, years before the Lewis and Clark expedition took shape, Jefferson – in a letter – commented on British investors who were planning to finance an expedition from the Mississippi to California: “They pretend it is only to promote knowledge. I am afraid they have thoughts of colonising into that quarter.”²⁴ His own expansionist policy, a form of enlightened imperialism, did not only support the Lewis and Clark expedition. Other journeys of exploration received comparable financial and scientific support. In 1786, John Ledyard who had sailed with Captain Cook and who was the first U.S. citizen to set foot in the Pacific Northwest, proposed to Jefferson – then ambassador in Paris – to travel by land from Moscow to Siberia, then to cross the Bering Strait and to walk across the continent.²⁵ Ledyard was supported by Jefferson. However, his journey through Siberia was eventually stopped by the Empress of Russia, Catherine II. Ledyard was deported to Poland. In his report on Cook's *Voyage* which was published in 1783,²⁶ Ledyard shows a self-consciously American attitude. Ziff (2001) argues: “This Americanness was defined both in contrast to the English culture it resembled and in comparison with the Pacific-island cultures from which it so apparently differed” (6). Ledyard's proposal to explore the Western parts of the North American continent and his plan to start this journey from Siberia, convinced Jefferson. Both men supported the idea of national expansion and both articulated cosmopolitan

²³ Quoted in Tucker and Hendrickson (1990), 159.

²⁴ Quoted in Ambrose (1997), 68.

²⁵ Concerning Jefferson's involvement, see Ambrose (1997), 69.

²⁶ Ziff (2001) refers to Ledyard's report as the “first American travel book” (5).

attitudes. Although Ledyard speaks of “*amor patriae*” in his book on Cook’s journeys²⁷ when starting his journey to Siberia, encouraged by Jefferson, he stages himself as a citizen of the world, as Ziff (2001) puts it, holding the “common flag of humanity” (46).

Further engagement of the statesman in expeditions to the unknown Western parts of North America illustrates the interrelation and intricacies of knowledge production and imperialist politics. Already a few years before Lewis and Clark started their tour westward, Jefferson endorsed an expedition to the Pacific coast. In June 1793, the French botanist André Michaux, supported by the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, set out for the river Columbia and the Pacific Ocean. However, when he reached Kentucky it was revealed that he had been hired by the French Republic as a secret agent and was traveling less to explore the unknown wilderness or for scientific purposes than to find ways how to attack the Spanish possessions west of the Mississippi.²⁸

During Jefferson’s presidency, Major Zebulon M. Pike led a military expedition, authorized by the U.S. government, to explore the Southern and Western parts of the newly acquired Louisiana territory in the years 1805 to 1807. Jefferson was informed about this expedition and discussed it in political circles. He exchanged letters with Pike.²⁹ Pike’s reports are among the first broadly influential descriptions of Spanish Mexico and the borderlands of U.S. territory and the Spanish empire, as will be discussed in chapter 6.2. Such examples of journeys and expeditions, supported by the high-level statesman and president Jefferson, illustrate the ‘political’ dimensions of traveling and how the political elite of the United States – still a young and in terms of global imperialist expansion comparably weak nation – imagined the nation not just as expansionist but also as acting very consciously within imperialist struggles for territory and rule in North America.

²⁷ See Ziff (2001), 35.

²⁸ See Ambrose (1997), 37 and 70–71.

²⁹ “Thomas Jefferson to Zebulon Montgomery Pike, November 6, 1807.” *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress.*

4.2. John Filson: The National Narrative

John Filson's topographical description *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke: An Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of that Important Country* (1784) was published three years before the first edition of Jefferson's *Notes* appeared. Filson, a schoolmaster from Delaware, had moved to Lexington, Kentucky, one or two years before publishing *Kentucke*. He had acquired land and worked as a surveyor. His publication is based on his traveling in the region and on interviews he conducted with settlers.³⁰ Like Jefferson's exploration of Virginia, structured according to the conventions of descriptions and topographies, Filson's *Kentucke* does not provide a travel narrative in the form of a first-person factual account of a journey. Instead, Filson's description aims at providing information for readers who might intend to either visit or settle in the region. His description is based on his recent move to the region. While Jefferson's *Notes* is structured as a journey through the history and scenery of his home state, particularly keen to translate American idiosyncracies into transatlantic scientific and political discourse, Filson's *Kentucke* is much more directly positioned in the tradition of promotional travel writing aimed at attracting settlers by praising the economic potential of a region.

A 41-page descriptive essay is followed by an appendix consisting of four parts (a total of 69 pages). The first chapter of the appendix, an account of the 'adventures' of the explorer and settler Daniel Boone, has remained the most famous part of Filson's report on Kentucky. The account of Boone's adventures is followed by the minutes of a Piankashaw council which took place on April 15, 1784. The third part of the appendix concentrates on customs and manners of "the Indian Nations inhabiting within the Limits of the Thirteen United States." The last part gives exact information on distances between different settlements and posts along travel routes from the Atlantic coastal regions to the frontier of Kentucky. A brief conclusion is followed by Article II of the *Definitive Treaty* which defines the geographical boundaries of the United States (cf. original table of contents, figure 2, p. 130).

³⁰ For biographical information on Filson, see Slotkin (1973), 268–312.

Slotkin (1973) emphasizes that the composition of the thematically diverse chapters shows characteristics of the conversion structure of Puritan sermon traditions (272). He further argues that Filson employs this structure in order to engage the reader in the explicitly national narrative. The nationalizing narrative, highlighting the history and the contemporary borders of the independent union, acquires particular symbolic force through the personal and mythic quality of the Boone chapter in which the reader learns about the experiences of a fellow citizen and his selfless and sacrificing contribution to nation-building. Slotkin (1973) writes:

Kentucke roughly follows the sermon form favored by the Puritans, in which narrative passages are set within a logical framework as circumstantial demonstrations of the truth of the author's thesis. But where the Puritan form relies on a carefully articulated process of abstract logic to convince the reader, Filson's book relies on a narrative-like movement of images resolving themselves into a dramatic unity. Boone's initiation into the wilderness becomes the reader's own experience, as each chapter of the book carries him deeper into the wilderness, into a more intimate knowledge of the life of the pioneer and the Indian. (272)

In addition to the compliance with the form of Puritan sermons, *Kentucke's* narrative creation of the pioneer-hero references such New World literary formats as the captivity narrative and narratives of discovery. Filson's report figures prominently in the history of American travel writing as it combines national mythmaking with an expansionist voice celebrating not only the prospect of the region but of America as a nation. Structured according to generic conventions of topographic descriptions and of natural history, Filson's combination of thematically different chapters generates a discourse that aims at popularizing a national narrative. *Kentucke* aims at defining the scope of the nation by underlining (and warning of) the geopolitical interests of European colonialist competitors on the North American continent (particularly France and Spain). Filson's national narrative shapes Otherness that is positioned outside of his blueprint of the American.

In the preface, as was common in published travel narratives of the time, Filson legitimizes his authorship and writing. He

introduces himself as a traveler and visitor to the region: “I am not an inhabitant of Kentucke, but having been there some time, by my acquaintance in it, am sufficiently able to publish the truth” (6). Filson highlights that geographers of America had so far failed to produce a proper and truthful image of the region. He writes that his aim in composing the chapters was to fill this gap that so far left “the world [...] in darkness” (5). This rather conventional rationale, claiming to aim at enlightening the world by producing new knowledge about a region, however, is given an explicitly national twist by Filson:

When I visited Kentucke, I found it so far to exceed my expectations, although great, that I concluded it was a pity, that the world had not adequate information of it. I conceived that a proper description, and map of it, were objects highly interesting to the United States; and therefore, incredible as it may appear to some, I must declare, that this performance is not published from lucrative motives, but solely to inform the world of the happy climate, and plentiful soil of this favoured region. (5)

The preface introduces Kentucky as “a place of infinite importance” (5). The first paragraph of the “essay” continues this celebratory mode when commenting on the achievements of the European ‘discoverers’ of the region in the mid-eighteenth century: “These men [...] returned home with a pleasing news of their discovery of the best tract of land in North America, and probably in the world” (7). In the first paragraphs, Filson presents the history of the region within the colonialist Eurocentric parameters of narratives of New World discovery and wonder in which acts of taking possession acquire mythical significance. He explains:

The first white man [...] who discovered this province, was one James M’Bride, who, in company with some others, in the year 1754, passing down the Ohio in Canoes, landed at the mouth of Kentucke river, and there marked a tree, with the first letters of his name, and the date, which remain to this day. (7)

After emphasizing the “white man[’s]” initial act of symbolically taking possession of the territory, Filson goes on to introduce “John Finley” who was “trading with the Indians” (8) as the next visitor in 1767. When Finley has to leave because of “disputes

arising between the Indians and traders" (8), he passes his locally acquired knowledge on to "Daniel Boon [sic]" who leads a journey of exploration in 1769. Boone and his companions, "[a]fter a long fatiguing march, over a mountainous wilderness, in a westward direction [...] arrived upon its borders; and from the top of an eminence, with joy and wonder, descried the beautiful landscape of Kentucke" (8).

Following this onset of a heroic narrative of discovery and settlement, interlaced with pre-romantic celebrations of natural beauty, Filson concentrates on two issues: first, the history of land acquisition through treaties with the Native Americans and, second, the hardships the explorers and first settlers had to endure, constantly fighting hostile Native Americans in an otherwise fertile and friendly environment. A rough description of the boundaries of Kentucke leads to fact-oriented paragraphs on nature, landscape, and the life of settler communities. The paragraphs are captioned in a way that indicates the heterogeneous thematic structure: "rivers," "soil," "climate," "produce," "quadrupeds," "inhabitants," and "curiosities." Two final sections, entitled "Rights of Land" and "Trade of Kentucke," gather information about contemporary life and prospects, aimed at informing and attracting settlers.

Particularly the longer section on "Curiosities" shows how attentively Filson connects his description of the region to the transatlantic discourse of natural history. After commenting on "curious sepulchers" (33) indicating a method of burying the dead that "appears to be totally different from that now practised by the Indians" (33), he discusses another archeological finding unaccounted for: "At a salt spring, near Ohio river, very large bones are found, far surpassing the size of any species of animals now in America" (33). Filson uses this "curiosity" to emphasize the significance of the region for the scientific discourse of the time, notably Natural History:

These bones have equally excited the amazement of the ignorant, and attracted the attention of the philosopher. Specimens of them have been sent both to France and England, where they have been examined with the greatest diligence, and found upon comparison to be remains of the same species of animals that produced those

other fossil bones which have been discovered in Tartary, Chili, and several other places, both of the old and new continent. (34)

Similar to Jefferson's interest in the mammoth,³¹ Filson juxtaposes different explanations for the existence and possible extinction of an unknown monstrous being. While the Tartars, he explains, "relate many marvellous stories" it appears certain that "no such amphibious quadruped exists in our American waters" (34). Filson concludes that the bones resemble an elephant. Similar to Jefferson, he asks: "Can then so great a link have perished from the chain of nature?" (36). Different to Jefferson, however, Filson emphasizes that he is convinced of the extinction of this "tyrant of the forests" (36) – a statement which definitely helps in supporting his celebratory description of Kentucky as a friendly place of future grandness.

The subsequent section, titled "Rights of Land," supersedes the mode of prehistoric mystery and wonder entirely. However, it repeats the promotional structure of celebrating the secure and friendly nature of the territory, implying the progress of Anglo-American civilizing. Filson gives detailed information on how settlers qualify for acquiring land in the territory administrated by Virginia. Filson places the individual rights of preemption in the context of the establishment of "permanent" (38) boundary lines of the territory which were defined in the Treaty of Paris of 1763. Considering that Filson's *Kentucke* was published in 1784 when the independent republic was still considered an experiment, Filson's conclusion "that the right of Virginia to Kentucke is as permanent as the independence of America" (38) marks the patriotic optimism of the entire book.

The longer last section of Filson's "essay," captioned "Trade of Kentucke" conflates the scientific, celebratory, promotional, commercial, and patriotic modes of the preceding comments. The section repeats the structure of inserting elements of adventure, danger, and threat into the lush description of abundant natural resources. While the preceding sections first expounded the dangers of recurring prehistoric beasts and the threat of losing chartered land rights, the concluding part of the descriptive essay,

³¹ See Jefferson (1999 [1785]), 43–44 (Query VI).

warns of Spanish and other European interests in the land west of the United States' national border. Emphasizing the significance of the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers for trade, Filson repeatedly addresses the Spanish presence and interests in the region:

But perhaps it will be replied, New Orleans is in the possession of the Spaniards, who whenever they please, may make use of that fort, and some others they have on the Mississippi, to prevent the navigation, and ruin the trade. [...] I grant it will be absurd to expect a free navigation of the Mississippi whilst the Spaniards are in possession of New Orleans. (47)

Filson suggests reacting to this looming threat of Spanish control by endorsing expansionist policies. He concludes his descriptive essay with expansionist statements. The Spanish presence in the West leads him to the rather exposed articulation of a collective national position, employing the first-person plural for calling upon the patriotic sentiments of his fellow citizens:

They [the Spaniards] may perhaps trade with us upon their own terms, while they think it consistent with their interest, but no friendship in trade exists when interest expires; therefore, when the western country becomes populous and ripe for trade, found policy tells us the Floridas must be ours too. [...] and the trade and commerce of the Mississippi River cannot be so well secured in any other possession as our own. [...] Nay, I doubt not, that in time a canal will be broke through the gut of Iberville, which may divert the water of Mississippi that way, and render it a place of the greatest consequence in America; but this important period is reserved for futurity. (47-48)

These remarks on future distribution and mastery of the territory South and West of the contemporary United States conclude Filson's 42-page long "essay" on Kentucky and are followed by an appendix of 69 pages.

The appendix starts with the famous narrative of "The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone" and the "War of Kentucke" (49), covering 33 pages. Although written by Filson who interviewed Boone while in Kentucky, the account of Boone's life is narrated in the first person, suggesting an autobiographical style. Filson's treatment of Boone's adventures turned the Kentucky

pioneer into one of the first popular heroes of the United States. Filson presents Boone as an explicitly national hero. According to Slotkin (1973), the narrative of Boone's frontier experience fulfilled "the desire for a coherent expression of the new sense of national (and sectional) identity" (267) and established one of the groundbreaking national myths of America:

Filson created a character who was to become the archetypal hero of the American frontier [...] as the man who made the wilderness safe for democracy. The Boone narrative, in fact, constituted the first nationally viable statement of a myth of the frontier. (268–269)

The first-person narrative employs a much more explicitly literary mode than the other parts of Filson's book. The imagery adds a symbolic depth that we do not find in the other chapters. The imagery of the first paragraph introduces Boone as a hero driven by curiosity, faith in divine guidance, and the will to civilize as well as to promote a region most significant for the new nation. Slotkin argues that "Filson casts Boone's adventures as a personal narrative, developed by the Puritans as a literary form of witness to an experience of God's grace" (279). The Puritan conversion narrative and the captivity narrative are clearly referenced by Filson and structure the narrative. Filson starts his Boone narrative by highlighting, as Slotkin puts it, his hero's "trusting immersion in the wilderness [which] ultimately results in the attainment of self-knowledge and an understanding of the design of God" (280):

Curiosity is natural to the soul of man, and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections. [...] yet in time the mysterious will of Heaven is unfolded, and we behold our conduct, from whatsoever motives excited, operating to answer the important designs of heaven. Thus we behold Kentucke, lately an howling wilderness, the habitation of savages and wild beasts, become a fruitful field; [...] where wretched wigwams stood, the miserable abodes of savages, we behold the foundations of cities laid that, in all probability, will rival the glory of the greatest upon earth. And we view Kentucke situated on the fertile banks of the great Ohio, rising from obscurity to shine with splendor, equal to any other of the stars of the American hemisphere. (49)

As is indicated in these introductory lines, Boone's fictional pseudo-autobiographical narrative contains many elements that are most characteristic for different forms of writing about North America of the time, such as the distinction between wilderness and civilization, and the topics of Native American 'barbarity', captivity, and the conquest of the Native American tribes and tribal land. The narrative of adventure informs about Boone's different excursions to Kentucke, his suffering, the loss of family members, and finally the establishment of settlements. Interspersed we find allusions to the aesthetic discourse of the late eighteenth century and to the history of Old and New World civilizations. After informing the reader that his "eldest son was one that fell in the action" (57), the first-person narrator goes on to describe a mountainous landscape in terms of the sublime and the picturesque: "The spectator is apt to imagine that nature had formerly suffered from violent convulsion; and that these are the dismembered remains of the dreadful shock; the ruins, not of Persepolis or Palmyra, but of the world!" (58).

The narrator particularly concentrates on depicting interactions with Native American groups, as for example in such adventurous experiences as the captivity of his daughter (60–61) and of himself who was adopted by the tribe:

At Chelicothe I spent my time as comfortably as I could expect; was adopted, accordin [sic] to their custom, into a family where I became a son, and had a great share in the affection of my new parents, brothers, sisters, and friends. (64–65)

Despite the indication of processes of acculturation, after his escape from captivity, the natives reappear as a threat to the settlers and as enemies that the explorers and settlers fight and aim to expel from the region: "In this expedition we took seven prisoners and five scalps, with the loss of only four men" (78).

As Slotkin and others have emphasized, Filson's faked autobiographical Boone narrative successfully works on forming the myth of America from a post-revolutionary national perspective of a citizen. It thus offers a nationally anchored heroic type to his readers. The peculiar mix of description, historiography, and testimonial narrative, of factual information and heroic narrative,

gives Filson's book a special position in the history of American travel writing as it articulates a national voice that appears intertextually linked just as much to generic traditions of narratives of discovery, exploration and conquering as to contemporary Rising Glory poetry. Filson's topographical description, based on his journey to Kentucky, not only creates a national hero but also shapes national imagery in the form of the frontier dualism of 'wilderness' and 'civilization.'

However, Filson's national discourse goes beyond the logic of a 'civilizing' quality of frontier mobility when discussing the geopolitical interests of the new nation. This preoccupation with national security 'nationalizes' the historical figure Daniel Boone in a way that biographical data hardly support. As Boone's more recent biographer Meredith Mason Brown (2008) writes, the actual frontiersman who lived from 1734 to 1820, can neither be described as a patriotic supporter of the independent American republic nor as being particularly emphatic about the expansion of the national territory. Brown explains:

During the Revolution he defended the frail young American settlements in Kentucky, yet like many on the frontier, his loyalties were not limited to the new nation that had yet to take shape. Boone fought the British not because he was a dyed-in-the-wool American [...] but because he was defending settlements against Indians armed and sometimes supported by the British. (xv)

Although Boone founded Boonesborough in Kentucky, led many immigrants into the territory and most probably inspired many others to follow, his bonds to the region were apparently rather detached from the inclusion of the state in the U.S. After all, in 1799 he and his family moved to Missouri when it was still Spanish territory and "Boone became a civil servant in the Spanish administration (Brown 2008, xv).

Considering Boone's apparent disinterest in the society and the political system of the Union which Kentucky joined as the fifteenth state in 1792, it is even more significant that Filson gives Boone's voice such a strong national tinge. While Boone was primarily interested in settling and conquering what he considers as "the wilderness," Filson redefines Boone's expansionism within

the discourse of the emerging nation and of nationalism. Boone's adventurous love of yet unsettled Western land – independent of political and administrative structures – is incorporated in Filson's narrative of the expanding nation. By giving a voice to Boone as the 'discoverer' and 'conqueror' of the region that Filson himself had lived in for about two years, his topographical description acquires heightened credibility and authenticity. At the same time it attains an imaginary quality that interweaves such conventional elements of travel accounts as routes and ethnographic observation with history, science and myth. Filson's way of arranging such heterogeneous textual material around the fictional autobiographical account of the frontier hero Boone creates a speculative narrative about the future prospects of the nation. As such, Filson's *Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*, generated a starting point in the emergence of an outspoken national perspective in American travel writing.

Finally, suggesting a circular narrative and interlinking the personal-heroic and the collective-prospective elements, Filson's voice as first-person narrator reappears in the last paragraphs of the appendix, rounding up the discourse of his book in a most emphatic, flowery, patriotic mode. Within the parameters of mythmaking and of the structure of Puritan New World narrative, as Slotkin remarks, Filson's 'conclusion' completes the cycle of experience that *Kentucke* traces: "We end as we began, outside the wilderness; but because we have experienced the wilderness way of life with the Indian and the frontiersman, our perception of the landscape has been enriched" (276). At this point, Filson addresses the readers as inhabitants of a promising nation, as American citizens, and, in terms of regional pride, as Kentuckians. As Slotkin argues, Filson's book concludes with a "visionary statement of the idea of manifest destiny" (276). Filson's patriotic comments transcend the limits of the United States of his time not just by implying expansionist tendencies but also by emphasizing the universal significance of the region and the nation:

This fertile region, abounding with all the luxuries of nature, stored with all the principal materials for art and industry, inhabited by virtuous and ingenious citizens, must universally attract the attention of mankind; being situated in the central part of the

extensive American empire [...] where agriculture, industry, laws, arts and sciences, flourish; where afflicted humanity raises her drooping head; where springs a harvest for the poor; where conscience ceases to be slave, and laws are no more than the security of happiness; where nature makes reparation for having created man; and government, so long prostituted to the most criminal purposes, establishes an asylum in the wilderness for the distressed of mankind [...]. [By] deliverance from their chains happiness may be found, so universally desired by mankind. (107–108)

Biblical references and religious imagery connect the account of the frontier state to pre-Enlightenment discourse of America as the promised land. However, the ideas that the newly independent nation has a global significance and transports a universal mission also seem to allude to the transatlantic Enlightenment discourse of world citizenship: Kentucke does not only acquire significance for inhabitants of the region but for the worldly liberation of humanity. Imagining such an “Enlightenment utopia” (Slotkin 1973, 277), Filson concludes his first-person narrative:

In your country, like the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, and all kinds of fruits, you shall eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing in it. [...] Thus, your country, favoured with the smiles of heaven, will probably be inhabited by the first people the world ever knew. (109)

This celebratory imagery is followed by sections that link the discourse of the national hero to the border discourse of the time: a two-page excerpt from Article II of the Definitive Treaty, regulating the geographic boundaries of the United States, a map of Kentucky, and road distances from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to different locations in Kentucky and other places of the North American western lands.

Filson’s innovative recombination of generic conventions of travel writing – making use of fact and fiction, autobiography and natural history, and promotional and exploratory styles – imagines the scope of the nation in geographical, symbolic, and philosophical terms. His secular reflection on the global significance of the first independent American nation not only establishes a point of

departure for those American travel writers of the decades following the publication of *Kentucke* who aimed at connecting travel accounts to the emerging literary nationalism, but it also illustrates how the imagination of the national, the international and the transnational intersect in late eighteenth-century American travel writing on North America.

4.3. Gilbert Imlay: Western Territory and Transatlantic Comparison

Gilbert Imlay (1754–1828), the author of two book-length publications, was involved in land speculation in Kentucky (when still part of Virginia) from 1783 to 1785,³² before he left the U.S. for Europe. While in England he published the first edition of his *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (1792) which many critics consider “one of the most influential and successful travel books of the late eighteenth century.”³³ One year after the publication of this popular book he published the epistolary novel *The Emigrants* (1793), set mainly in Kentucky, according to Imlay biographer Wil Verhoeven (2008), “America’s first frontier novel, and the nation’s only Jacobin novel” (2). During the French Revolution, Imlay became a diplomatic representative of the U.S. in France. While in the diplomatic service he met the British writer Mary Woolstonecraft with whom he had a daughter (Fanny Imlay). After spending time together in Paris and England, the couple separated, which started a troublesome relationship.

The *Description* spans more than 500 pages and is composed according to generic conventions of the time: A description that combines different approaches and formats and which – similar to Jefferson’s *Notes* and Filson’s *Kentucke* – gathers different categories of information on a certain region. Imlay’s voluminous book combines elements of different literary genres, providing the reader with a kaleidoscopic view on the new nation. It is the fragmented aspects that make the book an interesting document of the emerging national ideology of the time. The book

³² Rusk (1923), 7.

³³ Verhoeven and Gilroy (1998), ix. See also Rusk (1923), 7–13.

unites different styles of writing about America: the epistolary report, natural history, cartography, topographical description, adventure narratives, political statements, historiography, economic treatises, sermon-like speeches, and – through a reprint of Filson’s Boone narrative (p. 306–376) – the captivity motif.³⁴ The full title indicates the range of topics addressed: *Containing A Succinct Account of its Soil, Climate, Natural History, Population, Agriculture, Manners, and Customs. With an ample Description of the several Divisions into which that Country is partitioned.* While the first 300 pages are mainly structured in an epistolary style, starting on page 306, Imlay adds texts written by other authors. The appendix contains information on Louisiana and West Florida as well as topographical descriptions of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, and Tennessee, and information on how to “purchase [...] land in America” (549).

Thus, the survey of the territory is not limited to simply mapping, but extends into other fields, including cultural matters, as for example, elements of the conventional ‘customs and manners’ approach of natural history.³⁵ Like earlier promotional travel reports, Imlay’s *Description* contains many pages of information on infrastructure, ways to travel to the Western territories as well as economic considerations.³⁶ For example in letter VII he gives an account of the present inhabitants of Kentucky:

³⁴ In the novel *The Emigrants* (1793) we find a further generic intertwining of travel report and fiction. The novel deals with the settlement of the interior (Kentucky) and is, at least in parts, framed as a sentimental novel, emphasizing domestic values, and structured on a plot based on misguided love affairs, marriage and deception. The different modes of narrative – adventure on the one side, domesticity on the other – give the novel an experimental character. His novel can be understood as an attempt to translate his earlier topographical account into a sentimental novel. Traveling figures appear in both texts in terms of a process of individual development and as containing a visionary mission to be realized in America.

³⁵ Cf. Regis (1999).

³⁶ My reading places Imlay’s *Description* in the context of writing about North America and concentrates on its contribution to representational practices. This departs from Verhoeven (2008) who suggests that “Imlay’s *Topographical Description* should first and foremost be read and interpreted within [the] wider intellectual context, and textual genealogy, of Britain’s national debate of the early 1790s – rather than within the

Emigration to this country were mostly from the back parts of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, until 1784: in which year many officers, who had served in the American army during the late war, came out with their families. [...] Travellers or emigrants take different methods of transporting their baggage, goods, or furniture, from the places they may be at to the Ohio, according to circumstances, or their object of coming to the country. For instance, if a man is travelling only for curiosity, or has no family or goods to remove, his best way would be to purchase horses, and take his route through the wilderness; but provided he has a family, or goods of any sort to remove, his best way, then, would be to purchase a waggon and team of horses to carry his property to Redstone old fort, or to Pittsburg, [...]. A good waggon will cost, at Philadelphia, about 101 (I shall reckon everything in sterling money for your greater convenience) [...]. Such are the expenses to be incurred in travelling to this country by Redstone and Pittsburg. (168–172)

Presenting itself as a topographical description in an epistolary style (addressed to an unknown British citizen), the text is not constructed as a narrative about a journey and it is not framed as a traveler's autobiographical account. However, like Filson's *Kentucke*, the narrative suggests that the implied reader assembles Imlay's chapters similar to a travel book that gives information and guidance. The chapters lead through the history and present state of the so-called Western territory. With this diachronic and synchronic exploratory journey, Imlay addresses readers who are considering settling in the Western territory. The descriptions are presented as being predominantly based on either the author's experience in the territory or on the author's research.

Particularly the sections on the history of the settlement of the territory acquire an allegorical quality, as they appear structured as a narrative about the nation-building process of the Union in which the narrator and reader are supposed to take part. Imlay's *Topographical Description* suggests the journey of the nation, starting out, as the table of contents informs the reader, with the origins of the Native American tribes leading to the "Plan of

narrow confines of the genre of American travel writing and topography per se" (95). For further details on the intellectual transatlantic discourse of Imlay's writing cf. Verhoeven's (2008) comprehensive study.

Association of the North American Land Company,” to the establishment of the independent republic.

On the title page the author is introduced by reference to events and activities that, at the time of publication, were considered to be of national significance: “By Gilbert Imlay, A Captain in the American Army during the War, and Commissioner for laying out Lands in the Back Settlements.” Thus the title page sets the following description in relation to two events and activities: the American revolution and land surveying. These two issues are not only discussed by the author but also structure the book. The national emergence is presented as tightly intertwined with a discourse of property, acquisition, and conquering. While the topographical aspect of the text takes up questions of territorial expansion, settlement, and land speculation, the discursive linking of the text emphasizes the post-revolutionary status of the independent republic and comments on the gains and weaknesses of the newly established political system (Imlay, for example, considers the continuing slave trade a mistake).

A few chapters contain documents that manifest the present status quo of the Western territories of the U.S. and the relations to Indian tribes and to European colonial empires in North America: Chapter XII, for example, “Treaty concluded between the United States of America and the Crown of Spain, for the free Navigation of the Mississippi,” and chapter XIII “Plan of Association of the North American Land Company, &c.” Imlay refers to other authors and intellectual debates of his time. Some references consist of rather long excerpts or reprints, as for example, Filson’s famous narrative of the life of Daniel Boone which is added in the second edition of *Topographical Description*. But Imlay also discusses the work of other authors. Most of these authors had already gained particular significance in the nation-building process. Chapter VII, for example, reprints an essay written by Benjamin Franklin (who died three years before the publication of Imlay’s book): “Remarks for the Information of those who wish to become Settlers in America, by Dr. Franklin.”

Imlay contextualizes his description of the Western territory in transatlantic social and political history. The first letter, marked as

being written from Kentucky,³⁷ addresses transatlantic relations before adding information on the history of Kentucky (11):

While ignorance continued to darken the horizon of Europe, priestcraft seems to have forced fetters for the human mind, and, in the security of its own omnipotence, to have given a stamp to the writings and opinions of men, that rivetted the tyranny of those ingenious sophists – The consequence has been lamentable in the extreme.

There are areas favourable to the rise of new governments; and though nature is governed by invariable laws, the fortunes of men and states appear frequently under the dominion of chances: but happily for mankind, when the American empire was forming, philosophy pervaded the genius of Europe, and the radiance of her features moulded the minds of men into a more rational order. (11)

Imlay's celebration of the American empire and U.S. expansionism is expressed in similarly patriotic rhetoric as in Filson's *Kentucky*:

[...] posterity will not deem it extraordinary, should they find the country settled quite across to the Pacific Ocean in less than another century. (vii)

Over the major parts of the book, the epistolary narrator answers questions posed by “Mr. Thomas Cooper, late of Manchester” (15):³⁸

[...] You ask what appear to me to be the general inducements to people to quit England for America? In my mind, the first and principal feature is, the total absence of anxiety respecting the future success of family. There is little fault to find with the government of America, either in principle or in practice [...]. (183)

³⁷ Verhoeven (2008) explains that “[d]espite the text’s claim that the letters were written from Kentucky, internal evidence suggests that the book was written (at least in part, but probably in its entirety) long after the author had left both Kentucky and America in the course of 1787” (234). For details see Verhoeven (2008), 94–96 and 234.

³⁸ Verhoeven (2008) highlights that Imlay’s “alter ego is clearly based on Crèvecoeur’s narrator, Farmer James” (96).

The letters contain popular rhetoric of the American republic: “The government is the government *of* the people, and *for* the people” (183). The government of the U.S. is explained to the British addressee, as in Letter VIII: “Our laws and government have for their basis the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. Liberty, security of person and property, ...” (205). We also repeatedly find explanations of democratic principles: “The first object of every free government is security of person and property...” (215)

What is particularly remarkable as regards Imlay’s *Description* is its inclusion of the topic of abolitionism and a discussion of New World slavery. His comments on the issue of New World slavery link the publication to the political and intellectual British American world of the time. Imlay introduces the topic by arguing that sugar production without slavery, as practiced in India, Batavia, and China, is more efficient. He quotes from a letter by Benjamin Rush who refers to comments by a Mr Botham on the mode of cultivating a sugar plantation in the East Indies:

Having been for two years in the English and French West Indian islands, and since conducted sugar estates in the East Indies, before the abolition of the slave trade was agitated in parliament, it may be desirable to know that sugar of a superior quality and inferior price, to that in our islands, is produced in the East Indies; that the culture of the cane, the manufacture of the sugar and arrack, is, with these material advantages, carried on by free people. (159)

In letter IX, Imlay expresses understanding for those who “left off the use of West India produce, in consequence of your parliament not having adopted any mode of effecting the abolition of the slave trade” (221). In a footnote he adds a criticism of the policies of Kentucky in this respect: “The constitution of Kentucky expressly forbids the legislature to interfere in any way whatever in the abolition of slavery” (221). Imlay then criticizes Jefferson’s comments on Africans in *Notes*:

I have been ashamed, in reading Mr. Jefferson’s book, to see, from one of the most enlightened and benevolent of my countrymen, the disgraceful prejudices he entertains against the unfortunate negroes. (222)

Imlay even discusses Jefferson's comments on the writing and intellectual capacities of Phillis Wheatley and Ignatius Sancho: "[...] his criticism is marked by prejudice" (230). Exposing the contradiction between Jefferson's enlightened intellectualism and his pejorative and abject ideas on Africans, Imlay articulates harsh and daring criticism of Jefferson's – by today infamous – comparison of Africans and the orang-outang in *Notes*: "non-sense!" (231).³⁹

This discussion of New World slavery and his engagement with Jefferson's racism distinguishes his topography from similar contemporary publications. The topic of slavery and the status of African Americans in the new republic does not only explicitly politicize his discourse but also indicates a maturing of the domestic imagination in travel writing: while Filson's *Kentucky* is characterized by unbroken patriotic imagery that does not reflect on social deficiencies of the new republic, Imlay's national imagination, albeit celebratory, shows fissures when it comes to the topic of slavery. Such internal controversies and differences become more prevalent in American travel writing of the 1790s and the following decades.

4.4. Anne Newport Royall: Domesticated Vistas

Between 1826 and 1831 Anne Newport Royall (1769–1854) published ten reports on her travels in different regions of the United States. Royall was born in Baltimore and grew up on the western frontier of Pennsylvania. After the death of her father, she moved with her mother to western Virginia where at the age of 16 she and her mother were employed in the household of the wealthy William Royall who later became her husband. After William Royall's death in 1812 his family led a court case against Royall, disclaiming her marriage. After seven years, her husband's will was nullified. This loss of financial support forced her to test new career options. In her fifties Royall started to travel in the United States and to write about it. This was the beginning of her career as a newspaperwoman. While living in Washington she edited two newspapers: *Paul Pry* (1831–1836) and *The Huntress*

³⁹ On Buffon and the orang-outang see Meisen (2008), 135–136.

(1836–1854) which both concentrated on investigative journalism in the field of politics, with a particular emphasis on issues of corruption. Royall published the novel *The Tennessean* (1827) and ten travel books, of which the first, entitled *Sketches of History, Life and Manners in the United States*, was published in 1826.⁴⁰

Her travel reports are particularly remarkable for two reasons. First, Royall is not just considered to be the first female journalist in the United States, but she was also the most read American woman travel writer of the first third of the nineteenth century. Second, stylistically her travel writing introduces a personal tone that positions the author in cultural and political controversies. The reports are clearly marked as the product of a professional writer who aims at participating in public discourse. As such she continues the discursive style of Jefferson's *Notes* and Imlay's *Topographical Description*, without, however, carrying forward their promotional transatlantic perspective of highlighting differences between the United States and Europe. Rather than concentrating on frontier regions, she mostly writes about settled regions and urban centers of the United States. This focus shows a stylistic proximity to Timothy Dwight's (1821–22) unadorned observations of New England.⁴¹ Dwight celebrates the "cultivated landscape and domesticated vistas" (Jehlen 128). On the first pages of his four-volume travel report, Dwight explains his views on American life as experienced in New England and New York:

Adventures, of all kinds, must be rare in a country perfectly quiet, and orderly, in its state of society. In a series of journeys, sufficiently extensive to have carried me two thirds of the distance round the globe, I have not met with one. Nearly every man, whom I have seen, was calmly pursuing the sober business of peaceful life; and

⁴⁰ On Royall's biography, see Humphrey (1996).

⁴¹ Timothy Dwight's four-volume *Travels in New-England and New-York*, posthumously published in 1821 and 1822, presents itself explicitly as commenting on the nation-building process. Spears (1989) emphasizes the contrast between Dwight's representation of American society and the writing on unsettled regions: "In contrast to the emerging wilderness myth described by Richard Slotkin, Dwight's transcendent vision focused primarily on settled agrarian America" (48).

the history of my excursion was literally confined to the breakfast, dinner and supper of the day. (1: 14)⁴²

However, in contrast to these precursors, Royall primarily discusses social weak points and highlights such issues as gender differences in the social and cultural life of the U.S. The choice of these topics indicates how securely established American society is perceived in the 1820s. Royall's writing represents and imagines the nation by exploring internal differences, social injustices, and regional differences, with a broad American public as her implied reader. Thus, she substitutes an implied American reader for the European addressee of earlier reports that were often written in epistolary style (as for example, by Jefferson and Imlay). This focus on domestic social life, however, is embedded in the promotion of literary nationalism which Royall repeatedly addresses. Thus her travel writing continues the thread of American distinctness which characterized the national imagination of her chosen literary format since Carver's creole positioning of the 1770s.

Royall's reports also continue a tradition of autobiographical writing by women in America that is structured by journeys; in this regard, the colonial texts by Mary Rowlandson and Sarah Kemble Knight can be seen as precursors.⁴³ However, Royall does not provide narratives of captivity or victimhood – as the tradition of captivity narratives framed women's experiences in America. In contrast to the genteel writing of Knight's travel diary, Royall's reports were written for publication, were published, and were even broadly read during the author's lifetime. Considering this thematic redirection of travel writing and the explicit inscription in public discourse, Royall's travel reports are part of the tradition of travel reports on journeys in settled territory that can be traced from Knight (1704/05), to Hamilton (1744), to Dwight (1821–22). Her writing does not show characteristics of such popular eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century styles of travel writing as the promotional mode, natural history, or narratives of exploration. Rather, her writing is personal and can be read as indicating the rising influence of touristic mobility. In this sense, Royall

⁴² See Spengemann (1977) on Dwight's introduction (46).

⁴³ On Rowlandson and Knight, see my comments in chapter 2.2.

continues Dwight's provincial focus which is less interested in discovering 'newness' in America than exploring established patterns of social and economic life, and in describing landscapes of civilization in settled regions (rather than wilderness).

Royall's first book of travels uses the genre category of the sketch in the title (*Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States*). This choice of title aptly indicates the anecdotal and informal style of writing. However, despite the use of the genre category, the narrative is chronologically structured like a journal, reporting on Royall's journey from Alabama to New Haven, Connecticut. There are no numerically distinguished chapters. Instead, the narrative is structured according to places and regions visited on the journey. The focus on cities and regions is subdivided by thematic paragraphs that are indicated by brief titles which are highlighted in italics, such as *Climate, Manners and Appearance, History, General Remarks, Literary Men, Orphans' Asylums*. A few of these categories reoccur in many of the geographically focused sections.

Royall's *Sketches* – and her entire oeuvre of travel writing – combines an emphatic personal tone with a thematic interest in public institutions. In the first paragraph, Royall legitimizes her journey and her act of writing about the journey. She mentions health problems and touristic distraction next to her engagement in the contemporary scene of travel writing by “journalists” (2). Thus, very private activities are contextualized in different forms of public discourse:

Having been advised to try the mineral waters in Virginia for my health, I set out on horseback from St. Stephens, in Alabama, July the 1st, 1823, intending to take the stage at Huntsville. With a view to divert my mind from melancholy reflections, to which it was disposed from ill health, I resolved to note everything during my journey, worthy of remark, and commit it to writing, and to draw amusement and instruction from every source. In doing this, I shall not imitate most journalists, in such remarks as “cloudy, or fair morning,” and where we stop, dates, &c. This is all the preface I deem necessary. (2)

Royall describes her stagecoach acquaintances and sketches her encounters in taverns and other places, commenting in detail on

the lives and activities of people she meets. Some of these descriptions use direct speech and vernacular language and capture local characteristics. For instance, Washington is represented as a city of vice:

[...] there are a number of strangers who flock to Washington during the sessions of Congress, with a view of begging money from the members; and so great is the infatuation of those unfortunate creatures, that they will implore even a cent in the most emphatic language. They will sell the coat off their back and hat off their heads to purchase drink. (159)

Royall links such observations to comments on the conduct of politics in the capitol: “Here an important question might be asked, where a man of sound principles is promoted to office, does he not eventually become corrupt?” (164).

Such narrative strategies give parts of the book the appearance of anecdotes. Royall’s focus in such sketches of regional life is on different social characters, such as the “Yankee” (24), Germans (26, 31), the Kentuckian (38), the Welsh woman (48), slaves (104), the American lady (169). This focus represents American society as being complex and heterogenous, marked by different immigrant groups and social classes. Royall’s narrative thus highlights the ethnic diversity of U.S. society in a way that was not yet common in American writing.⁴⁴

Next to a strong focus on culture and society, American nature and landscapes are made a topic of her narrative. As standard repertoire of American travel writing since the publication of Jefferson’s *Notes*, Royall repeatedly describes the picturesqueness of “natural bridges” (78). She uses such references to American politicians, intellectuals, and scholars for constructing a specifically American intertextuality, as if wanting to highlight the plethora of relevant American history:

What Mr. Jefferson said of the natural bridge, might with as much propriety be said of Peale’s museum, viz. that it was worth a trip across the Atlantic. Here are 1100 birds of different kinds, 230 quadrupeds, 3450 insects, fish, wax figures, and what was very pleasing to me, 200 portraits of our most distinguished men. (212)

⁴⁴ See Shuffelton (1996).

Throughout the report includes comment on encounters with famous public figures, as for example in New York, Royall adds a section on “Literary Men” (264):

I have little to say of Mr. Cooper, having formed no acquaintance with him. I never saw him but once, which happened in a bookstore, where he was sitting reading a newspaper. [...] The author of the *Pioneers*, &c. would neither gain or lose by anything I could possibly say of him – his fame having placed him far beyond the range of my strictures.

Miss Sedgwick, also a native of New York, is an authoress of some reputation; she is the author of *New England Tales*, and *Redwood*. I had the pleasure of seeing her once, but formed no acquaintance. [...] (266)

Royall’s style of writing and engagement with controversial issues, such as her discussion on American institutions of higher education (126–130), led such eminent figures as John Quincy Adams to describe her as a “virago errant in enchanted armor.”⁴⁵ Such ambivalent and gendered celebration positions Royall outside the regular and mainstream parameters of American patriarchal society. Royall’s queer position in the discourse of authorship of her times – addressed by contemporary commentators as an outsider, and as an unconventional female voice in public discourse – and her explicit critical political statements are contrasted by the exposed patriotic voice of her reports. Her comments on the United States as a society in the global context do not only construct a clear distinction between domestic and foreign but also endorse literary nationalism. Royall condemns the domination of the American publishing market and intellectual life by European, foremostly English, authors. Royall places her own writing in the transatlantic context and the emerging literary nationalism of the U.S. when complaining about the dominance of “foreign literature” (200) on the American market:

We aspire to great actions, we pride ourselves upon being a great nation; will we then neglect the growing genius of our country, is it alone unworthy our regard? [...] I shall only further observe,

⁴⁵ Quoted in Humphrey (1996), 352–353.

that all our efforts ought to go hand in hand, to the grand design of national excellence. (200–201)

Her description of society is embedded in a patriotic mode, emphasizing national imagery, such as the use of the national flag (113), Fourth of July celebrations (167), or references to singular “worthy patriots” (99). In her sections on Philadelphia, for example, she praises the achievements and personality of George Washington:

Matchless man! what greatness of soul! what an example of human excellence hast thou set to an admiring world! But to describe and to feel, are two very different things. Proud America! well mayest thou boast, since thou hast given birth to Washington, the greatest among the great of human beings! (205)

Such patriotic rhetoric as we find it similarly in early travel reports on the United States and topographies, such as John Filson’s and Zebulon Pike’s, however, is complicated by Royall’s discussion of political controversies and competing positions in the cultural and social life of the U.S. In contrast to earlier patriotic imagery and style in American topographies (e.g. by Jefferson, Filson and Imlay, as discussed in this chapter) Royall’s juxtaposing of patriotism and critical comments on domestic politics and social phenomena shows how consolidated the nation-building process, national consciousness, and national imagery were in the late 1820s.

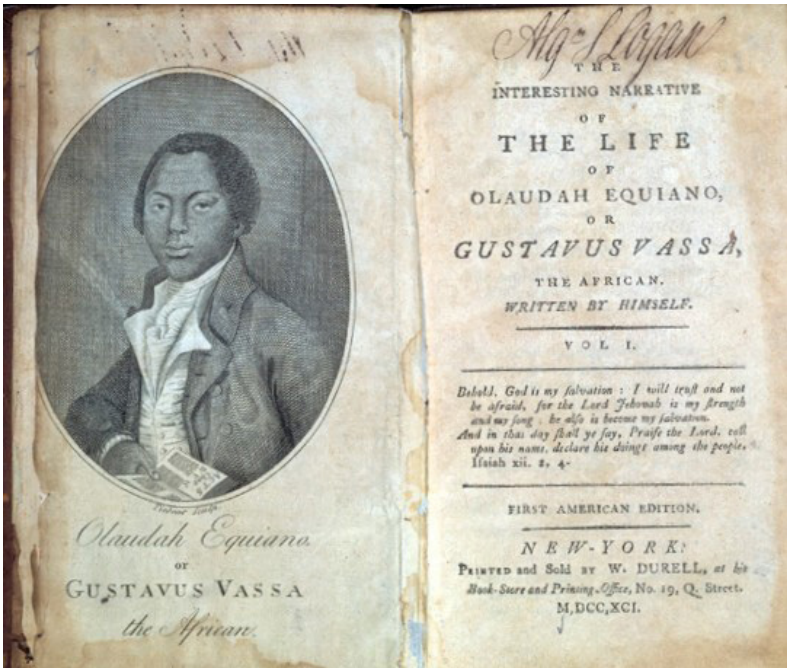


Figure 3: From *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York: W. Durrell, 1791).

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V. Fundamental Entanglements: Africa and the New Nation

5.1. America and Circum-Atlantic Mobility

Columbus' journeys and his conquest of Hispaniola can be seen as one of the initial moments of modernity, as Tzvetan Todorov (1992) and others have shown. They set the starting point not only of what Europeans celebrated as the discovery of a New World, but furthermore of global social and cultural transformations, and a new world order, of which the founding of the United States is part.

The transatlantic contact scenario inspired Columbus to come to a succession of three highly significant conclusions: (1) he found paradise, (2) the indigenous people should be converted to Christianity, and (3) the islands should be exploited in form of an economy of slavery. On his third journey across the Atlantic, under the impression of being in India, Columbus, trying to read the alien world he faces, notes in his diary that he thinks he has discovered paradise. He writes: “grandes indicios son estos del parayso terrenal.”¹ Columbus tried to satisfy the Catholic monarchs of Spain, who had financed his journeys, by emphasizing that he encountered many “savages” that the Spanish crown should convert to Christianity. However, this incentive did not suffice to convince the monarchs to continue financing his expeditions:

¹ In Cecil Jane (1988), 36 and 39; see also 40–47.

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Columbus was in need of economic gains which prompted his desperate search for gold. Being frustrated by the limited amount of exploitable goods he found (particularly little gold), Columbus made a proposal that would remain a characteristic and a predicament of the circum-Atlantic world for centuries to come: Columbus proposed to export natives of Hispaniola to work as slaves in Spain. This idea had already been mentioned in his first letter to the kings, as the historian Samuel Eliot Morison (1983) writes: “[Columbus] develops the idea [...] that Carib [...] slaves might be very profitable to export from Hispaniola, and that men might be employed to raid the Caribbean Islands with that object in mind” (110). However, as it turned out, the Caribbean natives were not exported. Rather, they were enslaved in the very place that Columbus had initially described as paradise, the Caribbean. Morison writes about the devastating result of this first episode of slavery in the New World:

By 1508 a census showed 60,000 of the estimated 1492 population of 250,000 still alive, although the Bahamas and Cuba had been raided to obtain more slaves. Fifty years later, not 500 remained. The cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors, this, as we know, eventually resulted in complete genocide [of the indigenous population of the Caribbean islands]. (129)

Thus, considering these first outcomes of transatlantic contact and of Atlantic modernity, there are two aspects that are particularly significant: (1) the perception of America as paradise and (2) slavery as a method of production in the European conqueror’s mind. In the centuries after first contact, as we know, these two aspects acquired different meanings and resulted in very different social conditions in the various regions of the Americas. In the intellectual discourse of British colonial North America and later the U.S., ‘America’ and the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, came to signify, similar to Columbus’ paradise, places of freedom, newness, and progress;² however, America also became a place of

² In the mid-nineteenth century, Henry David Thoreau (2002), for example, frames the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean from Europe in terms of a

enslavement, exploitation and collective trauma for others. While the political and anticolonial rhetoric of the American Revolution, in the tradition of the Enlightenment, clearly opposed human slavery and exploitation, it did not prohibit the enslavement of Africans.³ Thus, the symbolism, the cultural mythology, and rhetorical power of the New World in the West are contradicted by the social reality of slavery and the slave trade. During the eighteenth century, the slave trade was one of the most productive sources of revenue for the English economy. So important and productive was this industry that it received not only national regulation and protection from England but also a national subsidy.⁴ In the eighteenth century, this slave trade economy persisted while an ever-increasing humanitarian spirit of cosmopolitanism and liberation emerged.

In the past decades, transnational approaches to American history have challenged the glorification of the westward movement. Revisionists depart from the dominant representation of the Atlantic Ocean as a desired space marked by the immigrants' passage to freedom. Instead, they explore the Atlantic Ocean as the ghastly location of the slave trade between the Americas, Europe, and West Africa. From such perspectives, the crossings

passage to freedom: "The Atlantic is a Lethean stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions" (70). The crossing of the Atlantic Ocean is imagined as a linear crossing from East to West, like a naturally given and formed current that leads directly to liberation, redefinition, and progress. However, although this kind of rhetoric distances America from Europe, on another level, it remains fully European: Thoreau's "we" is referring to the Euro-American experience of *coming to* America and of *becoming* American. For this group, generally speaking, it was true: migration was the "outcome of a desperate individual choice" (35), as Oscar Handlin (1951) writes in his influential study of European immigration to the USA. On the ocean in the American imagination, see Benesch et al. (2004).

³ Kelleter (2002) highlights that there was opposition from the beginning of the revolutionary struggles (672), and in the later nineteenth century, radical abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison referred to the U.S. constitution as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell" and in 1854 he burned a copy of the constitution, commenting the act with the statement: "So perish all compromise with tyranny!" (qtd. in Kelleter 671).

⁴ See Eva Beatrice Dykes, in Sollors, *Equiano*, 210.

of ideas, peoples, and cultures over the Atlantic are seen in much more complex ways than the long-dominant and simplifying notion of the East-West movement as a form of linear progress suggested. In our contemporary Atlantic Studies approaches, the global entanglements of the social, economic, and cultural formation of the United States are given a central and even constitutive position. The U.S. is not perceived as an isolated and exceptional ‘City Upon a Hill’ but rather a society connected not only to European but also to African and Caribbean societies. One such central contradiction of the circum-Atlantic space is the persistent simultaneity of the discourse of Enlightenment ideals of freedom and the economy of the slave trade and of slavery.

Many theories of modernization are built on the specific European and European-American historical experiences of movement, migration, and traveling. For example, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1996) describes “modern life as pilgrimage” (Paul, 28), and makes the westward movement of Europeans and Americans a trope for global modernity. Iain Chambers (1994) challenges such a notion of modernity:

[T]he birth of modernity does not lie unilaterally in the history of European expansion and the modalities of remaking the world in its own image – the Industrial Revolution, capitalism, representative democracy – but equally lies in the savage repression of ethnic, religious and cultural alterity, in the brutality of the black African diaspora, the Atlantic racist slave system, ethnic pogroms and the imperial sacking of the globe that made its history, my history, the history of modernity and ‘progress’, possible. (28)

Paul Gilroy’s study *The Black Atlantic* (1993) emphasizes and illustrates that Atlantic history should not primarily be seen as a history of Europe and America, but just as much as a history of the African diaspora. The history of slavery, the slave trade, and enforced migration did not only help finance the industrial revolution but – as Gilroy argues – also established a transnational Black cultural space. Similarly, the historian Jürgen Osterhammel (2000) argues that the Atlantic world, until the mid-nineteenth century was bound by slavery. Slavery – and

the fight against slavery and the slave trade –, Osterhammel goes on, were of *fundamental* importance for the development of, as he calls it, the civilization of the West (16). However, the influence of the history of the slave trade on Enlightenment thinking, the history of modern democracy, and contemporary societies, has, according to Osterhammel, not been sufficiently examined. Rather, the “civilization of the West” (Osterhammel) has, until more recently, predominantly been seen as a product of European and American intellectual history – and, at least in popular discourse, is still represented this way. Considering the history of slavery, Osterhammel, Gilroy, and other scholars emphasize that concepts such as multiple modernities or peripheral modernities help in analyzing contradictions of the “civilization of the West”. The following readings of travel reports, slave narratives, and fictional renderings of transatlantic mobility show how the slave trade established a fundamental entanglement of the U.S. with Africa.

The discursive nation-building process of the United States of America was not only shaped by privileged white Anglo-Saxon male contributors but just as much by female authors and marginalized ethnic groups. In poetry, for example, the popular Rising Glory poetry stands next to Phillis Wheatley’s poems, such as “On Being Brought From Africa to America” which was published in 1773.⁵ Herman Melville’s novella “Benito Cereno”

⁵ The poetry by Phillis Wheatley was first published in the early 1770s: “An Elegiac Poem, On the Death of . . . George Whitefield” (Boston, 1770), “Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral” (London, 1773), “To His Excellency General Washington” (Providence, 1775).

Further anglophone Black Writing of the Enlightenment: Banneker, Benjamin. *Copy of a Letter From Benjamin Banneker to the Secretary of State, With His Answer* (Philadelphia, 1792); Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah. *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain, by Ottobah Cugoano, A Native African* (London, 1787); Gronniosaw, James Albert. *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, An African Prince, As Related by Himself* (Bath, 1772); Hammon, Briton. *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, A Negro Man* (Boston, 1760); Hammon, Jupiter. “An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley, Ethiopian Poetess” (Hartford,

(1855) of the antebellum period indicates how the question of slavery and the slave trade, almost eighty years after the Declaration of Independence still pervaded narratives of transatlantic encounters. Such literary texts by Wheatley and Melville negotiate topics of enslavement, colonialism, liberation, and mobility that are each shown as part of the multiple entanglements of the United States in international and transatlantic relations. The United States are shown as being part of the history of the Atlantic world – that is, as part of discursive exchanges between Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Thus, as Osterhammel, Gilroy, and others have shown, Columbus's journeys west of the Iberian peninsula turned the Atlantic Ocean into a meeting ground of Africa, Europe, and America. By the late eighteenth century, the Atlantic Ocean had become a space of global exchanges, particularly through the maritime trade, the whaling industry, botany, and the slave trade. In the late eighteenth century, these different practices of inter-continental trade coexisted and were affected by Enlightenment thinking and political upheavals. The circum-Atlantic region became the arena of revolutions, revolts, and social upheaval that had a lasting impact not merely on transatlantic history but on world history: the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Revolution in Santo Domingo. In this context, the history and continuing practice of slavery manifested as a fundamental contradiction of the new nation which, after all, emerged as the first republic of the Americas.

1778); Jea, John. *Life, History, and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea, the African Preacher, Compiled and Written by Himself* (1815); King, Boston. *Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher. Written by Himself, during his Residence at Kingswood-School* (London, 1798); Marrant, John. *A Narrative of the Lord's wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black* (London, 1785); Sancho, Ignatius. *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African, in Two Volumes. To Which are Prefixed, Memoirs of His Life* (London, 1782); Smith, Venture. *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa: But resident above sixty years in the United States of America. Related by Himself* (New London, Conn., 1798); Williams, Francis. "An Ode" (London, 1774).

5.2. Olaudah Equiano and Transatlantic Imagination

Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, published in London in 1789⁶, one of the earliest literary accounts of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade written by a former slave, is a product of, and documents, contacts, exchanges, and circulations of humans, cultures, and ideas in the Atlantic world. The book was reprinted in New York in 1791 and it found an enthusiastic readership in the United States. Many new editions followed throughout the nineteenth century. Equiano's slave narrative explicitly addresses such issues as abolition and universal human rights ("To the honour of humanity," 78) and it appropriates discourses of the author's time, such as Enlightenment ideas of freedom, cultural difference, and religious practice, for framing a textual account of the "Atlantic space of interaction" (Osterhammel).⁷ Equiano's narrative provides a symbolic mapping of the circum-Atlantic region, contradicting utopian New World discourse and the celebratory national imagination as we find it expressed in many travel narratives and topographies of the late eighteenth century, such as Filson's, Jefferson's, and Imlay's. Equiano's *Narrative* further provides a rare subaltern critique of the circum-Atlantic dominant mindset and economy. It is an expression of what Bruce Robbins (1998) refers to as "actually existing cosmopolitanism" (2), a coerced form of identification beyond a national frame. Although Equiano's *Narrative* speaks from the position of those who were generally excluded from print culture, the *Narrative* also documents how its author adapted to religious and cultural environments and how he had to compromise.

⁶ The source reference is Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*. Ed. Werner Sollors. New York and London: Norton, 2001.

⁷ Osterhammel (2009) uses the term "atlantischer Interaktionsraum" in the German publication. He explains:

Mit der Entdeckung, Eroberung und Besiedlung der Europa zugewandten Küstenzonen des amerikanischen Kontinents und der gleichzeitigen punktuellen Festsetzung von Europäern entlang der westlichen Küsten Afrikas entstand im 16. Jahrhundert als historisches Novum ein atlantischer Interaktionsraum. (23)

Considering Equiano's cultural and economic politics, his writing shows that – as Srinivas Aravamudan (1999) says about the “tropicopolitan” – subaltern resistance should not be understood as “completely outside of discourses of domination” (6).⁸

The *Interesting Narrative* shows many characteristics of the spiritual autobiography, and the memoir – as Equiano himself refers to his narrative. As a spiritual autobiography, the text hints at the contradiction between the Christian faith and the practice of African slavery. This contradiction was addressed by many early abolitionists, as for example the Philadelphia Quaker John Woolman, who insisted that all humans are of ‘one blood’, and the Philadelphia-based educator Anthony Benezet. Both authors discuss the effects of slaveholding on the white population of slave-holding societies.⁹ The *Interesting Narrative* is commonly read as slave narrative, a genre becoming popular in abolitionist circles in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ *The Interesting Narrative* recounts Equiano's life, mostly chronologically, from his birth in 1745 in a village in what is now Nigeria until the moment of writing his memoirs in the late 1780s in England. Given that Equiano, after manumission, worked in the merchant marine, the book has also been read as a narrative of a black merchant

⁸ On the concept of the “tropicopolitan”, see chapter 1.1 of this study. On notions of cosmopolitanism see chapter 1.4.

⁹ See Sollors (2001), xvii. Sollors explains that Quakers are considered the earliest religious group to protest effectively against the slave system. As early as 1671 George Fox, their founder, wrote:

Respecting the Negroes, I desired them [i.e. the ‘Friends’] to endeavor to train them up in the fear of God, as well those that were bought with their money as those that were born in their families [...] I desired also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their Negroes, and not use cruelty toward them as the manner of some hath been and is, and that after certain years of servitude they should set them free.” (qtd. in Dykes 1942 [2001], 211)

¹⁰ The historian Vincent Carretta (2003) explains the goals of early abolitionism:

Although the sustained political struggle to end the slave trade (and later slavery itself) in the British Empire did not begin until 1787, slavery was a topic of public discussion throughout the century. [...] It should be noted that abolition in the eighteenth-century British context almost always refers to abolition of the trade in slaves from Africa to the remaining British colonies in the West Indies, not to the abolition of the institution of slavery itself, though many of the slave-trade abolitionists no doubt saw slavery as the ultimate target. (Carretta, 10).

mariner.¹¹ As Equiano frames these different aspects in terms of an ongoing journey crisscrossing the Atlantic Ocean in different directions, as a slave as well as a free black man, the *Interesting Narrative* certainly overlaps with conventions of travel writing. Although Equiano's journey is initially an enforced one, nonetheless his representation of the transatlantic mobility in his later life is partly shown as a self-determined act of choice. The description of his ongoing journey suggests a parallel to his life and identity construction that are shown to be in flux and transcultural but anchored in his strong Christian beliefs.

Equiano is kidnapped by African slavers and taken to a British slave ship in 1756. He is then transported first to Barbados in the Caribbean and later to a plantation in Virginia. The following year he is bought by a British naval officer, who names him Gustavus Vassa and takes him to England. For the following four years, he serves with his master in the British navy during the Seven Years' War between England and France which takes him to Nova Scotia (Canada). He is present at the siege of Fort Louisburg on Cape Breton Island. Eventually, he is sold to a Quaker merchant from Philadelphia, Robert King, who carries on much of his business in the West Indies. King regularly trades in "live cargo" of slaves and Equiano is involved in these trading activities. In fact, Equiano works and trades for his master between the West Indies and mainland British colonies. In 1766 his Quaker master makes it possible for Equiano to purchase his freedom. He sails for London. In the following years, he continues traveling across the Atlantic Ocean. Among other journeys, he participates in an expedition to the Arctic in 1773, and to the Mosquito Coast in today's Nicaragua where he encounters and lives among indigenous people. Although by then a free man, the narrator recounts many incidents where he risked being enslaved anew in the Caribbean and in Central America. The narrative ends with references to his activities in the British and American abolitionist movements to end the slave trade.

As with many travel reports of the time, contemporary readers challenged the authenticity of Equiano's writing. Pro-slavery apologists questioned *Interesting Narrative's* veracity, attacking in

¹¹ See David Kazanjian (2003), 4 and 35–88, also Kazanjian (2000).

particular, Equiano's claim to have been born in Africa. Recently this question has been debated anew as the historian of slavery, Vincent Carretta (1999 and 2003), seems to have found proof that Equiano was not born in Africa but in South Carolina. As a travel narrative, *The Interesting Narrative* provides a literary representation and negotiation of central issues of Atlantic history: slavery, slave trade, colonialism, and encounters between regions, peoples, and cultures. It is particularly remarkable that Equiano gives a descriptive account of the international slave trade of the late eighteenth century. Most of the later, nineteenth-century American slave narratives concentrate on the domestic slave trade and less on international entanglements and the transatlantic slave trade.

Critics have argued that Equiano's *Narrative* established the genre conventions of the slave narrative.¹² Henry Louis Gates (1988) writes:

It became the prototype of the nineteenth-century slave narrative, best exemplified in the works of Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Harriet Jacobs. It was Equiano whose text served to create a model that other ex-slaves would imitate. From his subtitle, "Written by Himself" and a signed engraving of the black author holding an open text (the Bible) in his lap, to more subtle rhetorical strategies such as the overlapping of the slave's journey to freedom and his simultaneous journey from orality to literacy, Equiano's strategies of self-representation and rhetorical representation strongly influenced later slave narratives. (153)¹³

The advertising of the *Interesting Narrative* in an edition from 1838 – published by Isaac Knapp, the Boston book publisher and printer of Garrison's *Liberator* – illustrates literary aspects that contributed to making the narrative such a successful book. The keywords used in the advertising emphasize that the patterns of reception were not only political and moral but were also inspired by the expectation of a narrative of adventure and exploration:

¹² See Maria Dietrich (1986).

¹³ Sollors (2001) explains that Equiano's *Narrative* may not have been the ideal prototype of the American slave narrative, as it was neither written by an American, nor by an author in enslavement. It participated in the "eighteenth-century project of self-representation in autobiographical writing" and it showed an author who was "proud of Africa" (xxvii).

“The variety of romantic adventures in the experience of this noble savage who had passed through a great variety of wonderful scenes, which give his narrative an interest scarcely surpassed by *Robinson Crusoe*” (Marion Wilson Starling 1988, 221).¹⁴ There is a good case to believe that these patterns of reading were similar when the text was first published in 1789. As Sollors remarks, the 1838 edition emphasized the same features that had been advertised by London, Dublin, and Rotterdam presses in the 1790s (cf. title page of first American edition, figure 3, p. 166).

As a literary response to the experience of unfreedom, Equiano employs writing for defining himself, as a form of self-definition. The narrative starts with “I believe,” emphasizing the first person as if counteracting the control, dominance, and oppression of himself by others. As the reader learns in the subsequent chapters, Equiano goes through different definitions by others, he is made into a marketable object, he is seen as a noble savage and he is renamed by others at their will: Gustavus Vassa (referring to a Swedish aristocrat), Michael, Jacob, Captain (111). Self-definition through reading and writing is a recurrent topic throughout the book. Manumission is discussed in connection with alphabetization and the act of writing. While giving account of the joyful feelings when the option of buying his own freedom was offered, Equiano mentions his fascination for reading and writing:

I thought now of nothing but being freed, and working for myself, and thereby getting money to enable me to get a good education; for I always had a great desire to be able at least to read and write; and while I was on ship-board I had endeavoured to improve myself in both. (67)

However, the textual freedom he finds in the act of writing remains within the limits of certain historical contexts, discourses of his time, and limitations of the genre conventions (slave narrative, travel narrative, memoir). In this sense, the narrative performs what Pratt defines as autoethnography. Pratt argues that autoethnographic writing subverts the colonialist European privilege

¹⁴ On the noble savage, see Eva Beatrice Dykes (1942), 3, repr. in Sollors (2001), 212.

of representation by a partial collaboration with the laws of literary genres:

If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations. (7)

In her understanding, autoethnographic texts appropriate and re-write certain colonialist styles and formats of writing. Such a view of anticolonial writing stresses the subversive strategies of partial participation in dominant discourses. In this sense, Equiano's text appropriates and transforms conventions of abolitionist writing, the spiritual autobiography, and the travel report.

Equiano, for example, quotes prominent abolitionists and, in so doing, "signals his participation in this tradition of anti-slave-trade and antislavery writing" (Sollors 2001, xix) while at the same time being a black author himself – which establishes the genre of the slave narrative, as Gates (1988) argues (quoted above). Conventions of travel writing are adopted and rewritten. When Equiano, after having spent a few years with his British master in England, learns that he would not, as expected, be freed but would instead be sent to the Caribbean to be sold to another slaveholder, he experiences a second westward movement in captivity (the first one was the middle passage from Africa to the Caribbean a few years earlier). Equiano describes the conditions of his second journey to America in not much less horrific terms than his first passage on the slave ship (first chapters). He depicts the second journey in captivity as an experience of being reduced to a marketable object. In his description, the act of 'going West' and the space of the Atlantic Ocean take on a dark meaning:

What tumultuous emotions agitated my soul when the convoy got under sail, and I a prisoner on board, now without hope! I kept my swimming eyes upon the land in a state of unutterable grief; not knowing what to do, and despairing how to help myself. While my mind was in this situation the fleet sailed on, and in one day's time I lost sight of the wished-for land. In the first expressions of my grief I reproached my fate, and wished I had never been born. I was ready to curse the tide that bore us, the gale that wafted my

prison, and even the ship that conducted us; and I called on death to relieve me from the horrors I felt and dreaded,

Where slaves are free, and men oppress no more.
Fool that I was, inur'd so long to pain,
To trust to hope, or dream of joy again.

Now dragg'd once more beyond the western main,
To groan beneath some dastard planter's chain;
[...] (72)

Equiano curses the waves that take him westward. The West here is not a place of hope, not a promised land, not freedom, but rather means despair and death.¹⁵ In order to fully express his emotions, dread and the unutterable grief of going west, he quotes, apparently by memory, from a poem; as Werner Sollors (2001) explains, an “immensely popular poem” (288) in anti-slavery circles: *The Dying Negro, A Poetical Epistle, Supposed to Be Written by a Black (Who lately Shot Himself on Board a Vessel in the River Thames;) to His Intended Wife*, written and published by Thomas Day and John Bicknell in 1773.

However, this view of the New World as a place of oppressive institutions does not suffice for characterizing Equiano's textual negotiation of identity and of his relation to and position in the Atlantic world. His notion of the Atlantic world is shown to be more complex. This becomes apparent in the figuration of Africa in the *Interesting Narrative*. Africa figures as a place of origin, childhood, and the past which makes it part of the Old World. In this sense, it is juxtaposed to the threatening and oppressively modern New World. But Africa does not figure as a place of identification in terms of cultural and religious practices and learning. Instead, Equiano exposes his embrace of Christianity so markedly.

The idea of returning to Africa, the place of his origin, is raised at several points in the narrative. Interestingly, the topic of returning is brought into the narrative firstly via identification

¹⁵ This view on crossing the Atlantic Ocean and on travelling west, contrasts with dominant European and ‘white’ American perspectives, see chapter 5.1.

with the history of Jews and Judaism, and secondly via a parallel description of Africans as living in an earlier, primitive state, a framing of the African as a noble savage:

Like the Israelites in their primitive state, our government was conducted by our chiefs or judges, our wise men and elders; and the head of a family with us enjoyed a similar authority over his household with that which is ascribed to Abraham and the other patriarchs. (30)

Such analogies “created an expectation of a possible return to the state of nature” (Sollors, xxi) that Equiano imagines. But if such an original state of nature ever existed in Africa, it was brought to an abrupt and brutal end by the slave trade. As Sollors writes, Equiano does not romanticize a Rousseauian original state of nature:

Civilization and property spelled the end of Rousseau’s state of nature, but Equiano deemed such progress beneficial. Hence the slave trade appears to be not only morally wrong but also bad for all commerce – except the trade in shackles and chains, as Equiano sarcastically adds. (Sollors, xxii)

For Equiano, the analogy certainly is the returning of the Jewish diaspora to Israel and the returning of the African diaspora to Africa. However, although Equiano employs the Rousseauian, Enlightenment image of the noble savage, Equiano does not simply counter the Euro-American symbolism of the glorified West and the New World with a romanticized view of Africa, the East, or the Old World. Rather, the narrator develops different identifications. In fact, precisely the shifting between different ethnic and religious identifications is characteristic of the narrative. At different moments he identifies himself as African, British, Christian, Hebrew (143), Indian (140), and noble savage (111). These shifting identifications make Equiano an exemplary inhabitant of the Atlantic Rim, someone who at various times “called Africa, North America, South America, and Europe his home. [...] He defined himself as neither African American (his first owner was a Virginian) nor Anglo African (with London his adopted home).”¹⁶

¹⁶ Norton *Anthology of American Literature* (shorter 6th ed., 2002), 350.

Equiano's self-representation is characterized by cultural exchange, appropriations, and transformations of discourses circulating in the Atlantic world of his time. Equiano's narrative voice is both that of the African, the European, and the New World subject. His first encounter with Europeans, for example, is cast in terms of magic, which can be read as establishing an African voice in the text: He describes his fear that white men were cannibals: "I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair" (39). From his adulthood perspective as narrator, this depiction of first contact performs an inversion of the dominant European discourse of cannibalism and civilization.

Parallel to this African voice, the narrator establishes the voice of the English intellectual, quoting from the Bible, the Iliad, and many other literary sources. For example, when arriving in the Caribbean the second time, he quotes Milton's *Paradise Lost* – for giving expression to his unutterable grief and horror:

On the 13th of February 1763, from the mast-head, we descried
our destined island Montserrat; and soon after I beheld those
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can rarely dwell. Hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges.

At the sight of this land of bondage, a fresh horror ran through all
my frame, and chilled me to the heart. (73)¹⁷

As Sollors observes, there is "a certain instability of the first-person-singular observer and of the pronouns he uses to describe collective belonging" (Sollors, xx). For example, when speaking about the manners and customs of his family and native community, he shifts between first person and third person, between we and they:

Our manner of living is entirely plain; for as yet the natives are unacquainted with those refinements in cookery which debauch the taste: bullocks, goats, and poultry, supply the greatest part of their food. [...] Our vegetables are mostly plantains, eadas, yams, beans, and Indian corn. (22)

¹⁷ Another Milton quote we find on page 80.

Such shifting and instability of identification have been read in terms of W.E.B. Dubois' "double consciousness." Gates (1988) speaks of "the double-voiced tradition of African American Literature" (xxv) that has roots in Equiano's memoir.

Equiano's autobiographical voice is a consciously transcultural articulation of a black individual living in the Atlantic world of the late eighteenth century under circumstances of severe oppression. In the Americas he, even as a free black man, is constantly in danger of re-enslavement (e.g. in Virginia and the Mosquito Coast of Central America). Hence Equiano's *Narrative* provides a sophisticated, intellectual, transcultural, and cosmopolitan voice of the circum-Atlantic world of the late eighteenth century, as a voice of the Black Atlantic, a voice challenging and transforming Eurocentric Enlightenment discourse. Sollors writes about Equiano's appropriation of, and entanglement in intellectual discourse of his time: "Equiano's literary sophistication and rhetorical skills do not constitute a contradictory interference with his 'Africanness': they rather help to define the terms in which he came to present and view African life" (Sollors, xx).¹⁸

Thus, going West is seen in ambivalent terms. On the discursive level, Equiano is very much going West in a cultural sense. He shows himself as distanced from African customs and embraces Christianity. Salvation, as he emphasizes throughout his narrative, comes in and through Christianity. Thus, the incompatibility of slavery with Christianity – a theme that pervaded antislavery writing (Sollors, Equiano, xix) – is a central point of argument in the *Narrative*. According to the conventions of a spiritual autobiography, his own conversion strongly structures the narrative: a journey from heathen primitivism, even sinfulness toward a new home in Christianity and salvation:

[...] I felt a deep concern for my mother and friends, which occasioned me to pray with fresh ardour; and, in the abyss of thought, I viewed the unconverted people of the world in a very awful state, being without God and without hope. (144)

The topic of conversion, which Equiano shows himself to be a product of, comes up in a few chapters set in the Americas where

¹⁸ See also Sollors on the concept of "signifyin(g)" (9).

he comes into contact with indigenous people. An equation of Equiano with indigenous people, however, is first introduced when he recounts his baptism in the first part of the book. In chapter IV Equiano depicts how he was baptized in England while still the property of his English master. He is informed that he could not go to heaven unless baptized. He convinces an elderly lady who had helped him learn to read and write, to have him baptized. He writes “I was baptized in St. Margaret’s church, Westminster, in February 1759, by my present name” (56). Oddly, he adds a piece of information not further commented on: “The clergyman, at the same time, gave me a book, called *Guide to the Indians*, written by the*** of Sodor and Man” (57). Sollors gives the full title of the book referred to – the title that Equiano withholds from the reader: *The Knowledge and Practice of Christianity Made Easy for the Meanest Mental Capacities; or, an Essay towards an Instruction for the Indians* (1740, 1781). Equiano significantly withholds the title of the book about the conversion of American *Indians* which is demeaning to him. The clergyman clearly equates Equiano to indigenous people of the Americas. Both, the American Indians and the Africans are subsumed as savages with “the meanest mental capacities.” The description of the scene illustrates the equation of Africans and indigenous Americans in late eighteenth-century discourse.¹⁹

Later, in the second volume of the narrative, after being freed, he encounters groups of indigenous people on the coast of today’s Nicaragua. Now, interestingly, he becomes active in trying to convert these people:

I took all the pains that I could to instruct the Indian prince in the doctrines of Christianity, of which he was entirely ignorant; and, to my great joy, he was quite attentive, and received with gladness the truths that the Lord enabled me to set forth to him. (154)

He frames himself in a role otherwise still restricted to Englishmen and white Europeans. He becomes the one carrying Christianity across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World. Equiano appropriates and ‘Africanizes’ the history of the discovery of America.

¹⁹ The description of his baptism is not the first time indigenous Americans are mentioned in *The Narrative*: See earlier scenes set in Nova Scotia (53).

In fact, Equiano stages himself in the role of the European ‘discoverer’ of America, Columbus. The narrator describes an encounter between the English crew and indigenous people and he strategically exploits the Mesoamerican belief in magic – an aspect that was similarly experienced by him earlier in his life when first encountering ‘white’ people:

I therefore thought of a stratagem to appease the riot. Recollecting a passage I had read in the life of Columbus, when he was amongst the Indians in Mexico or Peru, where, on some occasion, he frightened them, by telling them of certain events in the heavens, I had recourse to the same expedient; and it succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. When I had formed my determination, I went in the midst of them; and, taking hold of the Governor, I pointed up to the heavens. I menaced him and the rest: I told them God lived there, and that he was angry with them, and they must not quarrel so; that they were all brothers, and if they did not leave off, and go away quietly, I would take the book (pointing to the Bible), read, and *tell* God to make them dead. This was something like magic. (158)

Writing and reading here are employed as techniques of magic. This rewriting of the popularized first transatlantic encounter between Columbus and the Caribbean natives, on the one hand, seems to mock processes of Christian conversion, and, on the other hand, exposes the falseness, the artificiality of white superiority.

In this sense, Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* is not only a “talking book” of the double-voiced black tradition, as Gates has it in the *Signifying Monkey* (1988), but it is furthermore a travel narrative that performs an appropriation and rewriting of the history of the Atlantic world. The text provides a representation of the history of Atlantic modernity very explicitly grounded in the contradictions of the New World. The polyvocal, hybrid, multilayered slave narrative and spiritual autobiography grasps the heterogeneity of the Atlantic world, characterized by multiple exchanges and circulations of discourses, ideas, and cultures.

The Interesting Narrative is a text about, and made of, metaphorical and literal mobility. It shows (black) Atlantic modernity as being characterized by multidirectional and circular mobility, and thus challenges Euro-American triumphant notions of progress

and modernity. Placing slavery at the core of modernity (as Osterhammel argues), the *transnational* imagination of *Interesting Narrative* challenges celebratory expressions of the national imagination as we find them in many American travel reports of the time. Equiano's form of coerced and "actually existing cosmopolitanism" (Robbins) challenges and supplements the nation-building discourse of many of his contemporary U.S. authors.

5.3. Literary Nationalism and Proto-Imperialism: Royall Tyler, Joseph Hawkins, and Benjamin Stout

Royall Tyler was a lawyer and New England Federalist who was actively involved in post-revolutionary politics. At his time he was best known for his play *The Contrast* (1787). In 1797, his fictitious memoir *The Algerine Captive* was published anonymously. In the first part of *The Algerine Captive* the narrator Updike Underhill recounts his experience as a teacher and doctor. Not successful in New England, he moves to the South. There, however, offended by the practice of slavery, he sails as a surgeon on a ship to England. Later he continues his journey on the slave ship *Sympathy* for Africa. While ashore, Algerian pirates capture Updike. The second part of the novel recounts Updike's captivity in Algeria where he is sold several times as a slave. A rather extensive part concentrates on the history, culture, and religion of the so-called Barbary states. After six years in captivity, Updike is finally rescued and taken back to the United States.

The novel combines very different narrative modes and genre conventions, borrowing conventional patterns from travel report, memoir, captivity narrative, and slave narrative. Considering the mix of literary and narrative styles, the editor of the 2002 edition, Caleb Crain, ends his introduction with harsh comments on the literary quality: "[...] the reader should not expect *The Algerine Captive* to be sublime. Underhill's tale and Algerian history have been thrown into a single pot, but the flavors haven't quite blended" (Crain 2002, xxxiii). It is certainly justified to find fault with the heterogeneous structure, particularly the discrepancy between the first and the second part of the narrative. However, when reading the novel more directly in the context of eighteenth-century

non-fictional travel writing, the heterogeneous form might be appreciated as a reflection on a very popular form of communication. The disruptions between personal narrative and historiography that Crain complains about, might then be seen as mirroring and imitating conventions of eighteenth-century travel writing.

The first part of the novel provides a satirical view of New England society and takes the first-person narrator Updike Underhill through different parts of the newly independent United States. He works as a teacher of ancient Greek, then as a physician in rural parts of New England and in the South where he encounters different religious and cultural customs. Being frustrated with his life and prospect as a learned man and physician in the United States, Underhill signs up for the merchant navy bound to Africa via London. In the English metropolis, he encounters Thomas Paine and other real-life contemporaries of Tyler before heading for Africa in July 1788 – as it says in the chapter heading: for “purchasing Negro Slaves.” The ship is supposed to take a cargo of slaves from the coast of West Africa to Barbados and to South Carolina (93). On the island of Goree, off the coast of Senegal, Underhill witnesses the cruelties of the slave trade for the first time. He is appalled by the manners of the slave traders (some of them Americans) and emotionally moved by the suffering on the overcrowded decks. Finally, during a stopover on mainland Africa, he is himself enslaved by a group of Algerian pirates – an act that ends the first part of the novel. The second part of the novel is almost entirely set in Algiers, where Underhill lives as a slave for six years. The narrator concentrates on his experiences and informs the reader about the history, religion, and culture of the Algerians. Finally, while participating in a pilgrimage to Mecca, Underhill is liberated by a Portuguese crew off the coast of Tunis. He returns to the United States in 1795.

Much critical attention has focused on the first part and its satire and critique of American society. The second part has often been dismissed for exploiting exoticism and imitating English novels of travel and foreign captivity after Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. Edward Watts (1998) emphasizes that the narrative is presented as the autobiography of the first-person narrator Underhill, who – at least in the first part – is positioned as a colonial subject: “anxious

about pleasing the standards of the metropolis and unwilling to explore local differences” (77). Watts reads this as a critique of the young republic. Underhill’s narration is understood as a satire on the continuing veneration of British culture. Watts argues that Tyler satirizes Underhill’s colonial attitudes and his Puritan ancestry. Other readings, such as Schueller (1998), put less emphasis on satire. The Orient here has the function of negotiating foremostly national identity, and of establishing the U.S.’s position in discourses of civilization and democracy. Starting with Cathy Davidson’s *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (1986), Tyler’s early American novel has also been read as an indictment of slavery. However, only little attention has been given to the fact that throughout, in both parts, the narrator employs different strategies for imitating markers of ‘authenticity’ of travel reports, captivity narratives, and slave narratives.

The novel combines American native color writing with foreign adventure, domestic travel with traveling abroad, and voluntary with involuntary travel. The narrative structure incorporates textual formats and generic conventions which in Tyler’s time were commonly separated: the picaresque journey of the learned man, trained in ancient Greek; the post-revolutionary American citizen in London; the Barbary captivity narrative; the slave narrative. By structuring his narrative this way, it transports marginalized social positions into the ‘nationalizing’ text, and transports imagery of independent America into types of travel narratives that in Tyler’s times, compliant with colonial discourse, still appeared reserved for Europeans: traveling abroad and describing and assessing the world for a readership at home. Hence, I would say, Tyler’s narrative composition negotiates literary forms of producing self-images and world views of the new nation. In this sense, the novel contributes to the emerging discursive ‘global mapping’ of American writing in the early republic, the formative years of American literature.

The two parts of the novel mark different positions in boundary discourse of the nation. The intertextual references and the appropriation of generic conventions comment on and highlight the function of travel writing in these different boundary discourses. In the first chapters, the narrator alludes to the frontier

– the ‘domestic’ boundary between civilization and wilderness in North America – and the cultural and racial anxieties of his society. By reference to a dream of his mother Updike introduces his birth:

My mother, some months before my birth, dreamed [...] that the house was beset by Indians who broke into the next room and took me into the fields with them. Alarmed by their hideous yellings and war hoops, she ran to the window and saw a number of tawny young savages playing at football with my head while several sachems were looking on unconcerned. (22)

The mother’s dream here foreshadows the captivity experience of Updike – which, however, was to take place in a very different and unexpected cultural setting. The equation of “Indians” and “Algerians” is also implied by formal characteristics of the novel: in the sections about life in North Africa, Updike adopts and transforms the so-called customs-and-manners chapters which gather various information on Native American groups and which were requisites of natural history writing of the eighteenth century. Updike, however, replaces North American Indians with Algerians and Muslims. In analogy to knowledge production in natural history and topographies, the reader learns about such issues as religious practices, law, and wedding customs.

The second part appropriates conventions of the Barbary captivity narrative,²⁰ the first of which were published in English as early as the mid-sixteenth century (cf. Baepler, 6). The first *American* Barbary captivity narratives were published in the late 1790s, more or less contemporaneous with Tyler’s novel, like the one by John Foss in 1798. Such reports on white Americans enslaved in North Africa would then become quite popular in the early nineteenth century. It is unclear whether Tyler had read any such American captivity narrative when writing his novel. The conflicts with the so-called Barbary states started in the years following the American Revolution when the American merchant navy lost British protection in the Mediterranean. The issues were widely debated in late eighteenth-century America and would

²⁰ See Gaston (1985), 283.

eventually lead to the first military involvement of the United States abroad in the Tripolitan War (First Barbary War) of 1801.

Next to the captivity narrative, Updike's experiences find parallels in the slave narrative of the Enlightenment: the detailed description of the suffering of Africans onboard the slave ship very much reminds of Equiano's narrative and the abolitionist imagery and emotional style of the late eighteenth century. Updike describes a scene of an African onboard who bids farewell to his family before passing away, and he is alarmed by the practice of chaining weak and sick Africans and simply throwing them overboard when their health seems fatally damaged – scenes that we find described in strikingly similar ways in Equiano's account of the Middle Passage.

Updike's participation in the slave trade turns him into an outspoken abolitionist. And Updike uses one of the foremost representatives of the Algerian regime, the mullah, for most explicitly exposing religious, cultural, and social contradictions of U.S. democracy – contradictions that can in fact be seen as the core issue of the entire novel. When trying to convince Updike to convert to Islam in order to get liberated, the mullah refers to U.S. society:

My friend, you surely have not read the writings of your own historians. The history of the Christian church is a detail of bloody massacre: [...] The Musselmen never yet forced a man to adopt their faith. [...]. We leave it to the Christian of the West Indies, and Christian of your southern plantations, to baptize the unfortunate African into your faith, and then use your brother Christians as brutes of the desert. (135)

By combining the African slave narrative with the Barbary captivity narrative in his fictional travel report, Tyler transports Equiano's important abolitionist statement (first published in 1789) into one of the first American novels. By contrasting the two different experiences of enslavement, Tyler implies a comparison between the 'barbarous' Algeria and the early United States and complicates Updike's patriotism that he adheres to throughout his narrative.

However, interestingly, Updike Underhill ends his report with a patriotic celebration of his native country and thus in the end does

not only return to his ‘home’ but also to his statements in the preface in which he expresses the need for a national literature. In the preface the narrator and implied author complains that the books read in New England “are not of our own manufacture” (6). This call for national literary distinction and boundaries is reiterated in the last lines of the novel. Commenting on his returning to the U.S., Updike writes:

I now mean to unite myself to some amiable woman. [...] To contribute cheerfully to the support of our excellent government which I have learnt to adore, in schools of despotism; and thus secure to myself the enviable character of an useful physician, a good father and worthy FEDERAL citizen. [...] My ardent wish is, that my fellow citizens may profit by my misfortunes. If they peruse these pages with attention they will perceive the necessity of uniting our federal strength to enforce a due respect among other nations. [...] Our first object is union among ourselves. For to no nation besides the United States can that antient [sic] saying be more emphatically applied; BY UNITING WE STAND; BY DIVIDING WE FALL. (225–226)

Considering the relation of the preface to the ending, Updike’s narrative is framed by literary nationalism. This framework of the nation is very much constructed in the language of home and domesticity. This seems emphasized by the overlapping of the imagery of the nation, home, and reproductive family life in the last lines.

In the end, Updike seems to have easily accommodated himself to the cultural amnesia of his fellow citizens and the silent acceptance of the unresolved domestic problems and contradictions, foremostly the continuation of the colonizing and removal of Native Americans as well as the economy of slavery in the U.S. South. In Tyler’s novel, these contradictions are brought forward by Updike’s mother and by the Algerian mullah. However, Tyler’s fictional travel writer, Updike Underhill, the narrator, seems to draw a line between his past adventures and his re-established and newly embraced home – apparently repressing both, his complicity and his moral outrage, comfortably displacing them and sealing them in his travel narrative of a time passed, while accommodating himself within the frame of ‘his’ unifying nation.

The Algerine Captive provides a sophisticated negotiation not only of the general discourse of national identity in the early republic but, more specifically, of the debate on literary nationalism, and of a specifically American literary form. As Edward Watts in his *Writing and Postcolonialism in the Early Republic* (1998) aptly writes, Tyler's *The Algerine Captive* should be read as a "sophisticated generic experiment" (76). Conventional literary forms and different literary genres are discussed, appropriated, and transformed. The novel is primarily a fictional captivity narrative in which the concept of the nation and its boundaries are of central significance. It is particularly noteworthy that the boundaries of the nation (in geographic terms, but even more importantly in symbolic and ideological terms) are negotiated within the context of broader transatlantic relations. However, these are transatlantic relations that go beyond the historical link between the former colonial motherland and the newly independent nation. Rather, the new nation is imagined within the circum-Atlantic world, with Africa and the history of slavery as core elements that are shown to be shaping the new nation from its beginnings.

After returning to the U.S., Tyler's narrator withdraws into private life and service to the unity of the nation. He concludes by endorsing patriotic unity with the aim of being respected as a nation among nations: "[...]the necessity of uniting our federal strength to enforce a due respect among other nations" (226). Hence Tyler's fictional travel report employs experiences abroad less for commenting on international relations than for commenting on U.S. society. His report, although in major parts set in North Africa, does not suggest that the new nation should conquer, rule, and control the regions visited. Tyler's fiction does not endorse proto-imperialist fantasies. In contrast, some non-fictional contemporary actors in the circum-Atlantic world, sojourning on the African continent or in Latin America, draft reports that indicate an emerging desire for expansion and imperial rule.

Expressions of expansionist desire were more pronounced in reports on Spanish America and Brazil;²¹ most of the few reports

²¹ Reports on Spanish Mexico and South America will be discussed in chapter VI.

by Americans on journeys in Africa are either framed as captivity narratives or as an adventurous undertaking in the context of the author's involvement in the slave trade. For example, Joseph Hawkins' *A History of a Voyage to the Coast of Africa, and Travels into the Interior of that Country* (1797) recounts the journey from the author's birthplace in New York state to Charleston (South Carolina) where he boards a "Guinea Trader" (14) that takes him to the West coast of Africa from where Hawkins enters the mainland. The 180-page narrative concentrates on the author's observations of the customs, nature, and social structures he encounters in Africa. However, the description is flavored and transformed into an adventure story less by the evil-doing of the native African population than by the dangers caused by slave trading and the imminent perils of the natural surroundings. In the first pages, Hawkins introduces his travels as induced by global commercial activities: "The spirit of adventure which has increased in proportion with the advancement of commerce [...] has contributed much within the last hundred years, in expanding the human mind, and extending the bonds which formerly attached a society only, round the whole universe and to each individual of the human species" (5).

The menacing danger inherent in acts of leaving home as a traveler is highlighted by the etching on the title page which shows the author after his return from his adventures in Africa as a blind man "relating the History of his Travels to his Friend". The blindfold he is shown wearing functions as a warning to the reader not to ignore the possible misfortunes, "the shocks of black adversity" (179), caused by the young man's desire for adventure. However, apart from American involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, the author does not endorse U.S. interference in African societies and colonial division. Similar to Tyler's fictional reflection, Hawkins uses Africa as a foil for comparison: "Their form of government is a limited monarchy; their affairs of the nation are comprehended in the simple measures necessary for the defense against an enemy, and so far the chief is absolute" (96).²²

²² On Hawkins' critique of the transatlantic slave trade, see Pankake (1975), 101-104.

In contrast to Tyler's and Hawkins' rather bleak depictions of Africa as a space of misfortunes, Benjamin Stout's *Narrative of the Loss of the Ship Hercules Commanded by Captain Benjamin Stout, on the Coast of Caffraria* (1798) provides a much more promising image of the continent and its inhabitants. However, his report is explicitly partaking in (or, in fact, instigating) an American proto-imperialist discourse on Africa.

Stout's *Narrative* combines two forms of travel report: (1) the maritime survival genre and (2) the emergent genre of continental exploration. Macia Jean Pankake (1975) highlights the fact that Stout, in contrast to the Barbary captivity narratives, does not concentrate on "negative experiences" but rather displays a "Romantic temperament" (99) praising the beauty of the landscape and the virtues of the native people. Stout describes the Africans he encountered as Rousseauian natives and 'noble savages':

[...] compassionate, generous, hospitable to those who do not come to injure or destroy him; truly grateful for benefits conferred, and not yielding in this cardinal virtue, to the most benevolent pupil of the sciences. Without ever having entertained the most distant consideration of a Supreme Being, or the existence of a Future State, his virtues are dictated by the genuine feelings of his nature, and expecting no reward, nor dreading any punishment in a future life, for his conduct in this, stands a pre-eminent character on the roll of virtue and philanthropy. (3)

David Johnson (2005) examines Stout's landscape figures (as for example, land cultivation) and reads them as an expression of American proto-imperial discourse: "[...] Stout's descriptions of the eastern Cape utilize eighteenth-century notions of landscape appreciation – the picturesque, the sublime and the romantic – in order to encode contradictory imperial ambitions" (45). As part of this "proto-imperial" aesthetic and narrative structure, the report starts with a direct and explicit imperialist suggestion: on the first pages we find an address to John Adams, president of the United States of America, in which Stout praises the "commercial benefits" for the U.S. of establishing a colony in South Africa (vi). Apart from the economic gains from such a colony, Stout argues that American colonists would better qualify for improving and

civilizing the native population than British and Dutch colonists. He informs the president that Dutch colonization is “barbarous” (xxv) and their procedure disqualifies them from legitimate rule, making their territorial claims “not only presumptuous, but preposterous” (viii). In the address Stout presents himself as speaking for the – in his eyes – innocent natives of South Africa:

I am desirous to arrest your attention and interest your feelings, on behalf of those wandering children of nature, who are scattered over the deserts of the African world; a race of unoffending mortals, long persecuted by those enlightened Savages, who under the appellations of Christians and Dutchmen, settled themselves by violence on the southern promontory. (iv)

This introduction, with the president as implied reader, is clearly written in the mode of promotional travel writing, outlining the natural resources, richness, and geographical advantages of the region. However, interspersed we find criticism of the colonialist European powers and a representation of the United States as a potentially better colonizer and superior civilizer (xxxix). Stout emphasizes that the African natives “are still the proprietors of these countries, never being dispossessed of them” (xxiii) and that they “have an unquestionable right to dispose of [the land] to whatever nation they may think proper” (xxiii). Stout suggests that the United States should colonize South Africa and that Americans would be the Africans’ preferred choice of colonizer:

I speak of these people as I found them; and from this knowledge I form an opinion, that so far from their interrupting any settlement of the nature I have before alluded to, they would hail the American, when they were convinced of his justice, as their friend, their protector and deliverer. (xxx)

By establishing “a colony,” he argues, the U.S. would support “the diffusion of science (and) the promotion of civilization through the unexplored regions of Africa” (xvii).

As one of the few critical readers of Stout’s report, Pankake (1975) points to the contradiction between enlightened philanthropy and imperialism: “It was the ambitious, the educated, the sensitive Stout who advocated imperialism, truly believing it

would advance both America and Africa” (101). Stout’s paternalistic rendering of Jefferson’s “Empire of Liberty” contradicts democratic principles of self-determined rule. Stout’s contradictory positioning toward colonialism indicates how the popular imagery of nationhood and cosmopolitanism were intricately entangled in international geopolitics and global imperialist struggles and conflicts.

It is not known whether Adams ever read Stout’s preface. However, it seems most significant for the status of travel writing in the period that, in a narrative about a shipwreck written by an otherwise unknown captain in the merchant navy, we find such highly political statements, legitimizing the publication by addressing the president of the new nation. The book was published in follow-up editions. It can be seen as an expression of, and a contribution to, the global mapping of American writing of the time.

Stout’s call for U.S. colonization of South Africa, is rather exceptional for the period. Africa was less a topic in expansionist and imperialist travel narratives of the time. However, countries and different regions of Central America, the Caribbean, and Spanish and Portuguese America – the Western hemisphere – became a target of an ambivalent rhetoric and imagery of concurrent *liberation* and *conquest*. Writing about these societies, as I will explore in the next chapter, did not only *frame* the nation ‘culturally’ by defining boundaries of Otherness (as Tyler and Hawkins did with Africa); it also claimed a leading position of the U.S. in the Western hemisphere. Such claims, in different ways, came close to Stout’s endorsement of U.S. imperialism.

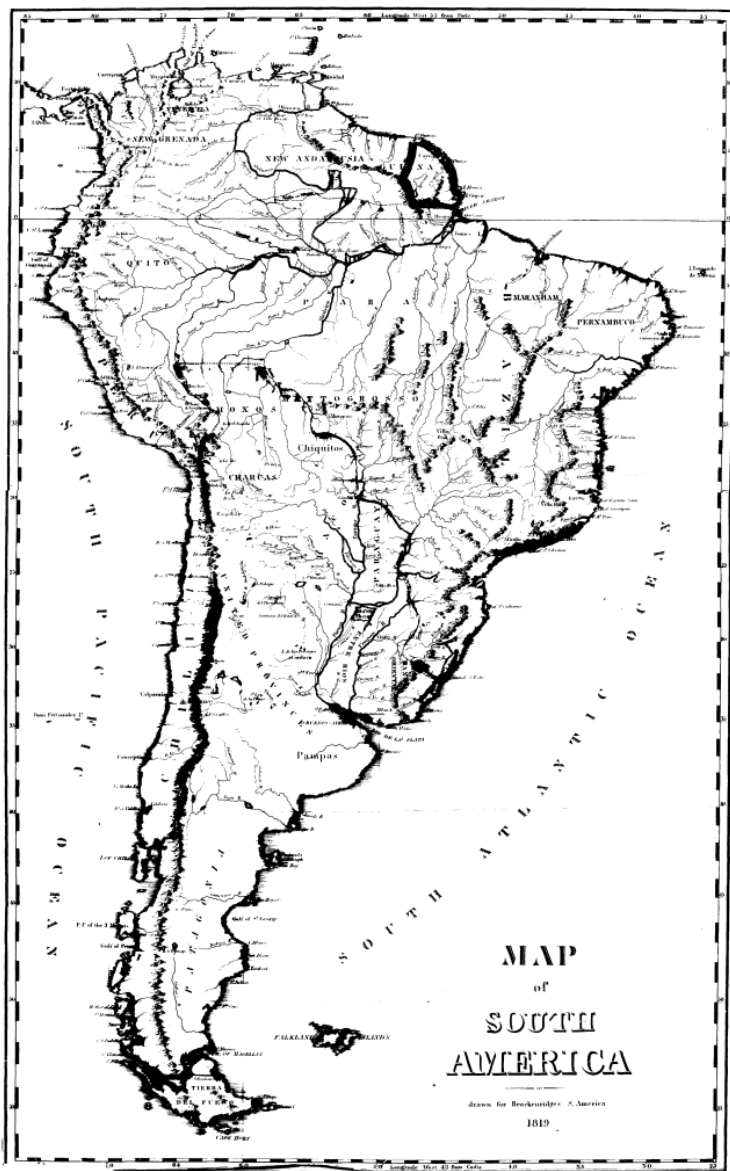


Figure 4: A Map of South America. From Brackenridge, Henry Marie. *Voyage to South America, Performed by Order of the American Government, in the Years 1817 and 1818, in the Frigate Congress* (2 Vol.). Baltimore: Toy (Printer), 1819 (imprint, Oxford University Press), page 1.
License: Public domain.

VI. The Hemispheric Frame: The Early Nineteenth-Century Traveler in Latin America¹

With the inception of the struggles for independence in Spanish-America, U.S.-based writers articulated a notion of the Western hemisphere as a space of affiliation and identification. The following reading of American travel reports will focus on the specificities of the discourse of the Western hemisphere, and the meaning and functions of this particular ‘transnational’ space in the period preceding the rise of the cultural discourse of the Monroe Doctrine that has been so convincingly outlined and analyzed by Gretchen Murphy (2005). Similar to the post-Independence appropriation of the Old World/New World dichotomy, other geographically and racially contoured regions such as Europe, the Orient, Africa, and Asia served as symbolic spaces of projection in the emerging national discourses of the United States, as the readings of chapter 5 illustrate. However, the idea of the Western hemisphere (emerging from the Old World/New World dichotomy), as I will show, played a particularly

¹ This chapter consists of revised and extended previous publications:

“The Idea of the Western Hemisphere: Imperial Knowledge Production on the Americas in Travel Writing of the Early Nineteenth Century.” *Cultural Mobility and Knowledge Formation in the Americas*. Eds. Volker Depkat and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson. Heidelberg: Winter, 2019. 31–50.

“The Hemispheric Frame and ‘American’ Travel Writing of the Early United States.” *Hemispheric Encounters: The Early United States in a Transnational Perspective*. Eds. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez and Markus Heide. New York: Peter Lang (Interamericana series), 2016. 73–96.

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effective role in giving expression to the national self-conception as a republic which overcame colonialist rule and at the same time fostered imperial entitlement.

This chapter explores the emergence and construction of the “hemispheric frame” (Murphy 2005) as part of the discourses of American nationalism and empire in travel writing. As in the previous chapters, I am interested in conceptions of ‘the imagined outside’ of the nation in different forms of travel writing. In other words, I am focusing on the complex tension between territorial and generic concepts of ‘domestic’ and ‘abroad’ in American travel writing on different regions of the globe. Thus, my critical reading employs the transnational paradigm of American studies in two ways: first, a methodological approach to early American writing and, second, as a reading of travel writing in terms of transnational and international linkages (of the texts themselves) that have received less or no critical attention in historical and literary research – which has mostly limited its critical perspective on frontier regions of what later became part of the U.S., and on the national paradigm and iconography.

In the following, I will introduce four reports on journeys to regions of the Americas outside the territory of the contemporary U.S., by Zebulon Pike, Henry Ker, Henry Marie Brackenridge, and William Duane respectively. The reports on Latin America link Pike’s early military and exploratory account of Spanish Mexico to later annexationist literary voices,² such as Richard Henry Dana’s memoirs *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840) which uses the autobiographical account of adventure in Spanish California for endorsing the mid-nineteenth-century discourse of annexation, the territorial expansion of the U.S., and manifest destiny.

6.1. The Idea of the Western Hemisphere

Throughout American history, writers, intellectuals, and politicians have imagined and proposed models of identification that go beyond categories and boundaries of the national and the limiting concept of the nation. They have envisioned the Americas

² On the representation of Latin America in nineteenth-century writing see Breinig (2008 and 2017).

as a unity based on a common history, a common culture, or the politics of anticolonialism. In the early United States, political thinkers, such as Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, perceived the Americas as a unity primarily to ward off British and other European influences. In 1823, such anticolonial interests and sensibilities were codified in what became to be known as the Monroe Doctrine and which was to form a central aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Various events inspired American politicians and authors to think about the hemisphere, including the Haitian revolution (1791–1804), conflicts with Spanish Florida (1810–21), the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the Spanish American Wars of Independence (1808–25), and the Texas controversies (1835–48). Diplomatic and political historians have outlined several important precursors to what historian Arthur Whitaker conceived of as “the Western Hemisphere Idea” in his book of the same title as early as 1954; and, more recently, cultural theorists such as Walter Mignolo (2000) have done so as well. Among the texts that established the hemispheric frame are George Washington’s *Farewell Address* of 1796, Jefferson’s letter to Alexander von Humboldt of 1813, John Quincy Adams’s message of 1826 on the Panama Congress, and Secretary of State Henry Clay’s initiatives advocating a system of inter-American cooperation.³

Similar to such pertinent political texts and actions, early American writers and poets employed hemispheric topics and imagery. Such authors were inspired by the desire to distinguish the New World from the Old. Epic poems such as Joel Barlow’s “The Vision of Columbus” (1787)—later revised into “The Columbiad” (1807)—provided contemporary readers with a description of America’s history, a poetic topography, and a vision of America’s future that were *hemispheric* in their historic and imaginary scope. In political and visionary poetry of the revolutionary and early national periods, such as Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Philip Freneau’s “The Rising Glory of America” (1771), America is imagined as comprising the entire continent. Poets like Barlow, Brackenridge, and Freneau employed hemispheric imagery primarily within the logic of, and in service to, the pre-revolutionary positioning of creole peoples (that is,

³ See Arthur Preston Whitaker (1954), 35–38.

colonials born in the New World but of European descent).⁴ After the American Revolution, the logic became that of a fledgling literary nationalism (using poetry for imagining and circulating ideas of unity and collective history).⁵ Alongside political writing and poetry, travel writing was a literary genre that helped to popularize ideas of national and New World unity. What kind of literary expressions demonstrating a sense of pan-American unity do we find in the early nineteenth century when, after the founding of the “first new nation” (Lipset 1979), many other independent American nations were established? How is pan-American unity imagined in times when the map of the Western hemisphere was redrawn in response to the complex entanglement of colonialism, imperialism, anticolonialism, and postcolonial nationalism?

Political efforts to establish a unity of the Western hemisphere go back to the 1820s. Initial attempts to strengthen pan-American solidarity occurred shortly after most of the Spanish colonial empire had gained national independence. For the most part, these efforts—not yet using the term ‘pan-Americanism’ which, according to the early historian of Pan-Americanism, Joseph B. Lockey (1920), came into use in the 1880s—originated in the southern part of the Americas. While some proponents were primarily interested in Hispanic America, others stressed the common traits of all of Latin America (including Brazil or the non-Hispanic Caribbean); others intended to embrace America in its geographical entirety, from Cape Horn to Alaska. In the U.S., during the first half of the nineteenth century, the primary aim of these unification principles was to establish economic and political collaboration. However, from the revolutionary period onwards a few writers explored the hemisphere’s common history as well as inter-American issues. Apart from poetry by such authors as Barlow and Freneau, Washington Irving’s *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*

⁴ More details on Rising Glory poetry in the introduction (I).

⁵ In *The Americas: A Hemispheric History* (2003) historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto uses the term “Pan-American patriotism” when referring to Barlow and Jefferson’s notions of the Western hemisphere (120). For a comparative view of the efforts to establish ‘cultural independence’ in Hispanic America and in the United States, cf. Fernández-Armesto (2003), 101–58.

(1828) counts as one of the most acknowledged literary texts of the early nineteenth century that concentrates on the Hispanic world. In addition, a few non-fictional travel reports informed the reading public in the U.S. about Hispanic America. Apart from shipwreck narratives, e.g. George Fracker (1818), which are usually written in an autobiographical adventure mode and provide little information about people and countries, some travel writing of the 1820s and 1830s is explicitly supportive of the anticolonial struggles, and in fact, makes the struggle for independence of the American ‘sister republics’ the central topic of their narratives: for example, Samuel B. Johnston (1816), Isaac Foster Coffin (1823), and William Duane (1826).

The distinction between the Old and the New World, as manifested in political thinking as well as in poetry, was part of the emergence of the idea of the Western hemisphere. In his analysis of coloniality and concepts of the global, Mignolo (2000) writes:

The idea of the “Western Hemisphere” [...] establishes an ambiguous position. America simultaneously constitutes difference and sameness. It is the other hemisphere, but it is Western. It is distinct from Europe (of course, it is not the Orient), but it is bound to Europe. It is different, however, from Asia and Africa, continents and cultures that do not form part of the Western hemisphere. (31)⁶

With a critical eye on discursive power differences, Mignolo (2010) locates this idea of a New World unity within the imaginary of the modern and colonial world:

The visibility of the colonial difference in the modern world began to be noted with the decolonization (or independence) movements from the end of the eighteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. The emergence of the idea of the “Western Hemisphere” was one of those movements. (53)

Thus, according to Mignolo and other historians, such as Whitaker (1954) and Murphy (2005), articulations of the idea of the Western hemisphere are part of decolonization discourse.

⁶ Also quoted in Alemán (2008), 75.

Apart from such geopolitical statements and expressions of the literary imagination, of which I mentioned a few examples, references to the Western hemisphere appear in different forms of non-fictional anglophone travel writing. How do travel reports written by authors who present themselves as citizens of the U.S. relate to the – as Murphy (2005) puts it – “Hemispheric frame”?

Travel Writing and Hispanic America

Travel writing does not only construct, and reflect on, categories of national affiliation but it also performs the establishing of boundaries between legally solidified and imaginary categories, such as ‘home’ and ‘abroad’, ‘domestic space’ and the ‘world outside’, ‘we’ and ‘they’. It does, in fact, not only contribute to popularizing borderlines but also to testing and questioning given categories of affiliation. Thus, travel writing contributes to discourses on the geostrategic and symbolic meaning of the spaces visited and traversed (e.g. by describing encounters with people, cultures, and natural phenomena). As textual contact zones, travel narratives perform boundary constructions e.g. by marking an implied ‘national’ reader, by exposing the cultural rootedness of the traveler/narrator, or by interconnecting the narrative to imagined and/or actually existing institutional contexts (e.g. through letters to state representatives, by referring to intelligence networks and scientific communities).

In the Americas of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the nation was an emerging and contested concept. Travel writing by authors who represented themselves as citizens of the United States and who traveled in North America, South America, and the Caribbean partly continued the discourse of wonder, exploration, and promotion of colonial times;⁷ most authors connect their writing to the Enlightenment project of Natural History as a scientific method or mode of description and observation. However, texts written or published after 1776 indicate different strategies of positioning within changing categories of regional and national affiliation, some articulating an explicitly patriotic voice, anticipating the discourse and tendency of literary

⁷ See Greenblatt (1992).

nationalism as well as territorial expansionism and empire. In the following, I will discuss how travel reports of the period reflect on and imagine the space and category of the Western hemisphere, for example, in terms of political solidarity, or in paternalistic, expansionist, and imperial ways, or as a tool for establishing forms of post-Independence transatlantic distinction.

Until the first decade of the nineteenth century, only a few Americans visited colonial Spanish America as well as other regions of Central America and South America (what later in the century became referred to as Latin America). Only very few descriptions of the region were produced and published in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Of these, a large part was written by mariners, such as Amasa Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels, in the northern and southern hemispheres: comprising three voyages round the world; Together with a voyage of survey and discovery in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands*, which first appeared in Boston in 1817 but looks back at a journey that originally took place in 1805 – and that later served as the source for Melville's novella "Benito Cereno" (1855). With the inception of the struggle for national independence from Spanish rule in many parts of South and Central America, more U.S. visitors traveled in this region and wrote about their observations and experiences. Apart from the reports that I am going to discuss in more detail in the following subchapters, the following reports seem to be characteristic of the published travel writing on the region:⁸

(a) The epistolary narrative by Samuel B. Johnston, *Letters Written During a Residence of Three Years in Chili, Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Events in the Revolutionary Struggles of that Province. With an Interesting Account of the Loss of a Chilian Ship, and Brig of War, By Mutiny, And the Consequent Imprisonment and Sufferings of Several Citizens of the United States, For Six Months, in the Dungeons of Callao* (1816), is sensationalist ("fiery dragons," p. 18) and compares the landscapes of the United States and of South America (the Andes and the Allegheny mountains, see p. 17 and 28). He discusses the

⁸ In American literary scholarship not much research has been published on travel reports on Spanish America in the early nineteenth century.

influence of Benjamin Franklin on Spanish American intellectuals (196) and stresses the importance of education for the success of republican independence (197).

(b) George Fracker's *Narrative of the Shipwreck and Particulars of the Loss of the English Ship Jane, in the River La Plata. South America* (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1818) is related in an autobiographical mode with only a few references to country and people. In Fracker's report, personal experience figures more centrally than the description of land and people. In the "Advertisement," Fracker justifies the publication of the text, commenting in the third person: "to produce a true and plain-told tale, for the amusement of a winter's evening; and to preserve a memorial of so remarkable an instance of divine favor, are his motives for publication. [...] if, therefore, uninteresting, it may be considered as authentic; and his design in writing it, is, at last, not mercenary" (iii).

(c) Isaac Foster Coffin's 231-page *Journal of a Residence in Chili, by a Young American, detained in that country, during the Revolutionary scenes of 1817-18-19* (1823). The advertisement by the publisher legitimizes the publication by highlighting that the "increasing connection between the country described and our own, may, it is hoped, render it acceptable to readers of various tastes" (i). In the first part of his chronological *Journal* Coffin concentrates on trade as the topic guiding his observations. In the last chapters, the subjective experience of the narrator is subordinated to the depiction of the political and social success of the revolution. The very supportive stance for the cause of Chilean patriots is accompanied by comparative racial discourse and remarks on future trade relations with the United States:

In Spanish Chili you find every variety of complexion, from the dull Indian copper colour, to the pure red and white of the Biscayan. The chief family pride of the descendants of Old Spaniards has consisted in the preservation of the skin untainted with Indian blood. This has rarely been long effected in any family. [...] The revolution, which according to all appearance, is soon to be crowned with complete success, has been not a little destructive to the pride of Spanish origin. [...] Many] would pass with us as brunettes of the first order. (98-99)

Free foreign intercourse is one of the chief objects with the Patriots, and should the revolution succeed, how wide a field of improvement is opening upon the nation! (113)

In addition to such reports by mariners, we find descriptions of contact situations with Hispanic America in reports by Americans on journeys in those parts of continental North America that still were part of the Spanish colonial empire. Some of these narratives, discussed in previous chapters, explicitly articulate thoughts about the Western hemisphere. For example, Jonathan Carver explored parts of Spanish territory and published an account of his observations and experiences in *Travels Through America 1766–1768* (1787). William Bartram published his famous report on his *Travels Through East and West Florida* (1791) before the American Revolution – when the Floridas were under British control for a few years. Bartram comments less on the Spanish history of the region but his discussion of Natural History shows signs of a creole sensibility – as it becomes manifest in the *Dispute of the New World*.⁹ In view of the dominant role of European perspectives in travel writing, American texts of the period, such as Bartram's, perform – as I have shown in the previous chapters – what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) and Walter Mignolo (2000) have described as “creolizing discourse”: a “re-articulation of global designs from the perspective of local histories” (Mignolo 2000, 41). In this sense Natural History inspired a hemispheric constellation: Bartram – even before the American Revolution – names a plant in honor of Benjamin Franklin; Jefferson transports a moose across the Atlantic Ocean in order to refute Buffon's thesis of degeneration in the Americas.

In their analysis of these global relations Mignolo and Jesse Alemán examine power structures in the discursive definition of the hemisphere. Alemán (2008) explains the contradictory significance of the Western Hemisphere in colonial discourse:

⁹ On this transatlantic debate see Antonello Gerbi. *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750–1900*. Trans. by Jeremy Moyle. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973 (orig. 1955), and in more detail chapter 3.1 of this study.

[...] Saxon and Iberian colonial Creoles defined the hemisphere in the early nineteenth century through a “double consciousness” that was “geographical” insofar as the Creoles imagined the hemisphere in opposition to Europe (England and Spain, respectively) and racial insofar as the Creoles consolidated their whiteness against indigenous groups of African Americans, and black Creoles. This double logic works through a process that in effect renders the hemisphere unhomey, for, on the one hand, it characterizes the hemisphere by what it is geo-politically not (Europe) and, on the other, represses the presence of what the hemisphere geo-racially is (indigenous and *mestizo*). (87)

Based on Mignolo’s notion of the Western hemisphere as an ambivalent and contradictory concept, Alemán refers to this regional construction in post-1776 discourse in terms of a double consciousness, as emphasizing anticolonial unity but at the same time claiming the superiority of U.S. democracy (empire).

As I will show in the following, American travel writing about North and South America during this period is characterized by contradictions of the transatlantic Enlightenment, such as the antithetic positions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism as well as anticolonialism and imperial desire. The four travel accounts I will analyze, by Zebulon Pike, Henry Ker, Henry Marie Brackenridge, and William Duane, evoke the hemisphere in different, partly contradictory and inconsistent, patterns. For example, they cast the hemispheric idea in terms of political solidarity, or in paternalistic, expansionist, and imperialist ways, or as a tool for establishing post-Independence transatlantic distinction. In addition to racialized discourse, as evoked by Mignolo and Alemán, anglophone U.S. authors of travel narratives struggled with the contradictory split of geopolitical identification. They approached the hemisphere in terms of political solidarity and anticolonial positioning, on the one hand, and in an expansionist logic that grants a leading position to the U.S., on the other. While Pike’s report stresses military considerations, Ker’s account is characterized by an imaginary structuring of inter-American differences, Brackenridge’s and Duane’s description of South America, marked by diplomatic reasoning, are explicitly linked to the political establishment.

6.2. Zebulon Pike: Military Exploration

Jefferson was highly interested in obtaining information about the Spanish empire in North America. This became most evident in his encounter and subsequent correspondence with Alexander von Humboldt who provided knowledge on the Spanish southwestern part of North America.¹⁰ During Jefferson's presidency, Zebulon Pike led the military expedition, authorized by the U.S. government, to explore the southern and western parts of the newly acquired Louisiana territory in the years 1805 to 1807. Pike crossed the border into the Spanish empire. He was arrested as a spy by the Spanish army and his journal was confiscated. After his release he published an account of the journey, written from memory. The title positions the narrative in the tradition of exploratory travel, emphasizing the official mandate, and the military context, signaling the national worth of the journey: *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and through the Western Parts of Louisiana to the Sources of the Arkansaw, Kans, La Platte, and Pierre Jaun, Rivers; Performed by Order of the Government of the United States During the Years 1805, 1806, 1807; and a Tour through the Interior Parts of New Spain when Conducted through these Provinces by Order of the Captain-General in the Year 1807* (1810). This publication provided one of the first reports on Mexico by a U.S. citizen.

As a military man, Pike has a clear focus on concerns of national interest, zones of conflict as well as the boundaries of the nation. His post-Independence gaze demands lucidly marked national affiliation. He comments repeatedly on the confusion caused by the coexistence of the Spanish flag and the United States flag among Native American tribes of the southwestern part of the Louisiana territory. From his perspective, the apparently unclear allegiance of the tribes gives reason for distrust and makes the indigenous groups he encounters illegible and suspect in his eyes.

¹⁰ Jefferson, Thomas. "Jefferson to Humboldt, 6 Dec. 1813." Repr. in: "Alexander von Humboldt's Correspondence with Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin." (1959). See also Botting (2001 (1973), 205.

This wariness and confusion illustrate how patriotism shapes the perspective of this military explorer.¹¹

Within this logic of national distinction, Pike (1895) sees the western plains as demarcating the future boundary of the United States:

These vast plains of the Western hemisphere may become in time as celebrated as the sandy deserts of Africa. [...] But from these immense prairies may arise one great advantage to the United States: The restriction of our population to some certain limit, and thereby a continuation of the Union. (525)

In his view, the prairies provide a limit that allocates clear definitions of national space and categories, a borderline of the nation. Pike, however, worries about the stability of the southwestern national boundary line, if Mexico should not achieve independence in the future. In such a case, he argues, Mexico would remain under the control of European powers and the border zone would remain disputed territory. Such a situation would, he writes, “oblige us to keep up a large and respectable military force and continually lay us liable to a war on the weakest and most vulnerable part of our frontiers” (805). Such considerations lead him to recommend the U.S.’s support of a struggle for independence of Spanish America: “Twenty thousand auxiliaries from the United States under good officers, jointed to the independence of the country, are at any time sufficient to create and effect the revolution” (805). The last paragraph of the journal’s chapter IV imagines military activities of the United States in the Western hemisphere in order to protect its own interests and territorial borders:

Should an army of Americans ever march into the country, and be guided and governed by these maxims, they will only have to march from province to province in triumph, and be hailed by the united voices of grateful millions as their deliverers and saviors, whilst our national character resounds to the most distant nations of the earth. (806)

In Pike’s comments on Mexico, and at the start of the struggles for independence in Spanish America during the years following

¹¹ See Pike (1895), 415 and 583.

his publication, the conceptualizing of the Western hemisphere takes on a new ‘politicized’ quality. While earlier commentators, like Jonathan Carver and William Bartram, and topographies such as Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, shape an idea of the regional frame mainly in terms of the discourse of Natural History and the related Dispute of the New World, the Western hemisphere became part of a discourse of anticolonial and anti-royalist regional unity around 1810. As such, travel writing on the Americas published roughly between 1810 and 1830 is marked by a complex discourse of empire, negotiating the triangular relationship of Europe, the United States, and the regions of Spanish America struggling for independence. This discourse of empire finds one of the most solid early public manifestations in James Monroe’s seventh *State of the Union Address* (1823). The ideas he presented in it would later become known as the Monroe Doctrine. Considering this political context, Pike’s writing illustrates the earlier discourse, expressing positions characteristic of the Monroe Doctrine concerning the Western hemisphere. Pike’s military exploration demonstrates the close link between knowledge production and geopolitical considerations in the Americas of the early nineteenth century.

6.3. Henry Ker: The Hemisphere as Space of Captivity and Liberation

Charles Henry Bellenden Ker, alias Henry Ker, published one of the very few reports on a journey leading through different anglo-, franco- and hispano-phone regions of North America before 1820. Ker’s journey took him to the Caribbean, Mexico, the Louisiana Territory, and the southern regions of the United States. The 376-page report *Travels through the Western Interior of the United States, from the Year 1808 up to the Year 1816, with a particular description of a Great Part of Mexico, or New-Spain* was published in 1817. The report is most remarkable in that it not only provides information and instructions on different regions but also reflects cultural and generic patterns of understanding.

Due to the narrator’s strikingly high number of adventurous experiences, the authenticity of the text has rightly been

questioned.¹² However, the preface, written in the third person, assures the authenticity of the account:

When he first contemplated writing a history of his travels, his intention was to have given a correct diary of every transaction which might occur throughout his tour: but this he soon found to be impracticable. [...] It is hoped a candid and judicious public will select from the work such information as may be correct, and that the remainder, if any, will not be imputed to wilful misrepresentation, but to the ignorance of the author, and the impracticability of his procuring correct information. (iii–iv)

These introductory remarks correspond to travel report conventions, stating and acknowledging the incompleteness of information.¹³ It is precisely this uncertain dividing line between fact and fiction¹⁴ that makes this account particularly rich for the study of the national imagination and the emerging patterns of U.S. national self-definition. Ker stresses the struggle between individual and collective forms of captivity and liberation in the Western hemisphere.

The chapters of Ker's report are characterized by an overt discourse of self-identification, as they are strongly autobiographical and go beyond the timespan of the actual journey. This theme of identification is expressed in different ways: the narrator's repeated remarks on dual and ambivalent national identification

¹² Henry Ker (1785?-1871) was the son of the well-known English botanist John Bellenden Ker Gawler. Later in his life, Henry Bellenden Ker became known as a legal reformer in England. Ker was raised in England, where he received his education and apparently spent most of his life. Apart from his travel report, no documentation that he ever visited the Americas exists. Thus, evidence of his upbringing as the son of a natural historian and his acquaintance with intellectual and literary circles of his time might be used to support the argument that his report is either partly or entirely fictional. He might have acquired sufficient knowledge about the regions without actually having been there and he might have been acquainted with conventions of the travel report genre through studies and his intellectual environment in London. See *Early American Imprints*, Series 2, no. 37997.

¹³ We find similar legitimizing remarks and excuses for incompleteness in Carver's and Bartram's introductions to their reports.

¹⁴ On the creative use of fact and fiction in travel writing, see chapter 2.1.1. of this study and Pfister (2007).

are juxtaposed with an individualist search for ‘adventure’ (which he eventually finds and describes). The narrator presents his search for the unexplored and his desire to get to know the American wilderness as testing of his own boundaries of personal experience and identification. Thus, the depiction of his journey in the Americas acquires a symbolic meaning that transcends the conventions of his chosen genre, the travel report. Ker’s entertaining style and his description of adventures juggle with the boundaries between factual and fictional narration. The style links the narrative intertextually to various literary genres, such as the autobiography, natural history, shipwreck narratives (65), promotional travel reports, and adventure narratives. For example, at one point the narrator recounts shooting an egg from his companion’s head in order to free him from Indian captivity (128–130) – presenting himself in a heroic pose. Repeatedly, the narrative reads like a crime and adventure story (e.g., in the description of murder on p. 272), including gloomy, gothic-like experiences (275) told in a novelistic style. Descriptions of adventure, danger, and violence overlap with conventions of the captivity narrative, such as the testing of one’s character and personal devotion. But the heterogeneous style also includes philosophical ventilation, e.g. a discussion of Thomas Paine’s philosophical writing (280), and an exoticizing discourse of wonder when facing unknown natural and cultural environments.

The narrative starts in an explicitly autobiographical mode by giving information on Ker’s birth and upbringing: “I was born in Boston, in the state of Massachusetts. My father, when I was at an early age, removed to London, where I continued until I was at the age of manhood” (9). In the first chapters, the narrator repeatedly signals that the text will not merely provide a descriptive account of a journey but will portray traveling, in the literal and symbolic sense, as a life-long activity and experience. Thus, the narrator represents himself not only as being biographically positioned in the transatlantic British world (through his American birth and early life in London) but also as being imaginatively drawn to the New World as a space of self-fulfillment. This first-person self-representation not only takes up the tradition of narratives of exploration but adds a novelistic quality to the first chapters

of the report that are reminiscent of a *Bildungsroman* as well as a picaresque narrative:

My propensity for a wandering life, however, was very strong, and I found it impossible to content myself in the dull routine of employments which had not novelty to recommend them to the attention of a mind, already dazzled by the glowing description which I received of that part of southern America which had been but superficially explored. My mind already roamed over a country, which was said to be rich in everything which could render life of man agreeable [...]. (10)

The opening chapters also emphasize that the journey was spurred on by the narrator's curiosity for exploring unknown territory, inspired by reports on the New World by previous explorers.

Ker, although positioned in the tradition of the European explorer, does not mirror cultural superiority but instead comments on injustices and insufficiencies in the Old-World societies of England and Europe. His promotional narrative is interspersed with patriotic comments highlighting U.S. social and political achievements. For example: "The United States have ever displayed a generosity in that respect, which it would have been much to the credit of Europe had she generally followed" (15), and: "This country has far exceeded the most mature nations of Europe, in improvements and inventions which have surpassed in their practical results all the theories of the old world" (44).¹⁵

Such a highly positive political assessment of the American early republic corresponds to generic conventions of promotional travel writing as we know it from eighteenth-century colonial English reports as well as John Filson's patriotic *Kentucky*. In one of the last chapters (XXXIII), for example, Ker, interrupting his description of his journey through West Florida, gives "General information to settlers, either from Europe or the United States, pointing out the advantages arising from settling in the western country" (325):

The United States of America are under a free representative government, and every citizen has a voice in electing such men as will

¹⁵ See also 24 and 325.

make laws for the good of the community, and preserve inviolate their constitution.

There are in the country but very few persons, exclusive of some who reside in New York, Philadelphia, and a few other cities, who would in Europe be considered rich; but it is highly gratifying to the feelings of an American to know, that there are very few who can with propriety be considered poor. There is rather a happy mediocracy that prevails throughout the country. You nowhere see in the United States, that disgusting and melancholy contrast so common in Europe, of vice and wretchedness, and filth and rags, in the immediate neighbourhood of the most wanton extravagance and the most useless and luxurious parade. (325)

Such praise for the United States as a society of justice and social equality is interwoven with a celebration of landscape, nature, and natural resources that the narrator explores not just in terms of natural history but just as much in a mode of adventure. We find enthusiastic descriptions of nature throughout the narrative, particularly in the first part of the book.¹⁶ Thus, for example, following on from descriptions of the killing of rattlesnakes and bears (22), the river Ohio is referred to as being “universally acknowledged to be the most beautiful of any on the continent, or perhaps in the world” (24) – a topos and praise as we find them in many contemporary post-revolutionary reports, since the publication of Filson’s *Kentucke*.

The lengthy title is instructive and thus is given in full here: *Containing, A particular account of thirteen different tribes of Indians through which the author passed; describing their Manners, Customs, &c; with some account of a tribe whose customs are similar to those of the ancient Welch. Interspersed with Valuable Historical Information, drawn from the Latest Authorities*. It indicates that the report is closely linked to the natural history discourse of the time. The manners-and-customs chapters alluded to in the subtitle were conventionally included in contemporary reports on the North American interior. The overt comparative perspective emphasizes the report’s informed scholarly participation in the debate on the origins of Native Americans (“the ancient Welch”). This focus links the report to the transatlantic discourse

¹⁶ See p. 33 et seq.

of the time. Buffon, for example, is mentioned repeatedly in the main text.¹⁷ However, Ker's report differs from most anglophone writing on the western parts of North America of his time in that it connects the Enlightenment discourse of natural history to a description of the social and political situation of "a Great Part of Mexico," as announced in the title. This focus on Spanish America is exceptional in anglophone writing of the time. Ker's report produces knowledge on the Americas that was not so much of interest for natural historians but rather for American politicians who were preoccupied with securing the national borders, and who were thinking about the future territorial expansion of the young nation. Jefferson's involvement in Pike's expedition and his interest in Alexander von Humboldt's reports on Mexico underscore the contemporary thirst for knowledge on the territory to the west and south of the United States.¹⁸ Ker's report indicates that the idea of the Western hemisphere had become established not only by distinguishing between the Old and the New World but also by framing imagined perceptions of inter-American regional and cultural commonalities and differences. While Pike approaches the Americas in explicitly military and geostrategic terms, Ker employs narrative patterns, such as adventure fiction and autobiographical self-exploration, to sketch a notion of the Western hemisphere.

After explaining the narrator's origin and his arrival in Charleston, the chronological narrative describes Ker's journey to Baton Rouge and other cities in the Louisiana Territory. In these newly acquired parts of U.S. territory, he encounters slaves. The practices of plantation slavery obviously contradict the social equality Ker repeatedly praises in his comments on U.S. society;

¹⁷ See, for example, 241.

¹⁸ Ker highlights the importance of descriptions of Mexico for U.S. economic interests and thus promotes his own writing and publication. This is indicative of such complicity in geopolitics and strategic knowledge production:

When we consider the important revolutions which are taking place in this country, and the probability that she will one day or other become an independent country, and by far the richest in the world as it respects minerals, it cannot but be desirable to have an accurate account of the country, and that too from such sources as may be relied on. (268)

but Ker resolves the contradiction by blaming former European colonial rule:

The rich sugar and cotton plantations now began to wear a most elegant aspect, with commodious buildings, and out-houses for the numerous servants, who appeared in droves, going to and fro upon the plantations. The manner in which these poor Africans are treated by their overseers, is frequently cruel to the extreme; but I shall here forbear making any remarks on this subject. This south-western extremity of the United States was nursed by European powers, and seems not to have been brought to perfection, nor a state of subordination and rectitude, until it fell into the hands of the mild and judicious government of the United States, whose power and spirit have shown it the defender of all just rights and claims within their happy union. (44)

Later in the narrative, the issue of slavery resurfaces at length when Ker describes traveling in the company of a former slave (“I hired a negro [...],” 76). The former life of this companion, named Edom, is rendered in direct speech over four pages (78–81), adding another narrative pattern to the report: a first-person slave narrative that recounts the cruelties of slavery and the slave trade. The description of Mexico, as I will show, likewise makes use of narrative conventions, in this case, those of captivity and liberation narratives.

As the narrative goes on to describe the journey to New Orleans and the territory West of the Mississippi, Ker positions himself and the regions visited explicitly on the European colonial map of North America. He mentions how useful his merely rudimentary knowledge of French and Spanish (49) is in this region of the continent. From New Orleans he proceeds to Jamaica, St. Domingo, and then through the Louisiana territory to Mexico. The account of this itinerary is constantly interspersed with comments on colonial rule, its deficiencies and cruelties, as well as on the effects of colonial exploitation since Columbus’s arrival.

Despite the anticolonial attitude, exposing an interest in global relations and implying Enlightenment ideas of freedom and liberation, Ker’s narrative is intimately involved in an exoticizing discourse of wonder. This discourse of wonder establishes differences between the regions he visits: firstly, in rather traditional

ways, it emphasizes a colonialist transatlantic difference between ‘civilized’ England and the wilderness of the New World, and secondly, it maintains an inter-American difference between the U.S. and other parts of North America, that is, the Caribbean and Spanish America. The U.S. is shown as rational and enlightened, the other parts of North America, in contrast, as uncivilized and exotic. In Santo Domingo, for example, the narrator encounters monstrous creatures:

[...] and about 3 o’clock, we found the monster among snakes, having two distinct heads; it was about twenty inches in length. Its heads were perfectly alike, having in the neck of each a joint by which it could move its heads either way [...]. We then took off his skin as carefully as possible, which on my return to the port I boxed up, and sent as a present to the museum in London. It excited wonder in all who saw it. (54–55)

In the Caribbean, as well as in Mexico,¹⁹ the narrator goes on framing his activities as a naturalist in the rhetoric of wonder:²⁰

In viewing the wild scene around us we were filled with silent terror [...]. We arose in the morning refreshed; the sun was not yet risen. The numerous alligators bestowed out their thanks for the return of day, and were slowly floating and swimming in every direction, in quest of food. Geese, cranes, and pelicans were flying in abundance. (56–58)

However, some aspects of the monstrous are not only shown as having been caused by and being products of natural phenomena. Ker, for example, accuses Spanish colonial rule and despotism of the destruction of the peaceful state of nature (Rousseau) when describing the wildlife of the island of Hispaniola:

[...] The magnolia, the lemon, and the orange tree, in full bloom, yield a delicious fragrance which scents the air and gives animation to the scene. The feathered songsters tune their little throats, and warble with a melody at once exquisite and ravishing; in fact, there is no country in the world where the music of the feathered tribe is heard with such enchanting melody as in this. The stillness of the scene scarcely interrupted by the rustling of the trees, for as

¹⁹ In the chapters on Mexico he also mentions “monstrous serpents” (245).

²⁰ On the rhetoric of wonder in travel writing, see Greenblatt (1991).

yet *civilized* man, as he is called, has not set his foot in a region which may with truth be termed happy, is favourable to reflection, and here the mind, lulled in repose, cannot but indulge in retrospective contemplation of the scenes of horror and bloodshed, which once desolated this fair country of its aboriginal inhabitants. Born originally free and independent, they disdained to cringe at the feet of tyrants, and knew not slavery but by the name. Accustomed to elect their own chief, and dispose of their own territory, they could not behold without indignation, a set of foreigners driving them from their lands, and appropriating its riches to their use. The cruelties exercised by a Cortez, and a Pizarro, have desolated one of the finest countries in the world of more than seven million of inhabitants. (68–69)

In the narrative, the contrast between exotic wonder and civilized modern life is structurally repeated when juxtaposing Mexico and the United States. The reader learns about ‘positive’ civilization which the narrator locates in the U.S. and which he shows as contrasting with the Spanish destructive culture of early colonization. On the way to Mexico and in Mexico the narrator experiences various exceptional adventures that are shown as either life-threatening or astoundingly fabulous and in which Mexico represents the uncivilized, the exotic, and primitive. In contrast, the U.S. is shown to provide a civilization based on enlightened rationale, justice, equality, and freedom.

Ker described his journey to Mexico as a hazardous undertaking that led him through the almost impenetrable wilderness and Indian captivity. In chapter XIX, the narrator finally reaches Mexico (“Author enters the Mexican empire,” 200). A Portuguese trader informs Ker that “the provinces were in a state of insurrection, in consequence of the oppressive measures of the Spanish government, which required more from the people than they were able to endure” (199). Such political statements then give way to comparative descriptions of the society, culture, and natural features of the region. Following his arrival in Mexico City, the narrator comments:

[...] in a few hours I found myself as much at home as though I had been brought up there. I found the city far to exceed anything I had conceived of its grandeur and magnificence. The buildings were lofty, and the architecture of many of them executed in

a manner that leaves them very little inferior to any in Europe.
(218–219)

Such positive assessments of the city are supplemented with comparative remarks on natural phenomena. For example, the narrator refers to Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* when recalling his observations:

I discovered a natural bridge, extending across from one mountain to the other, while in the valley ran a stream of clear water; [...] I was struck with the similarity between this bridge and the one described by Mr. Jefferson, in his *Notes on Virginia*, and which I had so often admired. It appeared to me to be as wide at the bottom as at the top, but the sublime appearance of it was equal to the one seen in Virginia. (214–215)

Ker adds observations and assessments of the social structure of Spanish America:

There are, however, a large class of men who are excluded from public stations, and are called Creoles. The descendants of the companions of Cortez, having been constantly excluded from all places of trust that were in any degree considerable, have seen the gradual decay of the power that supported their fathers. (224)

Despotism had there produced those fatal effects which it produces everywhere. The whole state was sacrificed to the caprices, pleasures, and magnificence of a small number of persons. (260)

The Mestees [mestizos], who constitute a third order of citizens, are held in great contempt. (254)

Comments on social hierarchies and injustices are juxtaposed with a discussion of atrocities during the history of the Spanish conquest (e.g., 255–260) and of the advantages and disadvantages of 'discovery' for the indigenous population of the Americas (260–263). Like Pike and other American visitors to Spanish America in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Ker feels that revolt against Spanish colonial rule would be favorable and anticipates Spanish America's independence:

[...] the late struggles [...] have animated these injured people to declare themselves free, [and] seem to point out that the time has

now arrived when a dismemberment from a Spanish despotism is about to take place, and the time not far distant when the southern will be as free as the northern parts of America. (267)

Ker's Captivity Narratives

In contrast to Pike and other contemporaries, Ker addresses inter-American issues in a symbolic way by picturing forms of oppression and the desire for liberation in his lengthy account of two distinct experiences of being held captive in Mexico. Once the captivity narratives commence, the narrator refrains from commenting on Mexican colonial society and comparing Europe, the U.S., and Spanish America. Instead, he concentrates on describing his captivity, first by Spanish officials, then among a group of Mexican robbers he encountered on his way back to the United States.

Following a friendly overview of Mexico City, chapter XX-VII presents the narrator in an unpleasant, unsafe, and even life-threatening situation:

[...] information was immediately given [...] to the officers of the government, that I was a spy, acting under the order of a foreign government. I was watched still closer, and some circumstances seeming to justify their suspicion, I was arrested and conducted before the tribunal. (269)

Ker's arrest as a spy resembles Pike's account of his experiences in Mexico. But, interestingly, following Ker's release from the hostile state authorities, the report relates a second captivity narrative in even more detail, including narrative devices of suspense, adventure, and poetic sentimentality. In this section, the report establishes a pattern of commenting on cultural difference that goes beyond the descriptive mode of travel writing and the depiction of geopolitical conflicts of the time.

After his release from captivity (as a spy), Ker leaves Mexico City for U.S. territory and his praised society of justice and liberation. But, on his way north, he is taken captive again:

Before I had time to make any observations, a loud whistle caused me to turn round, and I saw advancing towards me, a large party, armed with guns and cutlasses. I seized my gun, but they instantly

ran towards me, and in an instant I was on the ground. They now blindfolded me, and I was led along between two of them, who held me by the arms. They went forward a considerable distance, and then began to descend, which they continued for a considerable time. The dampness of the air, I felt very perceptibly, which induced me to think that I was a considerable way under ground. [...] A man of commanding figure, stood contemplating me with fixed attention; he was surrounded by about twenty persons whose ferocious countenances declared them capable of performing any diabolical deed which might be suggested to them. [...] When I got in he shut the door, and I heard him turn the key. My reflections were gloomy, and I felt as though I was shut out from all the world. [...] The black walls, which reflected a thousand shadows, and the height of the room, which was lost in the darkness which surrounded me, seemed to give a gloomy horror to my situation [...]. (274–77)

The narrative thus contains gothic imagery and has a sensationalist tone. While in captivity, Ker discovers the letters and poems written by a former captive, Frederick, an educated young American who built up a small library in the dwellings of the gang. He died after a longer period of captivity. Ker dedicates a full chapter (XXVIII) to Frederick's papers written "a short time before his death" (282). Ker quotes from the writing of the "talented young man" (282) who died among the bandits, particularly his seven-stanza poem whose lyrical I speaks in a romantic tone to his mother and sister. This adds a melancholy and, at the same time, American patriotic dimension to his report:

[...]
 No more the sylvan scenes to view,
 No more to join the joeund [sic] crew,
 Shall I again return;
 But, doom'd from native home to dwell,
 Or else within a cavern's cell,
 I am left alone to mourn. [...] (285)

Following the narrator's account of his adventurous escape from captivity among the Mexican robber band, the United States, as the destination of his route, appears – even more than earlier in the narrative – as a refuge for those kept in conditions of oppression. By placing the captivity in a vague space in Northern Mexico,

somewhere between Mexico City and the most southwestern territory of the U.S., Ker constructs an undefined transitional space in which different forms of oppression, destruction, and liberation take place. A liminal space where justice and injustice become indistinguishable and where the narrator's will to survive is nurtured by the U.S. as a place of longing. In the end, he clearly presents the U.S. as a refuge and as a society whose social and political structure and history serve as an ideal for the entire Western hemisphere.

The captivity section negotiates the topics of individualism, oppression, and survival in a symbolic way that portrays evildoers and victims in a secluded space far away from the formative social and political events of the time. Only Frederick's private library containing books by contemporary political authors such as Thomas Paine (229–231) links this community to actual historical space. In contrast to the de-historicized gothic space of captivity, the closing chapters of Ker's report shift the mode of observation back to the social and national frame employed in the earlier chapters that led the narrative from England to Charleston, to different Caribbean islands, the Louisiana Territory, and Mexico City. After describing his travels through Northern Mexico and the outskirts of U.S. territory, he writes:

On the 3rd of July (1814) I arrived at Nashville, and found all bustle and preparation for the celebration of the birthday of the United States. Every citizen, from the daylabourer, to the man who could count thousands, was anxiously anticipating the moment, when the thunder of cannon would announce the dawn of that day which gave his nation a rank among the empires of the world. (304)

The narrator explains the hospitality he experienced after his liberation and return. He reports in a celebratory and patriotic mode: "The politeness and attention which I received from a number of gentlemen with whom I was not personally acquainted, can only be accounted for by my being in a land of *freemen* [sic], with whom hospitality and politeness are not only natural, but easy" (304).²¹ The last 70 pages gather information on the journey

²¹ Similarly, the narrator comments earlier in the text on American "freemen":

from Nashville to New York City. In the descriptive narrative, we repeatedly find celebratory comments on the U.S. as well as promotional “general information to settlers, either from Europe or the United States, pointing out the advantages arising from settling in the western country” (325), as announced in the heading of chapter XXXIII.

Ker’s *Travels* provides one of the earliest accounts of Spanish America and the Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Santo Domingo by a traveler who strongly and explicitly identifies with the independent republic and country of his birth. Ker reports on his journey as an outsider, observing countries, people and events through the eyes of an explorer. The uncertain boundary between fact and fiction, the discourse of identity and the mode of the exotic and the monstrous – which are particularly strong in the chapters on the Caribbean islands – merge with an account of personal suffering caused by human cruelty in Spanish Mexico. This imagination of national distinction juxtaposes the space of republican equality with the space of despotism, of civilized behavior with uncivilized oppression, of liberty with captivity. The independent U.S. republic is presented as an enlightened and progressive society, functioning as an ideal society with which the regions traversed during the journey should align. The narrator repeatedly takes a *transatlantic* comparative perspective – after all, the narrator grew up in England. But Ker’s *Travels* is mainly characterized by an *inter-American* perspective on regions, societies, flora and fauna, in which the U.S. is expected to become the leading empire of the Western hemisphere.

6.4. Henry Marie Brackenridge: Diplomatic Travel Writing

Henry Marie Brackenridge, the son of the writer and lawyer Hugh Henry Brackenridge (“The Rising Glory of America,” 1771, and *Modern Chivalry*, 1792), produced one of the first travel

[...] and in the United States, created seven millions of freemen, who, having adopted a constitution by which they are enabled to choose their own rulers, are governed by men of their own choice, and laws which secure to every citizen the free use of those rights which were transmitted to him by his forefathers. (264)

reports on South America by a representative of the American intellectual class. Like the entire diplomatic and political career of the author, the travelogue is closely tied, both financially and politically, to the presidency of James Monroe. As I will argue in the following, Brackenridge's report is characteristic of the changed style and mode of American travel writing after the War of 1812, when most works of this genre had become diplomatic with friendly perspectives but also aimed to collaborate in consolidating the U.S. position in global geopolitical struggles.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1786, Brackenridge studied law and worked as lawyer and journalist in St. Louis, Missouri, before he was appointed district judge of Louisiana in 1812. During the War of 1812, Brackenridge allegedly worked in the intelligence field. In 1814, his book *History of the Late War, Between the United States and Great Britain* was published without his name and with only his national affiliation highlighted on the title page – “By an American.” In the same year, he published the descriptive account and travel journal *Views of Louisiana; Together with a Journal of a Voyage Up the Missouri River, in 1811*. In 1817, he published the political essay *South America: A Letter on the Present State of that Country, to James Monroe, president of the United States*, in which he, as in his history of the War of 1812, remained anonymous.²² Also in 1817, he was appointed secretary of a mission to South America, a continent he had not visited before. After his return, he published the extensive two-volume report *Voyage to South America, Performed by Order of the American* indicates the official, diplomatic mandate of this exploratory journey: “Performed by Order of the American Government.” The title highlights the privileged position of the narrator.

Brackenridge's *Voyage to South America* consists of two volumes, each “published by the author” and printed in Baltimore in 1819. Volume one is divided into an introduction, three chapters on different parts of South America, and an appendix with “Documents referred to in the president's message at the commencement of the second session of the fifteenth congress.” Chapter I focuses on Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, chapter II on the journey

²² For further details see Pizarz-Ramírez (2016), 102–103.

from Rio de Janeiro to Montevideo, and chapter III on Buenos Aires. Volume two is structured in seven chapters on the society, history, and culture of Chile and the La Plata region, which had already gained independence from Spain, followed by an appendix containing translations of political manifestos of the region.

Up until then, inter-American discourse had largely been exploratory writing about the unknown wilderness, about the exotic and uncivilized features one encountered in the other Americas, and about Spanish despotism. *Voyage to South America* effected a shift in such discourse toward scholarly guides to the society, political structures, flora and fauna, legitimized by an official assignment from the highest level of an independent republican government of the U.S. This diplomatic travel writing differs not just in terms of content but also structurally from the military discourse of Pike's journal and from Ker's Enlightenment discourse of liberation. Brackenridge's national imagination is careful neither to glorify the U.S. to the detriment of its neighbors in the Western hemisphere nor to articulate expansionist fantasies of the U.S. political elite. In that sense, it is a diplomatic travel account that uses the genre to generate a space for unprejudiced international discourse. However, despite the diplomatic structure, *Voyage to South America* appears to be very much part of the politics of American expansionism and the negotiation of the U.S. role and function in the Western hemisphere: after all, Brackenridge was appointed U.S. commissioner of Florida and later U.S. judge for the western district of the newly acquired 'organized territory' of Florida in 1821.

The interplay between Brackenridge's publications and his professional positions in the state administration not only shows how closely this early American travel writer was linked to the project of the nation's territorial expansion but also illustrates the significance of the Western hemisphere in American geostrategic politics and in imaginary self-conceptions of the U.S. of the time. Brackenridge's report partakes in post-revolutionary "creolizing discourse," which Mignolo (2000) defines as a "re-articulation of global designs from the perspective of local histories" (41).²³

²³ Such 'creolizing' texts transform conventional forms of representation. See my reference to Pratt (1992) in the introduction to this study.

One strategy of ‘Americanizing’ travel writing is the negotiation of Otherness, which is partly defined in national parameters and within marked lines of distinction, as well as within newly emerging concepts of the global (“global designs,” Mignolo) that imagine the ‘outside’ world (the world beyond the U.S. borders) in post-Independence geostrategic patterns. In this sense, Brackenridge’s *Voyage to South America*, like Pike’s and Ker’s reports as well as many reports on the Americas by contemporary U.S.-based authors, is complicit in the politics and discourses of territorial expansion and empire-building in ways that are structurally similar to what Pratt has shown regarding European scientifically-oriented, exploratory travel writing on Latin America in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century: although such texts replace the discourse of conquest and superiority (of fifteenth- to mid-eighteenth-century European travel reports) with the discourse of natural history and Romanticism, the writing still contributes to discursively establishing patterns of social and cultural hierarchies as well as imperial perceptions of the world (and, thus, remains structurally linked to earlier European discourses).

Brackenridge starts his preface to *Voyage to South America* in an academic fashion by referring to the history of the study of South America, listing names of acknowledged authors from Europe and America who had contributed to scholarly knowledge production on the region, such as Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, Antonio de Ulloa, and Alexander von Humboldt (v). Throughout the two volumes, Brackenridge refers to these and other canonized authors of histories of South America, natural history, and geography, as well as further works on the Americas, such as the derogatory representation of the early U.S. by the Englishman Thomas Ashe (xv).²⁴

But despite these erudite references to scholarly work and historical detail, Brackenridge also legitimizes his writing in a way that was traditional and common in explorative travel writing: he emphasizes the general lack of knowledge on the yet ‘undiscovered’ parts of the continent. Brackenridge highlights the fact that his potential U.S. readers know little about the history and current situation of societies of the Western hemisphere. Due to

²⁴ On Ashe’s report, see chapter II above.

this ignorance, Brackenridge argues, the U.S. public fails to recognize the global significance of the region. However, he adds a post-Independence and creole viewpoint to the politics of transatlantic knowledge production: rather than re-inscribing European dominance into the text, he frames his account as a source for decisively inter-American knowledge production:

The study of South American affairs has not yet become fashionable; persons who possess the most minute acquaintance with different countries of Europe, have scarcely given themselves the trouble to become familiar with the mere geographical outlines of our great southern continent. To what cause are we to attribute this want of curiosity, with respect to the most important portion of the globe? (vi)

Thus, on the one hand, Brackenridge writes within the generic conventions of explorative reports (cf. map of South America from 1819 edition, fig. 4, p. 196). But, on the other hand, it is significant that he does not represent himself as visiting an ‘uncivilized wilderness’ as earlier and contemporary American explorative travelers of the Americas – including Bartram, Carver, Lewis and Clark, and, to some extent, Pike and Ker – claimed in their reports. Rather than the wilderness, it is the enlightened discourse of *knowledge production* that makes Brackenridge’s journey and narrative structurally resemble an exploratory expedition. Brackenridge’s diplomatic travel account ‘explores’ contemporary societies, political systems, economies and cultural customs. Accordingly, he substitutes the usual ethnographic ‘Customs-and-Manners’ chapter focusing on the ‘uncivilized’ indigenous groups of a region found in many exploratory reports influenced by natural history with an appendix consisting of the “Manifesto of Independence of La Plata” and other historical documents of the recent revolutions in South America. Brackenridge’s narrative perspective is guided by a professional and ‘national’ interest in law, political philosophy and activism in South America.

With this logic of inter-American knowledge production, Brackenridge’s preface and the 97-page introduction differ from the predominant style of introductions to travel reports that had previously been published. They also differ from contemporary

travel writing on other parts of the world. His mode of legitimizing his writing as well as his presentation of things observed and of his experiences take direct, explicit and self-confident positions in contemporary international relations, pursue a politicized discourse and articulate an anti-colonialist stance. This involvement and discursive engagement in political affairs mark a new style in American travel writing that seems, on the one hand, to be shaped by the Monroe presidency's Era of Good Feelings, and, on the other hand, appears to be closely related to the emergence of the hemispheric frame as a locale of affiliation and identification as well as a space of potential material acquisition. This new transnational regionalism of the Western hemisphere inspired a benevolent and engaged perspective in American travel writing which, at the same time, hints at paternalistic and imperialist tendencies that would become more evident later in the nineteenth century.

In the introduction, Brackenridge compares the colonial histories of South America and North America. He particularly stresses the preconditions for emancipation and revolution, colonial administrative structures and government, labor conditions of different groups, as well as the exploitation of Native Americans and African Americans (78–80). Brackenridge presents himself as a traveler on a public mission to visit South America during its “civil war” (99). He adds authority to his writing by citing president Monroe's message to Congress, which gave a mandate to a group of “gentlemen” (100) to visit South America on behalf of the U.S. government.

Brackenridge explains that his interest in South America's struggles for emancipation was inspired early on during his residency on the borders of the newly acquired Louisiana Territory. He writes that during his employment as a judge in Louisiana, he

[...] had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Spanish character, laws and government, [...] and living on the borders of New Spain, I had an opportunity of forming an acquaintance with several intelligent natives of that country, who contributed much to remove the prejudices, which, in common with many of my countrymen, I had formed against everything Spanish, whether European or American. (ix–x)

This initial contact zone with Spanish America is extended in different ways both in and by means of his report: first, the text provides descriptive accounts of South American culture and society; second, it provides instruction to the American reader who is addressed by the narrator; and third, Brackenridge's book provides a diplomatic and political contact zone, as the report can be read as a sequel to the published letter *South America* (1817) – thus implying no less distinguished a reader than the president of the United States:

To obtain correct information on every subject in which the United States are interested; to inspire just sentiments in all persons in authority, on either side, of our friendly disposition, so far as it may comport with an impartial neutrality; and to secure proper respect to our commerce in every port and from every flag, it has been thought proper to send a ship of war with three distinguished citizens along the southern coast [...]. (100)

Brackenridge emphasizes the role of international commerce as a source of the 'rise of American glory' and supports his reading of the U.S.'s and the Western hemisphere's prospect by referring to the poetic prediction of bishop Berkeley: "Westward the course of empire takes its way" (of which he quotes a stanza in his previously published *South America*)²⁵. In *Voyage to South America* he writes:

The position of South America as relates to the United States, to Europe, Africa, and Asia, holds out the most singular advantages for commerce. When the commerce of the east, comes to receive that direction which seems to be pointed out by nature, through the Caribbean sea and the gulf of Mexico, America will then be the acknowledged centre of the earth. [...] In spices, gums, and in articles useful in the material medica, she equals, if not surpasses, the East Indies. (19)

Brackenridge's introductory comments establish a connection between the U.S. and other parts of the Western hemisphere which

²⁵ See Brackenridge, Henry Marie. *South America: A Letter on the Present State of that Country, to James Monroe, president of the United States of 1817*. London: J. Ridgeway and J. Both, 1818. (Reprinted from the Washington ed. of 1817), 32.

is not only grounded in political sympathy and republican solidarity but also grows out of the territorial proximity to Spanish America. Its closeness became more obvious and striking with the Louisiana Purchase and other events and conflicts on the border, such as in Florida. Brackenridge asserts his emphasis on the economic potential and future importance of the region within an explicit anti-colonialist discourse. The anticolonialism articulated by Brackenridge in earlier publications – for example, in his *History of the Late War* – is brought to the forefront in his *Voyage to South America* in a collective voice of a national ‘we’. His anti-colonialist introduction to *History of the Late War* starts with an accusation of continuing European colonialist activities and attitudes:

The modes in which self-interest can pervert the simplest truths, to suit its purpose, are infinitely various; but there are none so preposterous, as those invented by the modern nations of Europe, to retain the American colonies in subjection. (vii)

And he goes on to analyze the rhetorical strategies used to legitimize European colonialism: “Of all the inventions to hold America in subjection, the most ridiculous is that of claiming over the colonies A PARENTAL AUTHORITY!” (viii).

In *Voyage to South America*, the use of the first-person plural is particularly significant in the chapters on the Brazilian monarchy. Brackenridge’s narrative voice implies an American reader and suggests a homogeneous national perspective. In Brazil, the American group, for example, encounters representatives of the Brazilian aristocracy and the royal family. Brackenridge uses the description of such encounters to insert patriotic, anti-monarchic, and anti-colonial remarks into his narrative:

We were soon after waited on by the commander and several officers from an Austrian frigate, which had brought out the princess Leopoldina to espouse the heir of the Brazilian throne. These officers spoke French, and appeared to be extremely desirous of examining our vessel. The admiration with which they saw every thing, could not but be highly gratifying to our pride of country. The Congress is perhaps one of the finest vessels in the world. [...] Never was national pride more fully gratified than ours, at the noble and distinguished figure made in a foreign distant port, by this admirable representative of our national sovereignty. (116–117)

And in the same section he comments:

It would be useless to conceal the truth; every American who goes abroad, has a contempt for royalty and its attendants, and he is only restrained by prudence or good manners from expressing it. (118)

Brackenridge addresses the profoundness of intra-American cultural differences when commenting on Brazilian society:

A motley collection of people attracted by curiosity were lounging about the quay, their looks directed towards the American frigate as the principal object of their curiosity. I shall not attempt to describe their dress or looks; nothing could be more unlike our countrymen. The English or French fashions do not appear to predominate. Among these people I felt myself indeed a stranger; their countenances made a very unfavorable impression on me, though by no means disposed to judge hastily, for I have been too often taught by experience the danger of condemning people by wholesale, merely on account of their looks. The complexions of the middle and lower classes are generally dark, their features coarse, and their persons in general inclining to corpulency. A number of them were distinguished by ribbons and baubles attached to their button holes, many wore enormous, ill-contrived cocked hats, and all appeared desirous to distinguish their persons, by the wearing of some badge of uniform. There was no smile of welcome to us in their countenances; but rather repulsive half scowling glances. A number of them were priests dressed in loose gowns, and wearing hats as broad as parasols. (119–120)

He establishes clear lines of difference between Americans and Brazilians in cultural as well as racial terms. Although he addresses the danger of stereotyping and of prejudices against cultures and societies that one does not know, his racialized discourse marks the conspicuousness and profundity that he attributes to the difference in “complexion” (120). He compares the role of racial differences in both societies:

The prejudice with respect to complexion, did not appear to me as strong as in the United States. This may be owing to the great number of persons of color, who own large fortunes, and possess wealth and consequence. I remarked several mulatto priests, and in one instance a negro. (142)

Some remarks, although uttered in a pointedly neutral and descriptive mode, clearly establish an inter-American hierarchy of cultural distinction in which the U.S. ranks highest: “There is more printing in any one of our smallest cities, than in all Brazil” (145).

As such comments on population and social practices illustrate, Brackenridge’s travel account focuses on hemispheric and inter-American social relations and knowledge production. His attitude and mode of approaching topics are clearly anchored in the tradition of exploratory writing in the service of providing information on a certain region. Brackenridge’s imagery of friendship (between nations), however, appears to be closely tied to the ideology and policy of territorial expansionism. While it embraces the independence movements and the young republics of South America as ‘hemispheric siblings’, he emphasizes, explores, and assesses differences between the first independent republic and her younger sister republics as well as the remaining European colonies in South America. Given the national perspective and narrative tone, Brackenridge’s comparative approach results in implicit claims for the superior quality and position of the U.S. in the Western hemisphere. These claims appear to extend his earlier active involvement in the administration and politics of U.S. expansion. While earlier he was involved in securing newly acquired territory as a lawyer and writer in Louisiana territory, his account of the journey to South America explores options of future interactions between the nations of the Western hemisphere.

6.5. William Duane: Democracy, Trade, and Race

The journalist William Duane published a 600-page report *A Visit to Colombia, in the Years 1822 & 1823* in Philadelphia in 1826. Duane pursues a similar agenda to that of Brackenridge. However, Duane’s report employs, to a much lesser extent, a perspective of exploration, knowledge production, and adventure. Duane’s report on his experiences in the newly independent Colombia is more characterized by a calm, intellectual and cosmopolitan observing voice of a visitor to a country that provides scenery, distinguished social life, and luxury as well as an apparently well-functioning post-colonial social and political system resembling the society the narrator shows himself as being used to in the

United States. However, a closer look at this mix of touristic and diplomatic views reveals a discourse of domesticity that is marked by paternalistic and racializing attitudes and expressions of superiority through colonialist comparisons. The imagery of family life and the discourse of domesticity overlap with a discourse of U.S. economic interests. As in Brackenridge's report, this creates a contradiction between the cultural discourse of anticolonial hemispheric unity and the imperialist desires of the U.S. citizen.

Duane was born in New York to Irish parents, returned to Ireland with his mother in 1774, and then lived for 22 years in different regions of the British Empire, "gaining so much renown as the liberal editor of the Calcutta *Indian World* that he was seized by the governor, deported without trial, and divested of his property without legal process because of his criticism of governmental officials of the East India Company" (Smith 1953, 123). He returned to Philadelphia in 1796. Duane became known in U.S. politics and journalism after succeeding Benjamin Franklin Bache as editor of the *Aurora* in 1798. The *Aurora*,²⁶ founded by Bache, a grandson of Benjamin Franklin, was the leading Republican print organ in the United States.²⁷

Like Brackenridge, Duane published a pamphlet on international politics before actually traveling to South America. Two years before the publication of the report on his journey to Colombia, Duane published a 37-page essay on Europe and the Western hemisphere, titled *The Two Americas, Great Britain, and The Holy Alliance*, which shows his engagement with the newly independent nations of the Americas and documents his in-depth reflections on the position of the post-revolutionary American republics in global international politics. In this political essay, Duane argues that Great Britain has commercial interests in South America's independence (10–11) as it makes the markets accessible: "England has an interest in common with the two Americas, founded in commerce, the sole source of her power and prosperity" (31–32). Because of this commercial interest, Duane argues, it would be most unlikely that British policy would become

²⁶ On the history of the *Aurora*, see Richard Rosenfeld (1997).

²⁷ Briefly before the passing of the Alien and Sedition Laws, Bache died during the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia.

supportive of “any conspiracy or designs of the Holy Alliance against any part of America, North or South” (15). Duane’s focus on the importance of the North and South American markets for Great Britain implies a competing struggle for influence on the newly independent republics and thus corresponds to Monroe’s *State of the Union Address* of 1823, given a year before Duane’s essay was published.

Duane’s *Visit to Colombia* engages less explicitly in political discourse. While the first-person narrative reveals much about the life of the author and his involvement in U.S. politics of his time, it is at the same time structured like a guidebook. The chronological narrative is characterized by an entertaining tone and a cautious style (e.g. such insertions as: “[...] perhaps it was only the censure of a passing thought [...],” 36). The narrative is directed at an implied educated reader ‘at home.’ The lively style and the sophisticated discourse reveal the author to be a professional writer.

Along the lines of the economic rationale of the 1824 essay, the first paragraphs of the preface to *A Visit to Colombia* highlight the rather profane, petty, and materialist reasoning for the undertaking described in the following long 34 chapters (plus an appendix consisting of Colombian laws and an itinerary). Duane explains that his journey “to the Colombian Republic was made on behalf of persons in the United States, having claims against the government, of which other agents had not procured the liquidation” (iii). This plain sentence starts the 600-plus-page narrative and introduces the author as negotiating a troublesome business relation between U.S. citizens and the republican government of Colombia. However, rather than intensifying the impression of an untrustworthy Colombian government, the first paragraph informs the reader that the author was successful in settling the matter and shows the American party, not the Columbian government, as unreliable as they “contrived to cheat me out of my commissions” (iii).²⁸

²⁸ As was common in published travel books of the period, Duane highlights that his writing was primarily of a private nature. Interestingly, however, within the same paragraph he connects questions of literary form with a geopolitical perspective on the Western hemisphere when commenting on the idea of a canal through the isthmus of Panama which had previously been suggested by Alexander von Humboldt:

The second paragraph shifts from the emphasis on personal material gain to the idealist and geopolitical reasoning when highlighting the author's 30-year-long sympathies for the revolutions in Spanish America and the "commercial and political importance of those rich regions to the United States" (iii). This is followed by a eulogy on the global significance of the U.S. as it had become popular in different literary genres since the Rising Glory poetry of the 1770s.²⁹ However, while John Filson's famous patriotic Boone narrative, for example, as well as Zebulon Pike's patriotic writing, comment on the exceptional future role of the U.S. (as quoted above), Duane's preface as well as the entire lengthy report, attribute an exceptional global role to hemispheric republicanism. The U.S. is represented as the leading force in the Western hemisphere, a fatherlike position within the family of republics:

A new creation springing out of chaos; inviting the republic, which had only a few years preceded, to communicate its institutions, exchange its useful products, and promote a family of republics, whose institutions must eventually regenerate humanity. (iii)

In accord with the friendly family affair discourse of the preface, chapter 1 expresses a radical break with the long history of secluded Spanish America and the intelligence and spy character (assumed or real) of reports by anglophone visitors to the region. Duane explains that he was invited to visit the South American republic by a representative of the Colombian government who had just acquired the U.S.-built corvette *Herkules*. This invitation was, as Duane goes on to explain, extended to "my daughter Elizabeth, and stepson Lieut. R. Bache, of the U.S. Artillery" (9). The description of the family cruise to the friendly sister republic

No labour has been attempted in this work; a mere conversational narrative, such as I should give to a circle of private friends, is all that I pretend to. [...] I meant to have said something about the Amphyctions of Panama, with the origin of which I was acquainted before any other person now living in the United States – and I proposed to bestow a chapter on the grand work of the strait of Panama, to effect which I have made proposals to the Columbian government (sustained by capitalists) – and which, if accomplished, as I know it is practicable, would render the communication between the two oceans as free and more secure than the passage of the straits of Sunda or Gibraltar. (iv)

²⁹ On the American prospect poems, so-called Rising Glory poems, see the introduction to this study.

takes on an allegorical meaning as the reader learns that “the state cabin had been appropriated to Señora Antonia Bolívar and her daughter Josephine” and that “Young Pablo, the son of Señora Antonia” (10) travels on the *Herkules* as well. After the introduction of the eldest sister of the South American liberator, Duane writes:

We had a great variety of characters, and (what does not always happen on board crowded ships) there was not a single squabble nor dispute during the voyage; good humor, and an unstudied disposition to afford every service that could be agreeable, rendered the passage rather a party of pleasure on a river than a voyage at sea in a ship of war. [...]

Our fare, to the hour we landed, was in every respect equal to what we should expect at the best hotel in New York; and the wines were equally excellent and abundant. (10)

The passengers on the ship interact in an amicable way as members of Duane’s young “family of republics” ought to. Such imagery of peaceable and convenient domesticity characterizes most descriptions of social gatherings in Duane’s travel narrative. After his arrival in Colombia, Duane stays onboard while his daughter goes ashore:

After paying our respects, and partaking of the good Catalonian wine of the commandant, and the excellent sweetmeats of his good lady, we retired to meet with fresh evidences of the hospitality we were to receive without anticipating them. A friend had sent from Caracas, a well-trained grey mule, tastefully caparisoned with a handsome side saddle, which was to be for the use of my daughter during her stay at Caracas; and upon this she made her first equestrian essay, by galloping off with a gay young party to Maquiteia, where she was received by her friend Mrs. Lowry. (22–23)

A cheerful farewell dinner with the shipmates at Laguayra is described from the perspective of a cosmopolitan connoisseur:

The company was about thirty, and the table was covered with an abundance of excellent provisions, well cooked and displayed, and more than sufficient for double the company; the free circulation of the bottle, in the British West Indian fashion, was already before

dessert; but the dessert was excellent, and the coffee introduced in the French mode was perfect. (26–27)

Duane stresses such homely and aesthetic issues as the “mixture of ancient and modern furniture” (24), the beauty of folk music, patriotic songs (39–40), and military music (53). Such topics clearly address an educated republican reader at home in the United States. The overall promotional quality of the report on the Colombian republic is intensified by such repeated remarks as the absence of “mosquitos” (27) and Duane’s defense of cultural customs alien to the North American visitor: “The customs of every nation are the criterion of their own morals, which ought not to be judged by customs which differ from them, and are seldom more nor less moral than the other” (43). This kind of open and friendly representation of Columbian society stresses the hemispheric anticolonial unity. The elaborate descriptions of hospitality apparently aim at making old negative stereotypes of the Spanish world (the so-called Black Legend) dissolve in the American reader and the collective mind.

However, despite stressing the hemispheric anticolonial unity through such highlighting of similarities in lifestyles and shared political ideals, as well as descriptions of hospitality, the narrative concurrently establishes a discourse of the exotic that marks differences within the Western hemisphere. This discourse of the exotic employs references to, and comparisons with different parts of the British colonial empire that Duane had visited earlier in his life. Thus, the friendly, enlightened and explicitly post-Independence descriptions of Colombia borrow from and overlap with the tradition of a colonialist gaze that encodes Otherness and legitimizes hierarchies, positions, and exploitative systems:

The landing at Laguayra has been held forth as unusually dangerous. Those who have had occasion to land at St. Helena or at Madras, would consider it as a matter of very little difficulty at the worst, and we landed without any inconvenience whatever. (20)

As in the depictions of elegant social events and pleasant landscapes, Colombia is presented as a place to be visited “without any inconvenience” (20). But Duane constructs a comparative

framework that imaginatively links Colombia to the British empire in the South Atlantic and India. This focus adds a second spatial imaginary to the Western hemisphere: that of a global empire.

The style of building, the pavements, the high folding doors, the broad staircase, and the elevation of the apartments, with the naked timbers of the structure, brought to my mind the strong resemblances of what I had seen many years before in different parts of Asia. (22)

The manner of landing the baggage reminded me of the same kind of transaction at the ghauts of Pondicherry and Calcutta. Upon the approach of the baggage boat to the landing place, a crowd of men and boys, of every shade of complexion and apparel, rushed forward in tumult, and each seizing the article nearest hand, bore it away, until there was no more to carry, and deposited them at the custom house; where those that underwent examination were removed as the owner directed. The mode of payment was in the same oriental style. (23)

At Madras, or Calcutta, or from the pier of Batavia, a walk of that distance might be fatal. I could not but recollect Batavia as I walked along the margin of the sea, but Laguayra is a paradise compared either with Madras or Batavia. No white man ventures to walk in the mid-day in the Asiatic cities mentioned without a *chattah*, or umbrella, carried by a servant whose business it is. (30)

Although the narrator stresses the superiority of Colombia to the colonial regions of Asia, he locates the hemispheric sister republic on a level for comparison that differs from the one the United States seems to occupy. This marks an inter-American distinction. Neither the warm and humid climate of the U.S.' Southern states nor the racially heterogeneous population of the first American independent republic, nor such politically controversial topics as slavery in the U.S. are taken as points of reference for comparison – they would have produced a different image of the U.S. and would have provided different parameters of comparison. Rather, the interconnectedness between the U.S. and the Republic of Colombia is established by invoking the 'family of republics' and the anti-colonial stance of this family. In this spatial, symbolic, and political constellation – with the British colonial empire,

independent Spanish America, and the U.S. as points of reference – the U.S. evolves as an unsullied society and nation, lacking deficiencies, weak points, and issues of social injustice – an ideal father figure in the setting proposed by the report. From this paternalistic viewpoint, Spanish America is not approached as an entity of value of its own or as a society whose characteristics might be helpful for critically reflecting on deficiencies in U.S. society, but instead serves as a mirror reflecting the U.S.’ high standards of democracy, economic development, and cultural distinction.

The two apparently contradictory discourses – on the one hand, the hemispheric republican family and, on the other, the discourse of inter-American differences – are intertwined by comments on commercial life and Duane’s advice on trade opportunities that make the claimed high interest of the region to the United States tangible:

Mercantile men, therefore, should not send articles which are not transportable by mules [...]. But these articles of modern taste do not appear to advantage; [...] the best chair to be found any where is that which is called the Windsor chair, put out of good company among us for twenty years, and very scarce in any part of South America till the revolution of 1810 opened the market. (28)

In this sequence, the reference to the anticolonial revolutions of Spanish America serves as an explanation for trade relations that had intensified in the past decade when the markets were opened for U.S. trade. Duane’s economic view structurally corresponds to his comments on, and complaints about, British international politics which, as he argues in *The Two Americas*, are primarily driven by considerations of commercial interest in South American independence. Ultimately, in Duane’s reasoning, the U.S. competes with Britain for the leading role in the region. Like Africa and Asia in British colonial history, in Duane’s discourse, Latin America is approached as a space to be conquered.³⁰

³⁰ From a similarly comparative angle, Brackenridge in his *Voyage to South America* (as quoted above) refers to British East India when reflecting on the economic potential of South America: “In spices, gums, and in articles useful in *materia medica*, she equals, if not surpasses, the East Indies” (19).

Although Duane's narrative – which incorporates his experience of colonial rule in India and residence in other parts of the British empire – represents post-Independence Spanish America in benevolent and enlightened terms, it produces and takes part in a discourse of superiority and establishes patterns of inter-American difference that equal former, pre-revolutionary transatlantic modes of colonial difference and coloniality.

Duane's report, like the reports by his contemporaries Pike, Ker, and Brackenridge, forms an idea of the Western hemisphere which, on the one hand, makes colonial differences visible by exposing transatlantic power relations, and, on the other hand, is part of a discursive struggle for hegemony, the power of defining global relations from the perspective of the first republic of the New World. The way the outside of the nation – Spanish America and Portuguese America – is represented by the three authors creates a post-Independence and anti-colonial idea of the Western hemisphere while at the same time aiming to consolidate the U.S.'s role as a future leading power in the region.



Figure 5: Newspaper editorial cartoon from *Minneapolis Journal*, 1912, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

VII. Conclusion: Continuities of Early Frames and Claims

In this study, I have analyzed and discussed writing about different forms of travel and mobility in North America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The authors of my primary material either were U.S. citizens or lived for extensive periods in British North America or the United States. The initial assumption informing my reading is that the writing – whether about domestic or foreign land – both *reflected* and *shaped* the evolving ideas of the nation between 1770 and 1830. The detailed examination shows that these reports, topographies, memoirs, natural histories, and narrative fiction draw depictions of the nation that not only sketch out particular social, political, and natural characteristics, but that furthermore very consciously present the nation within international relations and as an emerging entity of global historical significance. My readings of these travel accounts aim at complementing frontier-dominated research that has deemphasized early American travel writing’s transnational perspectives and entanglements. Furthermore, my chapters show that late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century descriptive and imaginative processes of forming the nation were embedded in structures of social transformation. Such structures included European colonialism, Enlightenment knowledge production, U.S. expansionism, and emerging U.S. imperialism. Travel writing was complicit in these processes, even while sometimes reflecting critically upon them. In this sense, the analyzed texts contributed to communicating the boundaries of the nation: they *framed* the nation. Beyond

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this frame, much of the writing of the time postulated that territory outside of the contemporaneous geographical borders should be either added through territorial expansion or be controlled by the first independent republic of the New World. In this way, texts also *claimed* territory.

7.1. Foundations: Nationalism, Expansionism, and Imperialism in the Making

Surviving their own historical period, the positions articulated in the early *trans-national imagination* have continued to shape the thinking, writing, and politics of the Americas. Early textual nation-building laid the foundation for patterns that would mold literary perception of the nation during succeeding centuries. Such initial patterns influenced some of the most fundamental cultural and political ideas of U.S. society, including the frontier myth, the “Empire of Liberty,” manifest destiny, American exceptionalism, and the Monroe Doctrine. However, the trans-national imagination of travel writing in the early national period did not only reflect and shape patterns of self-definition. It survived, in various ways, in the mindscape of canonical nineteenth-century writing, through authors’ reflections on the nation and the Western hemisphere. The work of authors as diverse as Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Herman Melville, María Ruiz de Burton, and José Martí continued to parse out the frames and claims of the nation. These later, nineteenth-century texts recompose, and build on, earlier negotiations of nation-building and U.S. geopolitics.

In 1813, Thomas Jefferson thanked Alexander von Humboldt for providing data from South America. Although afire with Humboldt’s work in natural history, Jefferson does not omit comment on the social and political circumstances of Humboldt’s exploratory journey. On the inception of the Spanish American colonies’ struggle for independence, Jefferson writes:

That they will throw off their European dependence I have no doubt; but in what kind of government their revolution will end I am not so certain. History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free, civil government [...] but in whatever governments they end they will be “American”

governments, no longer to be involved in the never-ceasing broils of Europe. (Jefferson 1959)

Besides hinting at differences in cultural and religious practices between the U.S. and Latin America, Jefferson signals that he perceives the societies of the Western hemisphere in unity. In Jefferson's perspective, this American unity stands specifically in opposition to Europe. Jefferson thereby advocates the idea that future American societies will no longer be determined by European powers, but will define their own independent history of sovereign government. Jefferson introduces a distinction, however, indicating that within this unity of the Americas the United States's "free, civil government" occupies a superior position. As I have shown in this book's readings, about a decade later this distinction and hierarchical perception recurs in reports on the 'sister republics' of South America. With this geopolitical constellation, Jefferson's letter anticipates the logic of the Monroe Doctrine.

Jefferson's image of a Pan-American unity under the guidance of the U.S. reveals a reluctant and feeble willingness to auto-criticism. Interestingly, and tellingly, Jefferson refrains from mentioning that when writing this letter to the European intellectual, his own praised "civil government" still justified the practice of slavery, while Mexico, the newly independent nation of one of Jefferson's "priest-ridden people," had officially ended slavery in 1810.¹ This form of disparate international comparison, casually overlooking the U.S.'s own deficiencies, has characterized U.S.-Latin American relations since Jefferson's time, as analyzed, for example, by Cuban political activist and poet José Martí in the late nineteenth century.

Jefferson's pensive comments on the Western hemisphere read like a concluding appraisal of how the travel writing of his time *framed* the nation at the same time that it *claimed* a special role in the Western hemisphere: a fluid mix of patriotism, Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, imperialism, and the ideology of expansionism.

¹ Although Miguel Hidalgo's abolition decree of 1810 ended slavery officially, slave owners in parts of New Spain's territory did not comply and it needed further decrees to end the practice in the independent country, see Olveda (2013).

Jefferson's claim of superiority and the implied exceptional role of the U.S. in the Western hemisphere and globe, as well as his blindness to the contradictions of U.S. civil government and democracy, indeed mirrors much of the writing about travel between 1770 and 1830. Such early, post-revolutionary ideas about the nation and its exceptional nature remained controversial issues throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

In my selection of texts, the late colonial and pre-revolutionary reports by Jonathan Carver and William Bartram are the first to articulate a shift toward a distinct New World sensibility. These 'creolizing' texts, as I argue, introduce ways of describing and judging North American nature and society from the perspective of the offspring of European colonial settlers. Writing by these white North American creoles is gently marked by a distancing from British determination and an underscoring of specificities of American knowledge and experience. John Filson's later, post-independence reflections on Kentucky turn this gentle creole proto-nationalism into an explicit endorsement and celebration of the new nation's territorial expansionism. Gilbert Imlay's topography, on the one hand, celebrates the freedom and economic opportunities of the North American republic, while on the other hand, it raises issues concerning the profound contradiction upon which the democracy is built: the continuation of slavery. Anne Newport Royall develops Imlay's matured domestic imagination. The journalist employs the genre of the travel report as a form of social critique. Her writing examines idiosyncrasies of regions and social deficiencies within the nation, such as the educational system and the power of privileged urban classes. For the most part, she looks at the nation as being liberated from transatlantic determination.

Most of the considered authors depict themselves moving in territory that was not yet officially annexed by the United States. At the time, national geographic borders remained in flux. In contrast, writers concentrating on the circum-Atlantic world, Africa, Europe, and Spanish and Portuguese America, operate with a clearer notion of the nation and its Other. These texts, as discussed in chapters five and six, give expression to the nation's imagination of Otherness. Vice versa, these notions of Otherness

reflect on patterns of national self-definition. Olaudah Equiano, for example, rejects identification as American. Neither the U.S., British America, nor the Caribbean are spaces or societies to which he wants to belong, despite that he was forced to spend long periods of time there. The narrative of his enslavement and his journey, crisscrossing the Atlantic world, confront white creole descriptions of the Western hemisphere by documenting the New World's first independent republic's active role in slavery and the slave trade. Other accounts of Africa in travel writing can similarly not do without addressing the United States's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and the economy of slavery. Royall Tyler's fiction, for instance, uses the depiction of different forms of enslavement and African settings for reflection on U.S. society. Joseph Hawkins's report concentrates on the dangers that white Americans have to confront when engaging with African societies and landscapes. Similarly to Tyler, he depicts the transatlantic slave trade as an evil with which Americans must avoid involvement. In contrast, Benjamin Stout does not provide gruesome images of African 'wilderness,' but rather praises nature and people in his favoring of American colonization of South Africa. Such imperialist ideas and suggestions to compete with European global dominance became yet more prevalent in writing about Spanish and Portuguese America beginning in the 1810s.

The authors Zebulon Pike, Henry Ker, Henry Marie Brackenridge, and William Duane endorse U.S. nationalism and reflect on the nation's role in the Western hemisphere. Their reports are explicitly marked by white creole perspectives on global relations, emphasizing the distinction between the Old and New World. Their writing thereby communicates the geography and idea of the Western hemisphere. However, as shown across the readings of this book, these authors' strategies of 'Americanizing' travel writing at the same time articulate and mark inter-American differences, ultimately attributing a leading position to the U.S. – similarly to Jefferson's above-quoted epistolary comment on the hemispheric struggles for independence. In light of these inter-American hierarchies, early nineteenth-century writing about journeys through the Western hemisphere cannot only be described as an anti-colonial discourse. Rather,

these writings demonstrate a tendency toward complicity in the politics of territorial expansion and prospective empire-building. Although in Ker's, Brackenridge's, and Duane's reports, the discourse of conquest and superiority (most explicit in Pike's military exploration of Spanish Mexico) is replaced by the friendly discourse of a New World family of republics, the writing nevertheless contributes to establishing patterns of imperial perception that are shaped fundamentally by inter-American social and cultural hierarchies. While Ker employs and redefines exoticizing discourse of adventure and of the monstrous, Brackenridge and Duane instead write as representatives of the U.S., ascribing themselves the position of superior reviewers of Western hemisphere republican achievements. The idea of the Western hemisphere – as articulated in the four reports – makes visible transatlantic and inter-American power relations. The U.S. authors' conception of the hemisphere contributes to the discursive struggle for hegemony. The writing shapes, defines, and employs the hemispheric frame in the nation's own best interests.

7.2. Reverberations

In the 1840s – about two decades after the publication of Duane's *A Visit to Colombia* – Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840) ranked among the most successful travel narratives focusing on Hispanic America. Dana gives an account of his journey departing from Boston, rounding Cape Horn, and heading north to California. Substantial sections of the narrative are dedicated to depicting the society, landscape, customs, and economy of California. The subjects addressed, as well as his critical comments, indicate how centrally Dana's thinking is situated in the struggles between imperial powers for economic influence and territorial rights in the Americas. Despite an apparent curiosity and interest in Mexico, his writing details how his perspective is constructed through his time's stereotypes and clichés of Anglo Americans and Hispanic Americans:

In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this [California] might be! we are ready to say. Yet how long would a people remain so, in such a country? The Americans (as those from

the United States are called) and Englishmen, who are fast filling up the principal towns, and getting the trade into their hands, are indeed more industrious and effective than the Spaniards; yet their children are brought up Spaniards, in every respect, and if the “California fever” (laziness) spares the first generation, it always attacks the second. (237)

A decade later, an influential and far-reaching contribution to political discourse on inter-American relations very bluntly rearticulated Dana’s notion of U.S. superiority. In 1854, *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* published an anonymous article with the simple title “Annexation.” The article defends the territorial expansionism of the U.S. and supports political and military interventions in Latin America:

As the inheritors of whatever is best in modern civilization, possessed of a political and social polity which we deem superior to every other, carrying with us wherever we go the living seeds of freedom, of intelligence, of religion; our advent everywhere, but particularly among the savage and stationary tribes who are nearest to us, must be a redemption and a blessing. South America and the islands of the sea ought to rise up to meet us at our coming, and the desert and the solitary places be glad that the hour for breaking their fatal enchantments, the hour of their emancipation, had arrived.²

“Annexation” is clearly based on the ideas of manifest destiny, as an evident expression of paternalistic and racist attitudes toward Latin America. Most certainly such imperialist rhetoric was even more inflamed by the recent U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War and the territorial gains that resulted. In “Annexation,” we witness the reverberation of earlier proclamations published prior to Dana’s book: Pike’s argument, for example, that the population of Spanish Mexico would welcome U.S. military intervention and annexation (“[the Americans will] be hailed by the united voices of grateful millions as their deliverers and saviors, whilst our national character resounds to the most distant nations of the

² Qtd. in Emery (1984), 51.

earth” [806]), or Benjamin Stout’s suggestion to colonize South Africa (“they would hail the American” [xxx]).³

Expansionism and imperialism did not, however, remain unchallenged in the second half of the nineteenth century. Authors articulated various forms of skepticism and critique of such claims of superiority and leadership in the Western hemisphere. One year after publishing “Annexation,” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* printed Herman Melville’s “Benito Cereno.” Melville’s complex novella was inspired by Amasa Delano’s early nineteenth-century travel report, *Narrative of Voyages and Travels, in the northern and southern hemispheres: comprising three voyages round the world, together with a voyage of survey and discovery in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands* (1817). Melville transforms Delano’s observations into a fictional critique of the U.S.’s advancement in world politics. Allan Moore Emery (1984) and others have argued that Melville was not only likely acquainted with “Annexation”, but that it in fact influenced the writing of the novella. At the very least, “Annexation” illustrates the discursive context of “Benito Cereno.” Expansionism and claims of manifest destiny contradict the U.S.’s nineteenth-century engagement in uniting the republics of the Americas.⁴ Melville’s tale superbly demonstrates how such political ideas and actions of establishing unity in the Americas (as articulated in Jefferson’s letter to von Humboldt of 1813) were not only part of the young nation’s global political and economic agenda, but were furthermore intimately connected to the nation’s role in maintaining slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

“Benito Cereno” tells the story of the encounter of an American trading ship and a vessel under Spanish flag in a remote area off the Chilean coast in 1799. The meeting evolves as a complex narrative reflecting on deception: deception of others and of oneself; deception on individual, collective, and national levels; and deception as both potential and power of fiction. The American captain Amasa Delano (Melville explicitly uses the name of the story’s inspiration) quickly comes to understand that he is dealing

³ On Stout see chapter 5.3, on Pike chapter 6.2 of this study.

⁴ Starting in the in the 1880s, this project was referred to as Pan-Americanism.

with a slave ship traveling within the Spanish empire, on its way from Buenos Aires to Peru. According to Delano's primary informant, the Spanish captain Benito Cereno, the slave ship was stalled for several weeks due to poor weather conditions. According to Cereno, during this time most of the crew members were killed by scurvy. The narrator, speaking from the perspective of Delano, tries to penetrate the uncanny atmosphere, as well as the contradictory and conspicuously insecure behavior of the Spanish captain. In particular, the closeness between Cereno and Babo, who is enslaved by Cereno, appears both extraordinary and suspicious to the American narrator. As the reader learns from Delano's ironic comments, the thought that two races might join together on an equal level arouses terror in his mind. To the American, it suggests that the weak Spaniard depends on his inferiors' support: as if incapable of functioning without the physical, mental, and emotional support of his slave. Furthermore, the American – although a Northerner from Duxbury, Massachusetts – is disturbed by the unrestricted movement of the African people on board the ship. To Delano, it seems at times that the slaves are about to get the better of Cereno and the rest of the white crew. Although Delano does not dislike Cereno, the obscure and, in his eyes, reversed roles and twisted interactions aboard the ship make him question whether the Spanish captain is attempting to trick him. At this point, Delano perceives the crew along the lines of Anglo-American stereotypes of Spanish people as cruel and ruthless, decrying all things Spanish – which historians have referred to as anti-Spanish *leyenda negra*.⁵

In the end, both Delano and the reader learn that, weeks before the encounter, the majority of the Spanish crew was killed in a slave revolt on board, after which the slaves coerced the remaining crew into sailing the ship back to Senegal, where it had started its journey. It also becomes clear that Captain Cereno was helplessly subjected to the leader of the slaves, Babo. As it later turns out, when Amasa inspected the ship and talked to the captain, Cereno was acting as a puppet of the slaves, who planned to rob

⁵ On the image of the Spanish and of South America in the early United States see Lewis Hanke (1964), 5.

food and water from the Americans. Toward the end of the narrative, when Cereno, in a sudden act of self-liberation, discloses these facts, a violent fight erupts in which the American crew *liberates* the Spaniards and *subdues* the Africans. In the final chapters, the reader is informed that the leaders of the revolt were executed in Peru and that Benito Cereno died a few months later in a Peruvian monastery.

In an allegorical reading, the primary characters appear as representatives of nations and continents, as the combination of fictional characters suggests an encounter between America, Europe, and Africa. This encounter thus becomes a complex site of contact when seen through its narrative parameters as a moment of overlapping national and continental histories. More precisely, the encounter of the ships in 1799 brings about the following contact situations, each followed by further implications: first, the Spanish colonial empire meets the first American republic and independent nation; second, the 'liberated' Africans come in contact with the 'enlightened' republic and democracy, which, however, still supports the institution of slavery and is, just as its colonialist European counterpart, active in the transatlantic slave trade; third, the young and powerful democracy supersedes the 'aged' Spanish empire, subdues the Africans, and re-establishes the racialized hierarchies foundational to the economy of slavery.

The respective representations of these three groups and the symbolic implications of their encounters become even more multifaceted in light of the antebellum context of the novella's publication. From such a perspective, the narrative produces a fourth contact situation, as it directly addresses readers in the United States. In a time when slavery was an increasingly controversial issue, Melville's 'domestic' readers are confronted with African characters in revolt against the Spaniards who enslaved them. It appears unavoidable that contemporary debates on abolitionism and U.S. expansion would affect not only the text's imagery and composition but also its reception. Taking these contact situations into account, Melville's novella (by way of Delano's early nineteenth-century perspective) hints at the U.S.'s *complicity* in European colonialism and the imminent replacement of European colonialism in Latin America with U.S. interventionism and

imperial endeavor. Reflecting on the conventions of travel writing – especially about the foreign, with its unavoidable forms of national categorizing – “Benito Cereno” provides a critique of manifest destiny, the idea of the Empire of Liberty, imperialism, and the beginning of U.S. dominance in the Western hemisphere in the mid-nineteenth century.⁶

Through its narrative structure, Melville’s novella helps to further understand the *national imagination* as conceived in early American travel writing. Melville’s third-person narrative is limited to the perspective of a captain from New England, based on Amasa Delano, the real-world author of a selection of short reports on global seafaring between 1789 and 1807. Through this limited third-person perspective, we learn of the American captain’s understanding of, and imaginative ideas about, his nation and those of others, including Spaniards, Latin Americans, and Africans. This limited perspective highlights bias, prejudiced gaze, and lack of empathy with African people – fictionalizing history as it self-consciously tries to redirect the antebellum American public. Melville’s novella re-writes Early Republican-era negotiations of U.S. society and its position in geopolitics. It highlights that imperialist viewpoints occurred not only in mid- and late nineteenth-century U.S. society, but in fact had already affected the country’s very earliest literary imagination.

My survey of primary texts across this book has concentrated on the distinct literary articulation and imagination of *Americanness*, including expansionist and imperialist perspectives of the early reports’ respective narrative voices. However, a desideratum of my research has been to learn more about how those who are seen as Others – who are positioned *outside* of the nation – reacted to nineteenth-century U.S. authors’ definitions of themselves and of other regions and nations. In the considered period, it was indeed rare to find such published reactions and challenges to U.S. imperial desires, the Monroe Doctrine, and manifest destiny, in part because the U.S. was not yet considered a major player in global affairs. Most authors writing about travel struggled with the dominance of European authors and patterns of global mapping.

⁶ For a more detailed analysis see Heide (2008).

In the later decades of the century, however, this changed critically. Travel writing by such authors as Washington Irving, Mark Twain, and Edith Wharton is far less concerned with European dominance. However, these texts also deal less with questions of framing the nation. In the late nineteenth century, it was especially writers of Latin American descent who addressed a burgeoning debate on the relationship between Latin America and the increasingly powerful U.S. Their observations and complaints, similarly to Melville's "Benito Cereno," view U.S. expansionism and imperial desires as phenomena reaching back to the period examined in this study. The writing approaches U.S. imperial desires and geopolitics not as newly emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century – as American historiography tended to see it – but, rather, as reaching back indeed to the very birth of national imagination. While María Amparo Ruiz de Burton was one of the first authors to reflect on the effects of U.S. expansion on Mexicans remaining in annexed territories, José Martí not only made readers aware of Spanish colonialist tenacity, but furthermore warned fellow Latin Americans against U.S. dominance in the Western hemisphere.

Ruiz de Burton was one of the few nineteenth-century Mexican American writers of fiction. In her two novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), she provides voice to a distinct *mexicanidad* in the decades following annexation in California, and demonstrates how it is that powerful residual elements in fact form societies. However, in a mode very different from later, twentieth-century Mexican American and Chicana literature that predominantly emphasizes an aesthetics of resistance, Ruiz de Burton's novels rather favor an assimilationist approach. The character constellation suggests a unity of the social elite, a cooperation of 'the best' of both societies in Mexico and the United States.⁷ Such a favorable view on the appreciation among the educated class had earlier been articulated by William Duane in his report on South America. However, Duane reflects not on Hispanics who have become U.S. citizens

⁷ Josef Raab (2008) describes Ruiz de Burton's idealized community as an "inter-American elite" (92–94).

through annexation but on an imagined harmonious unity of the social elite of the Western hemisphere. Both Duane and Ruiz de Burton are less attentive to the effects of U.S. expansionism and post-Monroe Doctrine dominance over the general population. Instead, their focus remains limited to cosmopolitan elites. Neither author is particularly critical of emerging U.S. imperial desires.

In contrast to such elitist responses to the rise of U.S. influence in the Western hemisphere, the poet and activist José Martí was an outspoken critic of fledging U.S. imperialism. Martí's life was deeply entwined with Cuba's long struggle for independence. Cuba and Puerto Rico both remained under Spanish rule until the Spanish-American War at the end of the century, later than other Latin American nations. Thus, in 1853 Martí was born a 'colonial subject.' During his fourteen years of exile in the U.S., he wrote for various U.S. and Latin American newspapers and magazines. As Philip S. Foner (1975) emphasizes, Martí's articles were read all over Latin America and "made the United States known as it was never known before" (30). Particularly in the beginning of his exile, Martí describes the United States as the world's most anti-colonial and egalitarian nation. Later, however, this assessment would change decisively. This shift was partly due to his perception of the U.S.'s role in Pan-Americanism. Secretary of State James G. Blaine's efforts to diminish British influence on the American continent led to the First Pan-American Conference, held in Washington in 1889 and 1890. Pan-Americanism, as understood at the conference, aimed at unifying all American republics for the purpose of enabling political and economic cooperation. Early on, however, it became clear that the United States was claiming a powerful position, if not the leading role, in the transnational constellation. It seems most significant, as John Edwin Fagg (1982) remarks, that "the Latin Americans included prominent cultural figures in their delegations and the United States famous businessmen, such as Andrew Carnegie" (23). Martí understands such blatant economic interests in Latin America as part of a more imperialist U.S. foreign policy. This U.S. imperialism, in Martí's view, grew more powerful in the decades following the Civil War, when the U.S. gradually acquired a more respected position among the world's colonialist powers. The claim to supremacy, particularly in the

Caribbean, made Martí suspect that Pan-Americanism was a “system of Latin-American subordination” (Aguilar 1968, 30). As historian David W. Noble (1998) puts it: “When he came to the United States, Martí identified imperialism with Europe. When he left, he believed it was the United States that posed the greatest imperialist threat to the other American nations” (270). After the Pan-American conference, Martí refers to the U.S. as a “monster,” and famously describes his exile in New York in the following terms: “I am writing from within the monster’s entrails” (*Selected Writings*, 331).⁸

Martí’s articles about U.S. society and politics can be read as reacting to ideas of superiority and practices of expansion and imperial rule that played central roles in travel reports of the revolutionary era. In this earlier period, as I have shown in my study, many of the issues with which Martí famously struggled had already begun to be articulated and worked through. On the one hand, this is demonstrated by ideas of New World unity and the harmonious family of American republics. On the other hand, it is demonstrated by ideas of imperial expansion and the reduction of Latin American republics to future markets for U.S. investment and trade. The late nineteenth-century, anti-colonial activist, Martí, thereby articulates a radical and devastating critique of the Western hemisphere’s first republic along with its Enlightenment promise of liberation.

The primary texts examined in this study were written in the context of an emerging, expanding nation. The authors’ diverse perspectives were shaped by a continuous transformation of what they and their respective social spheres perceived as belonging to the nation. The travel writing of this period, therefore, performed experiments that surveyed the boundaries between spaces domestic and abroad, examining the contact zones of worlds inside and outside the nation. As a result of such testing of geographical and cultural boundaries – as well as conventional, residual colonial categories – travel writing in North America and across the world established new patterns of textualized land accumulation. These

⁸ On further aspects of Martí’s critique and ambivalent assessment of the United States’s role in Pan-Americanism, see Heide (2013 and 2008).

patterns became further institutionalized by way of cartography, law, and military action. From such a perspective, we witness travel writing functioning as a mediator between agents of territorial expansion and the symbolic, cultural incorporation of new territory into the American literary imagination – as national territory, as well as regions of diverse strategic interest. Thus, American territorial expansionism and imperial desires were already made apparent in this early moment of U.S. history. Reverberations of such early literary nation-building, which *framed* the nation and defined its *claims*, indeed shaped the entire nineteenth century.

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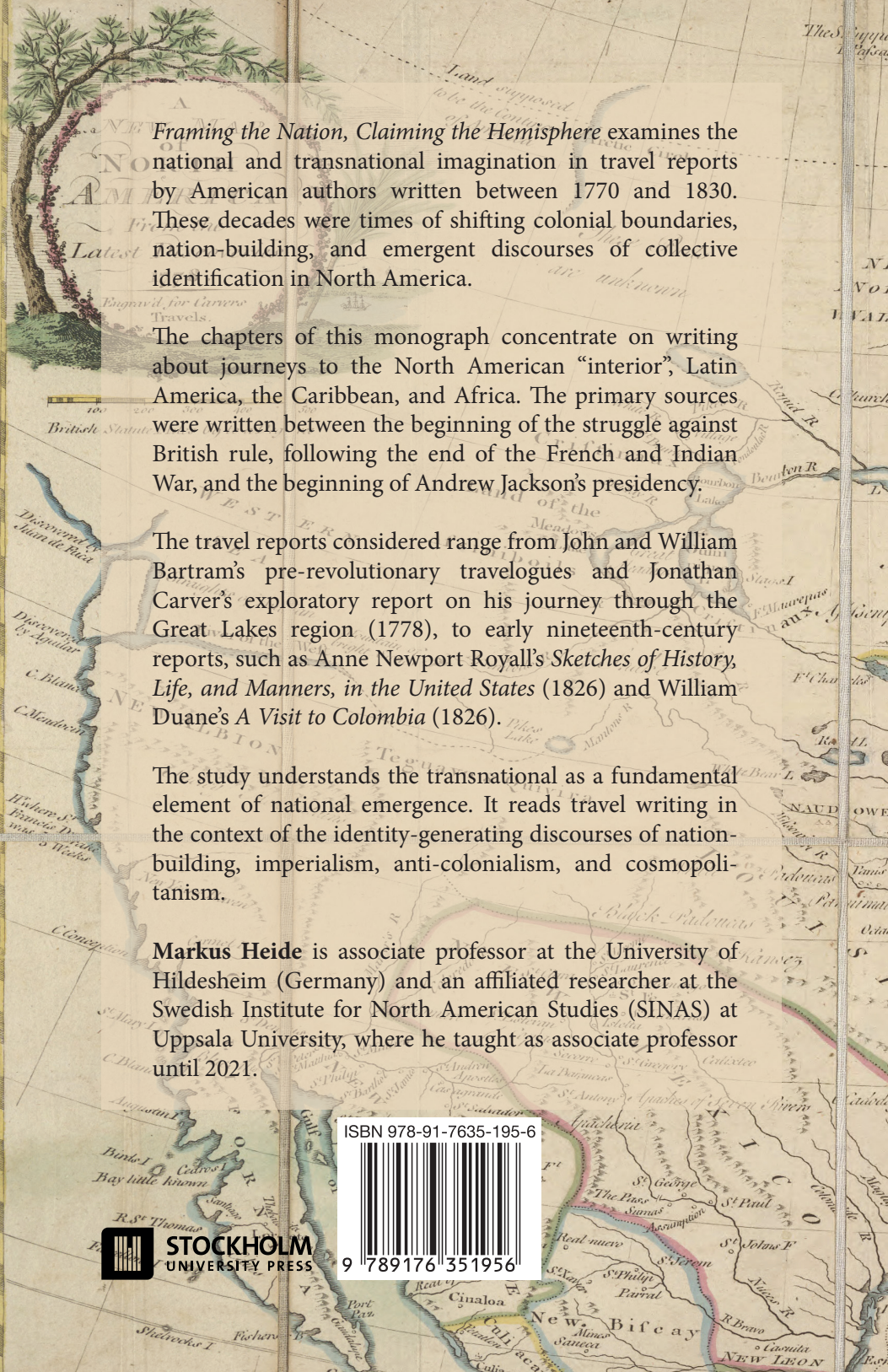
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Framing the Nation, Claiming the Hemisphere examines the national and transnational imagination in travel reports by American authors written between 1770 and 1830. These decades were times of shifting colonial boundaries, nation-building, and emergent discourses of collective identification in North America.

The chapters of this monograph concentrate on writing about journeys to the North American “interior,” Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. The primary sources were written between the beginning of the struggle against British rule, following the end of the French and Indian War, and the beginning of Andrew Jackson’s presidency.

The travel reports considered range from John and William Bartram’s pre-revolutionary travelogues and Jonathan Carver’s exploratory report on his journey through the Great Lakes region (1778), to early nineteenth-century reports, such as Anne Newport Royall’s *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States* (1826) and William Duane’s *A Visit to Colombia* (1826).

The study understands the transnational as a fundamental element of national emergence. It reads travel writing in the context of the identity-generating discourses of nation-building, imperialism, anti-colonialism, and cosmopolitanism.

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