Zeitschrift: SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature

Herausgeber: Swiss Association of University Teachers of English

Band: 27 (2012)

Artikel: The goods of bad mobility : Pierre-Esprit Radisson's The relation of my voyage, being in bondage in the lands of the Irokoits, 1669/1885

Autor: Buchenau, Barbara

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-323525

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Mehr erfahren

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. En savoir plus

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. Find out more

Download PDF: 29.11.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, https://www.e-periodica.ch

The Goods of Bad Mobility: Pierre-Esprit Radisson's *The Relation of my Voyage, being in Bondage in the Lands of the Irokoits*, 1669/1885

Barbara Buchenau

This paper addresses an early modern form of undesirable mobility, Indian captivity and enslavement, on the basis of the theorizations of cultural and social mobility set forth by Mimi Sheller and John Urry in the social sciences and Stephen Greenblatt in the humanities. Investigating the seventeenth-century report of the French Canadian *coureur de bois* Pierre-Esprit Radisson, the paper shows how the loss of liberty and the enforcement of spatial and cultural mobility produce a textual sense of masculine subjectivity that thrives on an economy of disenfranchisement. This non-canonical, but nonetheless influential text recasts the movements into and out of captivity and human bondage as personal assets and marketable goods. Captivity and bondage, in this scenario, are not bad after all, because they offer economic and social mobility in the borderlands of competing anglophone, francophone and indigenous communities. Stories such as Radisson's foster faith in good mobility and fear of bad mobility simultaneously. And captivity emerges as a good of western modernity, marketable especially, if the male subject can claim to have mastered its experience of subjection.

As Mimi Sheller and John Urry have pointed out, "[a]ll the world seems to be on the move" today (207). When people travel, commute or migrate for economic, political and personal reasons, when they make full use of the new channels of transportation and communication, their actions suggest that mobility is not only a marketable good (a commodity worth its price), but also a human good of great value. In *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* Stephen Greenblatt and his co-authors underscore this general assessment of mobility as a potential good when they call for

On the Move: Mobilities in English Language and Literature. SPELL: Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature 27. Ed. Annette Kern-Stähler and David Britain. Tübingen: Narr, 2012. 53-68.

a reappraisal of the multiple forms of movement and flux that animate human interactions across time and space. Following their lead, yet asking for the value judgments that are associated with mobility, I want to investigate how the embrace of mobility might well be a phenomenon that resonates in strange, oppositional ways with captivity – one of the most spectacular historical forms of enforced mobility and its many artifacts. Unlike the most common Western forms of mobility at the beginning of the twenty-first century, captivity as a widespread early modern form of spatial and cultural movement and transitoriness was undesirable and widely feared. But captivity had an afterlife in texts that reframed its core experiences, turning the mobility of captivity into a central asset, a commodity and a good, of western modernity.

Extensive, violent, mostly hurried movement is a central topic in early modern tales of captivity and enslavement. Describing the loss of freedom, whether through capture or enslavement, these tales emphasize that movement is usually good *and* bad at the same time. This mobility appears to be simultaneously voluntary and involuntary; it nearly always involves the massive exchange of goods and values that accompany early colonial encounters. While we would expect that the narratives ensuing from these experiences reprobate forced movement rather straightforwardly and unequivocally, a clear stance on the ethics of human mobility is rarely found in these texts. Instead, they offer an interesting commentary on Sheller and Urry's "new mobilities paradigm" and its rather straightforward celebration of contemporary voluntary mobility. While the new mobilities paradigm provides a mode of analysis and a model of thinking about recent phenomena of globalization, it also throws a fresh light on a narrative mode that sought to represent the drastic changes in the conceptualization of place, space and belonging in the age of European discoveries and exploration, thus raising more general questions about the ways in which mobilities are discursively framed, evaluated and controlled.

Sheller and Urry's argument for a new paradigm obviously reflects Thomas S. Kuhn's definition of paradigms as "some accepted examples of actual scientific practice – examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together – provid[ing] models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research" (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 10). This understanding of paradigms and paradigm shifts has fostered extensive debates about the nature of innovation and change in literary and cultural scholarship that do not need to be rehearsed here. Instead, I would like to follow the lead of the editors of this volume, adopting Stephen Greenblatt's stance on cultural mobility as a necessary critique of theories which favor sedentary patterns, amobility, locatedness and stasis over movement, nomadic patterns, flux and

travel (*Cultural Mobility* 1-7; see Sheller and Urry 207). Surmising that movement and stasis, nomadism and sedentarism function no longer as oppositional poles for the field of literary and cultural studies, I address the new mobilities paradigm as an incentive to ask how intersecting forms and functions of mobility in colonial America have shaped (the study of) literary texts and their negotiation of culture as something that, as Stephen Greenblatt has noted, paradigmatically thrives on both, "constraint" as well as "mobility" ("Culture" 226). Quite a few early colonial texts are generically located at the intersection between different cultures and different genres. These texts grate against static, regionally and nationally confined definitions of culture, of anglophone and francophone Northern America, of travel narrative and captivity tale, of public and private lives, the home and the not-home, the states of disenfranchisement and freedom.

Sheller and Urry's paradigm is concerned primarily with the phenomena of migration and globalization as they are familiar for the turn of the twenty-first century. The narrative of captivity and enslavement under consideration here, however, came into existence in an era far removed from today's world of airborne travel and wireless communication. But early modern times saw a comparable increase in the mobility of people, goods and texts. Pierre Esprit Radisson's manuscript of 1665 dramatizes this steeply increased mobility and the concomitant sense of starkly reduced individual control in its very title: *The Relation of my Voyage being in Bondage in the Lands of the Irokoits, wch was the next yeare after my coming into Canada, in the yeare 1651, the 24th day of May* (4). A manuscript only to be published in the late nineteenth century during another era of travel and migration Radisson's *Relation* throws new light on the first century of the European colonization of Northern America and its manifold examples of voluntary and involuntary displacement. Radisson's seventeenth-century text depicts Indian captivity and life among the Mohawks, and it negotiates the potential of the land for further exploration. At the same time, it reports on indigenous forms of enslavement and forced labor, conceptualizing either as training grounds for modern male subjectivity.

Radisson's times and socio-cultural contexts differ quite radically from the phenomena of global migration addressed by Sheller and Urry, and yet his text can draw attention to the ethical implications of present-day challenges of globalization and mobilization even as the text itself acquires new meanings if read in the light of theoretical reassessments of human mobility. This piece of writing has never been canonized as a central text of either the genre of the captivity tale or the slave narrative, anglophone or francophone Canadian writing, the British literature of colonization or colonial American literature, though it does contribute

to all of these literary traditions. In fact, Radisson's text literally travels between emerging traditions, encompassing moments and movements that literary scholarship has learned to treat as signature pieces of the respective mode of writing. Bringing the theorizing on social and cultural mobility to bear on the study of this text, we should first of all rethink the general associations of captivity and enslavement as ethically wrong movements, since movement now becomes a foundational vehicle for the constitution of male subjectivity. But we can also ask how the mobilities of authorial lives and authoritative texts intersect and mingle themselves, thus foregrounding the flexibility of generic conscriptions which only came to be streamlined with the rise of the novel.

Research aligned with the new mobility paradigm aims at "transcending the dichotomy between transport research and social research, putting social relations into travel and connecting different forms of transport with complex patterns of social experience conducted through communications at-a-distance" (Sheller and Urry 208). As such, it seems to be very much a social science phenomenon that is of limited value for the study of literary texts. However, Sheller and Urry's by and large celebratory stance towards mobility as a human achievement and their implicit distinction of good and bad forms of mobility encourage a closer scrutiny of gestures of celebration and dismissal in the five areas of mobilities research that Greenblatt has identified in his "Mobility Studies Manifesto":

- "literal" movements across space (250)
- mobility that is made invisible (250/51)
- encounters in cultural "'contact zones'" (251)
- collisions of "individual agency and structural constraint" (251)
- the various cultural activities that prioritize "rootedness," recasting mobility "as a threat" (252)

Research in these fields can easily contribute to Mimi Sheller and John Urry's new mobilities paradigm and its interest in "the power of discourses and practices of mobility" to "[create] both movement and stasis" (211). At the same time, Sheller and Urry's paradigm draws attention to the ethic and economic values accompanying forms of transgression and flux.

Sheller and Urry encourage a reconceptualization of travel as something other than a "black box" containing the "technologies" that permit specific "forms of economic, social, and political life" (213). Instead, it is understood as an activity that "is necessary for social life, enabling complex connections to be made, often as a matter of social (or political) obligation" (Sheller and Urry 213). This redefinition of travel reso-

nates particularly well with four fields of literary studies research that have shaped the way in which literary scholars address early modern texts describing captivity and enslavement among North American Indians.

First of all, Sheller and Urry's redefinition of travel as a mode of existence resonates rather well with the cultural mobility manifesto of Stephen Greenblatt and his colleagues at the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin*, providing data to underscore their interest in literal movement and the exchanges, interactions and the flux that are at the core of literature and culture (*Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*). Secondly, Sheller and Urry's redefinition of travel can also enhance the cultural theorizing of Mary Louise Pratt, inviting a broader social study of the transgressiveness that Pratt had found to be at the core of colonial intercultural contact and its dependence on various forms of encounters in and movements through space (see 6-7). Thirdly, Sheller and Urry's interest in travel deserves to be rethought in the light of scholarship on the large-scale circulation of travel narratives in early modern times. As Ralph Bauer has shown, these multi-functional texts did not only reflect early modern lives in motion. They also helped to craft entire new cultural geographies (3-5). In the field of literature proper they additionally prefigured the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century (Adams, chap. 2). Recent scholarship on captivity narratives, finally, offers significant expansions of this argument about the significance of mobility for human life and cultural production. As Lisa Voigt has shown in her study of captivity narratives in the early modern Atlantic, this particular, involuntary form of travel did not so much "[foment] oppositions" as shape and spread the "knowledge and authority" of those undergoing captivity, thus contributing to the "sharing of knowledge – whether through coercion or cooperation – across national, religious, and linguistic boundaries" (25). And in *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* Linda Colley elaborates that this kind of involuntarily gained and spread knowledge reflects on the larger contexts of political and demographic expansion. "Captives and captivities were the underbelly of British empire" (4), Colley notes, and she suggests that we explore the new, politically significant subjectivities and cultural affiliations produced by this particular form of travel. If these different brands of scholarship are read in conjunction, they underscore the extent to which a captive's movement through space fosters new ways of knowing only through its narrative transmission and generic crafting.

Pierre-Esprit Radisson's Relation and the Limits of Textual Mobility

The Frenchman Pierre-Esprit Radisson (1636-1710?) had a rough start into his life as a mobile and mobilizing seventeenth-century colonial: having barely settled in Canada and battling with the uncertainties of adolescence, he was captured by Mohawk forces twice, once to be adopted into a family and a second time, after having committed murder, to experience a period of enslavement. But these dramatic experiences did not spark the narrative. In fact, Radisson turned his captivity into a piece of (scribal) literature for rather pragmatic reasons, only writing up his tale of youthful adventure in benign retrospect when he realized he needed an entertaining support for his commercial negotiations with the English king, Charles II. Much of its textual history, including the language in which the text was initially written, is subject to speculations. According to Grace Lee Nute, it was at the king's request that Radisson wrote the manuscript in winter 1668-69 ("Radisson"). One consequence of this manuscript ostensibly was the founding of the Hudson Bay Company in 1670, hence trade and traffic were the most important measurable outcomes of Radisson's narrative of Mohawk bondage.

Seeking to sell his captivity-won intercultural knowledge to the highest bidder, Radisson became a paradigmatic '"mobilizer"' as Stephen Greenblatt would call it, an intermediary between indigenous, francophone and anglophone communities, who is cautiously negotiating his affiliations to multiple cultural contexts ("Manifesto" 251). Radisson had initially offered his services in the fields of commerce and trade to the officials in New and Old France. After these had shown little interest in Radisson's intercultural knowledge and even less enthusiasm for his unauthorized travels into western and northern territories hitherto little known by Europeans, Radisson turned to the English king rather than the French to obtain financial backing for a commercial venture into northern regions (Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness* 29-30, 105-66). Radisson's text – densely autobiographical and yet imaginative – is an unusual promotional tract for Hudson Bay traffic and trading. It advertises the flexibility, versatility, hardihood, and knowledge of its speaker, showcasing as well the difficulties the continent holds in store for Europeans bent on commerce and faith alone. Generically, formally, aesthetically and linguistically speaking the ensuing text is a slippery affair, challenging its major critics to adapt their terminology to accommodate this constitutive fluidity. According to Martin Fournier, Radisson uses the manuscript, written for a specific, personalized audience of potential investors in a Hudson Bay commercial venture, to "tell his own story [histoire]" rejoicing in "a great liberty, occasionally [expressing] his opin-

ion directly, [affirming] [. . .] his individuality with his commentaries, his observations, and by the very personal fabric of his text" (Fournier, *Pierre-Esprit Radisson* 9; my translation). And Grace Lee Nute assumes that Radisson wrote the travel narrative with a clear sense of genre expectations and that he did so in French, arguing that the existent English-language versions of his texts are translations (Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness* 29-30). As these comments suggest, Radisson's text might be a particularly radical example of the kind of cultural mobility produced by migration, colonization, greed and restlessness that, according to Stephen Greenblatt and his co-editors, should become the new focus of literary and cultural studies. In this text attention to textual mobility rather than to a clear location in established literary, cultural and linguistic traditions might be one key to an understanding of this text and its embrace of "bad" mobility.

Written in the mode of an unusual, cultural conversion narrative, Radisson's manuscript *The Relation of my Voyage, being in Bondage in the Lands of the Irokoits* is the first in a set of six travel narratives not to be published until 1885 (see Gideon D. Scull's Introduction to Radisson's narratives, 1-23). Radisson's *Relation* picks up the format of the exploratory travel narratives, but it combines this generic mode with the captivity narrative, thus producing a rare tale of cultural conversion. Its long existence in manuscript form might be explained in various ways. One possibility is that its coterie of royal and wealthy readers had used it primarily and even solely as a textual basis for economic and diplomatic deliberations. However, it is just as likely that the text itself did not facilitate publication since it lacks verbal and illustrative polish. Finally, the text does not contribute straightforwardly either to the cross-cultural Catholic mode of French Canadian writings or to the anti-assimilationist Protestant mode of British American writings. Hence it continued to move between francophone, anglophone and possibly even indigenous "power-geometries" as Doreen Massey would call it.

Relation of my Voyage recounts the capture of the sixteen-year old Radisson near Trois Rivières, New France, by a group of Mohawk men, his quick and friendly adoption by an older Mohawk woman and her family, his instruction in crucial social and cultural skills and, eventually, his attempt to break free by committing murder. Recaptured just before returning to his home in New France, Radisson is brought back into Iroquoia, tortured considerably, but once again accepted into his former Mohawk family. Eighteen months after his initial capture Radisson runs away to the Dutch at Fort Orange (today's Albany), New York, returning to Trois Rivières via France. Radisson drafted his report only after many years of unauthorized explorations into the areas of today's Wisconsin, Minnesota and the upper Mississippi region. The report accord-

ingly lacks immediacy, producing its adolescent speaker rather self-reflexively.

The 1885 title of the collection of Radisson's finally published narratives – *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson. Being an Account of His Travels and Experiences Among the North American Indians, from 1652 to 1684* – illustrates the extent to which both Radisson and his texts serve as "'mobilizers'" in debates about nationhood and belonging (Greenblatt, "Manifesto" 251), even as they are forced into comparable stasis. The new title anglicizes Radisson's name and cultural identity, it drops the idea of bondage altogether, homogenizing the narrator's experiences with various, usually specified North American Indian communities into a binary intercultural exploration. But the printed version of the travel report also centers on the conversions of the traveling subject; it complicates the familiar narrative of a slow transition from the predominance of the othered ignoble savage in colonial English-language texts to the rise of the foundational noble savage in nineteenth-century texts bent on cultural nationalism. Here, a young man going native, yet coming back is passing through removal, crime, pain, isolation, and acculturation to a state of permanent transition. This stance of undecidability, accompanied as it is by a lack of moral judgments and a failure to place trust in Europeans alone, has inspired later critics to address Radisson as either the quintessential traitor, an image most common in nineteenth-century historiography, or the paradigmatic white Indian or *coureur de bois*, fostered by twentieth-century scholarship (Fournier 10; Warkentin 67-68), thus indicating that the discourse on mobility does indeed produce both, stasis and movement (Sheller and Urry 211).

The static image of the *coureur de bois* is important in comparativist frameworks that explore the distinctions between competing concepts of colonization and settlement. It is a stereotype claiming a French Canadian version of the North American pioneer, a culturally distinctive, because less supremacist, more accommodationist alternative to the potentially racist U.S. backwoodsman (see Podruchny 1-17). As Sven Kuttner emphasizes, acculturations such as Radisson's were neither irreversible nor driven by the emotional ties offered in North American Indian communities. Instead, cultural and social border crossers had strong economic and social incentives to go native even if their in-between status made them easy victims of changing colonial and indigenous policies and interests (Kuttner 86-97). Since their status as European Indians did not foreclose an allegiance to eurocentricism and a French or English cultural identity, go-betweens or mobilizers such as Radisson often produced narrative works that underscore and enhance the contradictoriness of belonging and identification in thoroughly mobile lives.

Life inside the Black Box; Or, towards a Mobile Male Identity

The speaker in Radisson's narrative of captivity and conversion provides his readers with the possibility to live a temporary life inside the "black box" of constant travel (Sheller and Urry 213). Entering this life, Radisson's reader can seize and explore these tentative identifications in bad as well as good luck, testing the implications of being charged with mobilizing ideas of belonging and rootedness in "'contact zones'" (Greenblatt 251). The narrator begins his tale in the voice of an adolescent whose blend of independence, curiosity, and fear offers a home to his presumably male and leisurely royal implicit readers:

> [b]eing persuaded in the morning by two of my comrades to go and recreat ourselves in fowling, I disposed myselfe to keepe them Company; wherefor I cloathed myselfe the lightest way I could possible, y^{t} I might be the nimbler and not stay behinde, as much for the prey that I hoped for, as for to escape ye danger into wch wee have ventered ourselves of an enemy the cruelest that ever was uppon the face of ye Earth. (Radisson, *Voyages* 4)

The tone here is set for imaginatively reconstructing a real life of heartily embraced mobility in which work, recreation, and radical danger are intricately interlinked, each element being useless without the other. By page four of the narrative, the speaker's companions are found "murthered" and mutilated, and the cultural removal of the autobiographical persona is sealed (Radisson, *Voyages* 28). This removal soon evolves into an exchange that pits an individualized European against a uniform North American indigenous "enemy" in rather stereotypical ways:

> Seeing myselfe compassed round about by a multitude of dogges, or rather devils, that rose from the grasse, rushesse and bushesse, I shott my gunne, whether un warrs or purposely I know not, but I shott wth a pistolle confidently, but was seised on all sids by a great number that threw me downe, taking away my arme without giving mee one blowe . . .
> (Radisson, *Voyages* 28-29)

Radisson's Mohawk opponents here seem to be proto-typological animal-men, unmitigated enemies with little trace of humanity about them. But they do not remain "dogges, or rather devils" for long (Radisson, *Voyages* 28). As the narrative proceeds, the Mohawk characters become as humane and inhumane as the narrator himself. They apparently never abandon their companions, whereas the narrator had carelessly taunted his hunter friends for their timidity, leaving them to their much dreaded fate in order to continue the successful hunt alone (*Voyages* 27). Like the narrator, Radisson's Mohawks slay for rather unspectacular, pragmatic

reasons – their killings seem to be as contextually embedded as his, similarly lacking a simplistic logic of retaliation and revenge.

Within this setting of contextualized violence and kindness, the speaker himself leaves little doubt that this representation is part and parcel of Radisson's autobiographical self-stylization as both intimidated and confident, struck with terror and nonetheless trusting (see Combet 331-32). This coexistence of fear and faith, as they apply to both, the speaker and his Mohawk captors, informs the narrative at large. It is an early example of the ethically and culturally self-contradictory stance that characterizes the more traditional forms of the captivity tale (Strong 7-9). This self-contradictory stance is promoted in a spelling and diction that indicate limited formal education and a location at the intersection of two languages and a complex set of distinctive cultural codes and modes (Fournier 145-76). Accordingly, identifications and identities are blurry and evasive affairs already at the very beginning of the narrative.

Once the reader is thus prepared to follow the speaker into a truly transformative adventure in which mobility, both voluntary and enforced, becomes something like a "fetish" of male subjectivity (Ahmed 152), sympathy with the persona Radisson is not paramount, since his experience of removal and forced cultural as well as social conversion does not exact the reader's emotional contribution. Instead, we are asked to come along. "Priming our pistols" like the narrator and his short-lived companions, we feel encouraged to follow the lead of the speaker to narratively travel "where our fancy first lead us" (Radisson, *Voyages* 26). This non-fictional narrative, then, employs a number of rhetorical devices (personal pronouns, verbal conjunctions of action and deliberation) that encourage the reader to identify with the speaker's quite pragmatic negotiation of the liminal space into which he moves after his capture – a space of slow, yet persistent forced adoption and willing, yet strategic adaptation.

Initially traveling alongside Huron captives identified as "slaves" (Radisson, *Voyages* 38), the narrator watches uneasily as preparations are made for the gantlet through which the captured people had to pass at the entrance into the Mohawk settlement. A "good old woman and a boy wth a hatchet in his hand" save the narrator from the usual beatings and harassments occurring at this transitional stage (Radisson, *Voyages* 38), and he soon learns to conceptualize his protectors along family lines. After the old woman calls Radisson "by the name of the son who was killed before, Orinha," the autobiographical narrator in his turn begins to speak of his "brother," "sisters," "father" and "mother" (Radisson, *Voyages* 40).

As scholarship on colonial cultural mobility has pointed out, this family language and its subtext of acculturation and adoption would

become absolutely central to intercultural diplomacy and treaty making, with the stylization of the French, Dutch, and English as *brothers* slowly drifting toward increasing efforts of late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century British and U.S. American diplomats who sought to become *fathers* of their North American allies rather than brothers. Whereas an emphasis of fraternal interlinkages reflected the spirit of "experimentation" pervading early colonial interactions (Van Zandt 7), the shift toward increasing references to paternal linkages emphasized late colonial and early national questions of "possession" and inheritance (Rogin 5). In the context of these questions North American Indians oddly became both, dead fathers and mothers who conveniently pass their possessions on to a new settler population *and* eternal young children to be guided, educated, and punished by these same settlers – in words Mary Nyquist adopted from a number of early modern English texts, North American Indians became "contemporary ancestors."

But the linguistic transition from colonial brother to national father remained strategically incomplete. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century it helped erase North America's *middle ground*, this interculturally constructed space of colonial mediation emerging in the area between the Mississippi River and the Appalachian mountains (White). Arguably, this change in language even ushered in the disappearance of what Richard White has described as an underdetermined geographical and cultural space that permitted questions of power, authority, and legality to be left unanswered.

The Goods of Murderous Movement

In Radisson's text family bonds are frail in the biological and the adopted family alike, irrespective of the strategic use of family language. As soon as a public celebration had indicated the acceptance of Radisson's autobiographical persona into the Iroquoian community, the narrating subject ruptures these ties by killing his fellow hunters and running away. In the narrative order, this murderous escape replicates the introductory adolescent hunting scene, relocating it to the domain of Iroquoia. This time it is "3 of [his] acquaintance," who ask Radisson to join them on an extensive hunting trip (*Voyages* 41). Receiving the permission of his Iroquoian "mother," the narrator soon regrets his decision to come along because food is scarce and the journey is arduous (*Voyages* 41). These circumstances encourage the narrator to conceptualize his hunting voyage along the lines of a form of deprivation and want that appear to be adequate to the native population alone. A Huron adoptee encountered en route entices the speaker to attempt an escape

to his former home at Trois Rivières. Importantly, family language once again produces the atmosphere of trust and confidentiality that will allow the speaker to set himself apart from his captors-"comrades": "Brother" replied the "wild man" to the speaker's assertion that he "loved the french,"

> cheare up, let us escape, the 3 rivers are not a farre off. I tould him my 3 comrades would not permitt me, and that they promised my mother to bring me back againe. Then he inquired whether I would live like the Hurrons, who weare in bondage, or have my own liberty wth the ffrench, where there was good bread to be eaten. (*Voyages* 42-43)

This question of the metaphorical brother redefines Radisson's adoption into the Mohawk family, sketching it as a bad form of cultural mobility in which the mobile subject loses the "liberty" to choose the direction and the purpose of his movements. But apart from the loss of liberty Radisson now must also confront his life among the Mohawks in terms of a loss of economic and cultural value. The "wild man" reads Iroquoian adoption as a form of slavery and biblical bondage. Radisson initially refuses this interpretation of his status, but the provocation sinks in and he soon agrees to a murderous plan promising escape and cultural rather than religious redemption. Because bondage, in the words of the "wild man," becomes wedded to poor food, and cultural as well as racial disappearance, a return to the colonial community becomes desirable again, triggering a stock response to forced cultural removal: "Att last I consented, considering they weare mortall enemys to my country, that had cut the throats of so many of my relations, burned and murdered them" (*Voyages* 43). But when the autobiographical speaker thus identifies rather unexpectedly with his "country," his motives for doing so are rather unspectacular. Family, nation and relation now become crude economic terms in a social landscape that is first and foremost able to offer the "good bread" so dearly missed in Iroquoia.

As the narrative trajectory after this conversation suggests, it is neither productive, nor correct to read Radisson's mobility as a form of bondage by mortal enemies. In fact, this understanding of forced mobility as a form of enslavement will lead to crime and punishment. After the conversation with the Huron captive Radisson's autobiographical speaker kills in cold blood members of his new home in order to be able to return to his old home, but he is soon recaptured, returned to Iroquoia and tortured extensively. It is at this moment that Radisson's narrative diverges most strikingly from the patterns employed by later, far more popular captivity narratives by Puritan authors such as Mary Rowlandson and John Williams, because Radisson does not see his captors

as instruments of a Christian god. He also does not follow a pattern established in the *Jesuit Relations* where the indigenous captors appeared as biblical enemies of a faith understood as the only true one. Instead, the narrator explains torture in terms of an individual painful and fearful, yet understandable punishment for his own capital crime.

In Radisson's narrative this punishment does not preclude another loving and caring adoption into the Mohawk family and the larger community. After the torture Radisson again becomes a member of the cultural community of his captors, and he experiences once again the constraints and the mobility upon which this cultural membership is grounded (see Greenblatt, "Culture"). But because this communal punishment is likely to be repeated whenever the speaker violently transgresses social norms or whenever he must be accommodated into an antagonistic social context, the speaker eventually uses an opportunity to take refuge with the Dutch. Lamenting the departure from an otherwise cherished life as an Iroquoian, the speaker does not seek better and better valued cultural and religious contexts. Instead, he simply decides in favor of "good bread" and better safety. In sum, the enforced mobility of Iroquoian captivity most obviously and straightforwardly leads to a loss of economic and social standing, since it initially removes the speaker from the comparable ease and the dietary pleasures of colonial life. At the same token, however, the narrative itself turns captivity into an economically rewarding enterprise. Having survived capture, removal and enslavement the narrating subject can advertise the skills earned during the ordeal as assets in the marketplace of Northern American exploration and colonization. In this advertisement, the involuntarily mobilized subject emphasizes the goods to be found in the stores of bad mobility.

To conclude, Radisson's text offers a surprising addition to Sheller and Urry's critique of so-called "*sedentarist*" theoretical approaches to social interactions, since it seconds scholarly attempts to replace these approaches by "*nomadic*" ones which "[celebrate] the opposite of sedentarism, namely, metaphors of travel and flight" (210). When Sheller and Urry note that "[t]hese metaphors celebrate mobilities that progressively move beyond both geographical borders and also beyond disciplinary boundaries" (210), they certainly do not include present-day forms of captivity and enslavement into these celebratory metaphors. Instead, they reference feminist theorists such as Caren Kaplan and Sara Ahmed to note that movement can become a masculinist "fetish" (Ahmed 152), which thrives on exclusion to produce gendered identities and subjectivities (see Skeggs 48). But while scholarship on mobility tends to maintain a rather straightforward opposition between good and bad forms of mobility, this opposition is not to be found in a text such as Radisson's.

Here, mobility itself, whether good or bad, is turned into the heart of modern life, thus drawing attention to the fact that mobility is always simultaneously an ethical and an economic enterprise.

Looking at the varied history of Radisson's text, its protagonist and its author we might wonder whether they resemble the mobile places that play such a significant role in the new mobilities paradigm. "Places are like ships, moving around, not necessarily staying in one location," Sheller and Urry have noted (214). As Radisson's *Relation* illustrates, it is the intricate contact and collaboration between texts, materialities, locales, people and performances, which mobilizes places, turning them into containers full of goods, which can assume value only if they travel. But this movement is anything but a straightforwardly appreciated activity. Often enough it belongs to the kind of "hidden" mobility that operates under "regimes of censorship and repression" (Greenblatt, "Manifesto" 251). These regimes turn mobility into something to be feared rather than cherished. According to Sheller and Urry "[i]ssues of movement, of too little movement or too much or of the wrong sort or at the wrong time, are central to many lives and many organizations" (208). Generally speaking mobility is not a desired activity, postmodern celebrations of motorways, airports and the *world wide web* notwithstanding. Movement does not only challenge "*sedentarist* theories" which value "stability, meaning, and place" and stigmatize "distance, change, and placelessness" (Sheller and Urry 208). There is also a good amount of movement that seems to be ethically, morally wrong, because it hurts those engaged in it. As Radisson's text suggests only partially, human captivity and bondage do count as primary forms of this ethically wrong, "bad" mobility. Too little movement apparently is bad and so is too much movement (Sheller and Urry 208). But this idea of a bad movement, produced by a lack or an excess of mobility, becomes alive in discourse alone (Greenblatt, "Manifesto" 251). And it is in discourse as well that bad mobility can become a good, to be traded at a profit. In Radisson's narrative we can observe how the potentially catastrophic and annihilating experience of too much movement is narratively transformed into a moment of enlightenment and even empowerment showcased by the experiencing subject to demand social, cultural and especially economic mobility.

References

Adams, Percy G. *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel.* Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1983.

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Bauer, Ralph. *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Colley, Linda. *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850.* New York: Random House, 2002.

Combet, Denis. "Images de la peur et maîtrise de l'Autre dans les quatre premiers Voyages de Pierre-Esprit Radisson." *Travaux de Littérature* 17 (2004): 331-43.

Fournier, Martin. *Pierre-Esprit Radisson, aventurier et commerçant.* Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 2001.

Greenblatt, Stephen, Ines Zupanov et al. *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

——. "Culture." *Critical Terms for Literature Study.* Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995. 225-32.

Kaplan, Caren. "Mobility and War: the Cosmic View of US 'Air Power'." *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2004): 395-407.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962 and 1996.

Kuttner, Sven. *Handel, Religion und Herrschaft: Kulturkontakt und Ureinwohnerpolitik in Neufrankreich im frühen 17. Jahrhundert.* Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1997.

Massey, Doreen. "Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place." *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change.* Ed. J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson and L. Tickner. London: Routledge, 1993. 59-69.

Nute, Grace Lee. *Ceasars of the Wilderness: Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1618-1710.* New York: Arno Press, 1977.

——. "Radisson, Pierre-Esprit." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online.* 1701-1740, Vol. II. Eds. John English and Réal Bélanger. University of Toronto / Université Laval, 2000. www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=1052. Accessed on 5 May 2009.

Nyquist, Mary. "Contemporary Ancestors of de Bry, Hobbes, and Milton." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 77: 3 (2008): 837-75.

Podruchny, Carolyn. *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2008.

Radisson, Pierre-Esprit. *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson, Being an Account of his Travels and Experiences among the North American Indians, from 1652 to 1684. Transcribed from original manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum*. Ed. G. D. Skull. Prince Soc., XVI, Boston, 1885.

Rogin, Michael Paul. *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975.

Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry. "The New Mobilities Paradigm." *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2006): 207-226.

Skeggs, Beverley. *Class, Self, Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Strong, Pauline Turner. *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: the Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

Van Zandt, Cynthia Jean. *Brothers Among Nations: the Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580-1660*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Voigt, Lisa. *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulation of Knowledge in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Warkentin, Germaine. "Discovering Radisson: A Renaissance Adventurer between Two Worlds." *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*. Eds. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2003. 75-104.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.