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C.Norris, *The Deconstructive Turn* (London and New York: Methuen, 1983).

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Contents

Editorial

This is the last issue of *Textual Practice* to be produced under the present editorship. What was planned as a stint of five years has extended itself stealthily but enjoyably to eight. The challenges inherent in the establishment of any new presence on the academic scene have naturally made this an exciting time, and the opportunity to watch and perhaps encourage the development of new ideas, new perspectives, new voices has also ensured that it was uniquely rewarding. We aimed to reach an expanding constituency and, happily, we seem to remain engaged with it. But if *Textual Practice's* involvement in such a process has been to any extent fruitful, that is owing not just to the undoubted learning, wit and ingenuity of our contributors. The journal simply could not have been produced with-out the efforts of those at Routledge, our publishers, and at Cardiff, our base, who committed themselves from the first to those work-a-day tasks of proof-reading, production and promotion which make an editor's job not just bearable but, finally, possible. It is, nevertheless, time for change and the new opportunities and advantages that that will certainly bring. Indeed, the only evident disadvantage in prospect is the extent to which it may give the former editor the chance to become a more frequent contributor.

Terence Hawkes

The new editor of Textual Practice *is Professor Alan Sinfield. Future contributions and correspondence should be addressed to him at the Department of Cultural and Community Studies, Arts Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN 1 9QN, UK.*

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Twoccing and joyreading

JOHN HARTLEY

T.W.O.C

Without consent I begin by taking some words that were themselves taken without consent (long ago and far away):

> I feel I might well begin by proclaiming, as one of my own students once did, that 'before I start to speak, I want to say something'.[1]

Three somethings, in fact. First, in the face of various postmodern theorizings about the indeterminacy of language, I'm trying to find a way of describing what readers do, and I suggest it is a form of low-grade theft, characterized not by a reading *position* at all, but by a mobility which I will argue is vehicular in mode. Readers steal from writings much as juveniles take cars without consent for the purposes of joyriding. In police-court jargon this is known as 'twoccing', i.e. t.aking *w*.itho.ut *c*.onsent. Second, I want to discuss notions of mobility and 'unpositionality' (if there is such a word) by reference to writings as well as readings; specifically metaphors of travel. Recently, 'on the road' metaphors in cultural studies have been criticized as being male and patriarchal, even when used by feminist writers. Against this, I suggest that readers are not in practice stalled by the gender-history of their chosen metaphorical vehicle. This is not just to observe that women readers do 'twoc' male discourses, but also to argue that the 'unpositionality' or indeterminacy of women in this context is a model of readership in general, and so it needs to be rethought in other terms than those of power or weakness. In writer/reader, geopolitical *and* gender relations, 'unpositionality' may turn out to be more challenging than at first appears, while circulation and mobility may be not gendered but general, especially in the

contemporary phase of history with the globalizing circulation of knowledge, people and capital. Third, a reading of actual twoccing—juvenile car crime as covered in the Western Australian press—shows that in the public domain 'society' can be equated with traffic lights, while (it follows) joyriding is subversive of society itself. I take this to be a suggestive metaphor for reading.

From these instances of writing about race, gender and crime, through the discourses of science, intellectual culture and journalism, I conclude that the present conjuncture between the domains of writing and reading is characterized by disjuncture, to the extent that the 'speaking position' of writing can be seen as a red traffic light, ready to be run by the stolen vehicle of *joyreading*.

Most familiarly, juveniles twoc cars. But, I suggest, readers twoc writings. In both cases the offenders are mobile, travelling for the sake of it, in vehicles not belonging to them, without instrumental purpose. Twoccing requires a moral code at variance with that of possessive individualism; it's an offence to ownership, intellectual or vehicular, being in the end a kind of pure or total gesture of travel, wherein the vehicle, the streets, moving quickly, and being out of time and place are enjoyed for themselves, foregrounding the act and skill of driving (reading), not the possession of the car (text) or the promise of a destination (closure). In a twocced vehicle (book), driving (reading) is its own reward, travel (sense-making) is its own end, and time is the duration of the trip itself, not the steady state which travel disrupts.

Twoccing (of cars or writings) is not a glamorous crime of cultural politics or personal passion, not epic or heroic; it's a routine, low grade, show-off offence, and as such it cannot be romanticized as a form of consumer resistance. Not all modes of reading (and not all readers) can be described in its terms, but just as those who joyride in twocced cars often know and care more about their chosen vehicles than do the owners, so it is the more astute and committed fans of reading who are most likely to be twoccers. In fact, if reading is a kind of twoccing, then the readers I'm most interested in are not those who potter about in the mental equivalent of an ageing Datsun, but the petrol-heads of the republic of letters—the joyreaders. It is my purpose in this essay to show what twoccing is and how it works, rather than to survey its social existence, but I do argue that it is not only a personal mode of reading but also a sociocultural phenomenon. In other words, not only can texts' meanings be twocced by individual readers, but also by whole readerships.

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FIRST

The end of the world[2]

Take, for instance, the writings of Thor Heyerdahl, especially the popular adventure stories based on his expeditions, such as *Aku-Aku,* which is about his trip to Easter Island in 1956–7, accompanied by his wife Yvonne and two children, Thor Jr and Anette (all of whom are duly and scientifically indexed at the back of the book). Thor Heyerdahl was the adventurer-academic of his age; no one in the twentieth century managed to combine quite so successfully as he did the eyewitness ideology of science, the thrill of Viking voyages, the exoticism of the South Seas, and the racial fantasies of those for whom civilization has white skin and a red beard. Pursuing a Nordic quest for whiteness to a little island in the Pacific may seem quixotic (it may seem altogether nastier too, though you wouldn't guess from the chatty *Aku-Aku*), but it is the very uselessness, the 'hair'-brained outlandishness of Heyerdahl's quest, that makes it good copy—so the Kon-Tiki man got a year, a crew, a vessel, and a bestseller out of his conspicuously unscientific project, on the strength of his own red-bearded narrative appeal.

THE MYSTERY OF EASTER ISLAND

FROM THE MAN WHO WROTE KON-TIKI

Thor Heyerdahl, famous author of Kon-Tiki, has written *another* magnificent true adventure story that you can't put down. It's about a strange, remote island in the Pacific—Easter Island, where giant god-like statues brood over the countryside.

With the powerful help of a devil—Aku-Aku—Heyerdahl solved the mysteries of Easter Island that had puzzled the world for centuries.

He rolled back the years to uncover amazing facts about the colossal, glowering statues.

He brought to light treasures that had lain hidden in caves for generations.

He has discovered the secrets of the lonely inhabitants in a way that only Heyerdahl can do. *This is a thrilling adventure you must not miss!*

It starts this Sunday. Reserve your copy now.

STARTING IN THIS WEEK'S

SUNDAY DISPATCH[3]

Knowledge vs. travel (science vs. narrative)

'I felt sorry for my own *aku-aku,'* writes Heyerdahl:

> It had followed me for a year on a lead, without the freedom to wing its way into the unbounded universe. I thought I could hear its complaining voice. 'You're getting stale, and too prosaic,' it said. 'You're no longer interested in anything but dry facts.'… 'This is a scientific expedition,' I said. 'I've lived most of my life among scientists and have learnt their first commandment: the task of science is pure research. No speculation, no attempt to prove one thing or another.' 'Break that commandment,' said my *aku-aku*. 'Tread on their toes.'[4]

You probably remember Thor Heyerdahl, if at all, for his exploits on research vessels; not only Kon-Tiki but also the reed boat, Ra. What is less well remembered is that these Boy's Own adventures with indigenous shipping had a *purpose,* namely to demonstrate the possibility that an advanced, white-skinned, red-bearded people could have sailed from Peru to Polynesia *(Kon-Tiki),* and previously from an outpost of ancient Egypt to South America *(Ra),* ending up on Easter Island *(Aku-Aku),* thereby encircling the non-Asian globe with a civilization that predates but exceeds the cultural competence of the known or surviving indigenous society.[5] What Heyerdahl was looking for on Easter Island was a 'red-haired strain' within the indigenous population which could be traced back to a white-skinned, statue-building, 'long-eared' ancestry. His conversation with his imaginary *aku-aku* culminates in this:

> 'We were talking about a possible link between Malays and shortears,' I said. 'What would your view be, as an *aku-aku,* if language said yes and race said no?' 'If language suggested that Harlem negroes and Utah Indians came from England, I'd back the race expert.'[6]

It seems that what's sauce for the *aku-aku* is a source for the scientist, so Heyerdahl collects from various unsuspecting Polynesian islands 'a bag full of test tubes filled with blood':

> Chiefs, elders, and local authorities had helped [the expedition's doctor] select those who could still be considered pure blooded. We had sent the samples by air in ice-filled thermos bottles from Tahiti to the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories in Melbourne…. Never before had any living blood from natives of these islands reached a laboratory in such good condition that all the hereditary genes could be studied and determined.[7]

The point of this archaeological vampirism was to isolate 'all the hereditary factors arguing Polynesian descent from the original population of the American continent and at the same time clearly separating the Polynesians from all Malays, Melanesians, Micronesians, and other Asiatic peoples of the West Pacific.'[8] Such an argument, for blood over language, wanting the great pre-

contact civilizations of the Americas and the Pacific to be *white,* is the *purpose* of Heyerdahl's expeditions. The argument is presented as having something to do with science, even when it wishes to tread on scientific toes with its fantasy-speculations; the gist of the book's last chapter is to achieve *in narrative* what cannot be 'proven' by normal archaeological and anthropological methods, but to do this, paradoxically, with a combination of traditional ethnographic research and modern high-tech forensic science methods.

A moderate form of ancestor worship[9]

However, narrative is the clear winner over science. What *drives* Heyerdahl's quest in *Aku-Aku* is much more personal than the 'prosaic…dry facts…of pure research'; it's the combination of red hair, family, travel and race. His acknowledgement of his family's presence on the expedition is more than mere cutesy parental pride. The family serves a crucial narrative purpose, since the book closes with an anecdote about how his daughter Anette's flower wreath, thrown from the departing Research Vessel as the expedition left Polynesia, failed to clear the rail. Heyerdahl relates how he retrieves the garland and tosses it overboard to join the others—a superstitious gesture which earns him the approval (and symbolic integration with the culture) of his *aku-aku*.[10]

Heyerdahl's *aku-aku* was assigned to him by Easter Island's 'mayor', the only descendent of the 'long-ears', a man who wanted his grandson to be christened 'Thor Heyerdahl Kon-Tiki El Salvador de Niños Atan' —a boy whose 'skull was covered with stiff, flaming red hair', who was 'the last scion of the long-ears' race' and over whom Heyerdahl claims symbolic parenthood ('I was to be godfather and sat on the first bench on the women's side'). There's more, including the death of an unnamed granddaughter of the mayor from flu brought to Easter Island annually by the Chilean Navy, and for whom the 'strapping grandson' was 'compensation'.[11] All of this, including the unselfconsciously patriarchal and quite cheerful sacrifice of the young female child in favour of a masculine 'scion', tends to overwhelm Heyerdahl's 'science' with his *desire* for *his* red-haired, white, male, Nordic seafaring strain to be fused with that of the indigenous populations he studies. The Heyerdahl family sails the seven seas with dad not to keep itself intact but to provide racial purism with a local habitation and a name.

Vehicular theory

Everyone I've asked, without exception, has heard of Heyerdahl and even read one of his books,[12] but not a single one of them remembers *why* he went on his expeditions. Heyerdahl has crossed a Derridean divide—the distance between self and identity, between subjectivity and text—shorn of his own purposes and endowed with a later generation's racial preferences; he's remembered as being a Good Guy *vis-à-vis* indigenous peoples, since he demonstrated that they could do

a great many technological, navigational and spectacular travelling tricks of their own, never mind modern science. Heyerdahl's perverse desire to have human migration go from east to west (i.e. not from Africa via Asia to the Americas but from Egypt via Peru to Polynesia) actually helps him—it reads as if the ancient Peruvian *viracochas* were privy to knowledges that modern science scarcely suspects. Perhaps it no longer matters that these prehistoric wanderings were, for Heyerdahl, racially motivated, white-skined, longeared, red-haired, Nordic sorts of journeys. Heyerdahl's overseas study trips are remembered *for themselves*—not at all for their intellectual content, academic theorization or scientific rigour, but for their *status as travel*.

Here 'taking without consent'—twoccing—is raised to the level of historical practice, engaged in by a popular readership. Heyerdahl himself is twoccing; travelling in a series of vehicles that don't belong to him, he attracts the admiration of the crowd for his devotion to pure travel, without instrumental purpose. Like so many other popular performers, he's embarrassing when he confides his own beliefs, but when he does wheelies in a balsa raft, and handbrake turns with a reed boat, we know we're watching pure talent. But this isn't the end of the story, for Heyerdahl's own vehicle—his *text*—is twocced by his readers. The meaning of the performance turns out, as always, to be in the hands of the driver, not the intentions of the manufacturer. Heyerdahl's readers have misunderstood Heyerdahl's purposes so thoroughly that while he was tracing diachronic (longitudinal) connections among humans—i.e. origins in time, blood-flows through generations, authenticity in racial 'stock'—his public has simply flipped the theory sideways, and taken him to be a Derridean whose voyages *perform* the synchronic (latitudinal) connections between peoples; erasing the *différance* between indigenous and western, primitive and advanced, magic and science. Heyerdahl was talking nineteenth-century grand narrative of origins, but his popular readership was hearing twentieth-century structuralist relations, positing humanity not temporally but spatially, not as ancestors but as a simultaneous network. This is vehicular theory, where the motive intentions of the author (pure race), embodied in the purposes of the institution (pure science), upholstered in the colours of rhetoric (pure narrative), become but an empty vehicle which is parked, keys in the ignition (published), ready to be twocced by the popular readership (pure travel). Vehicular theory presupposes in principle that meanings are stolen, but for use only, not possession.

SECOND

Intellectual travel—a gendered genre…?

Ever since the Renaissance, and before that in Classical times, travel and knowledge have been seen as so similar that each is understood through metaphors of the other. Travel broadens the mind, and the most trusted knowledge (i.e.

science) is still that of the eyewitness who's 'been there, done that'. But the language of travel is more frequently encountered than actual foot-slogging; the itinerant jobbing academic, hawking knowledge from town to town like a medieval colporteur, is nowadays mostly a citizen of the imagination. Post-medieval academics usually conduct their travels via the vehicle of metaphor, communicating with the rest of the planet by publication, airmail and email. As Charles Chaplin might have put it, we live in Modem Times; as Charles Dickens nearly did, the one thing needful (in these hard times) is *faxes*.

These days, when metaphors are considered as factual as you can get, Janet Wolff thinks metaphors of travel in intellectual writing are gendered 'in fact and perhaps in essence'.[13] Their prevalence in critical writing is not only a postmodern migratory move but also a temporal leftover from Classical and Renaissance methodologies, wherein knowledge was thought to be a direct product of bodily displacement from the familiar. This was certainly gendered historically as a practice, not only because it reproduces an Aristotelian binary opposition between outside (active, rational, male, foreign) and inside (refuge, desire, female, home), but also for the simple reason that men undertook voyages of exploration and the European 'grand tour', and wrote them up for publication afterwards more frequently than women did, as Wolff points out.

Given the long history of masculine voyaging into realms of knowledge, it's not surprising that the resultant store of metaphor is rich, varied and gendered. But vehicular theory suggests that human travel is *bipedal* (as it were), and women do it, both metaphorically and across actual countries, independently of the 'provenance' of the metaphorical baggage. For Wolff, this is not the point, for a different kind of temporality is in play in the 'somewhat suspicious timing' of academic fashions: 'just as women accede to theory, (male) theorists take to the road.'[14] They're mostly taking to the mental road, doing the Deleuzian detour in footnotes, not footsteps, but still the suspicion remains, and it's not Wolff's alone. Lidia Curti, for instance, in her essay in the Monster-Book-of-Cultural-Studies, cites Patricia Waugh on the same subject:

> During the 1960s, as Vonnegut waves a fond goodbye to character in fiction, women writers are beginning, *for the first time in history,* to construct an identity…. As male writers lament its demise, women writers have not yet experienced that subjectivity which will give them a sense of personal autonomy, continuous identity, a history and agency in the world.[15]

If both theory and identity are understood in terms of a difference between mobility and stability, they can thus be seen not as neutral points of discursive productivity, but as gendered scarce resources; the men are going on the road, waving a fond farewell as they depart Whitman-style ('a backward glance o'er travel'd roads'), just as *('for the first time in history')* women writers hie into town; and the implication is that this near miss is not accidental…the blokes are

scarpering, taking as much theory and identity, as much autonomy, history and agency as they can carry, *because* the women are beginning, from places which are situated —Wolff lists such places as borderlands, exile, margins, edges, 'less visible spaces'[16]—to criticize the very place the men were occupying, namely the 'dominant centre' of, among other things, theoretical discourse-production and metaphor-generation.

Tinker, tailor, beggar(man)…thief

For Wolff, 'in a patriarchal culture we are not all, as cultural critics any more than social beings, "on the road" together'.[17] And so, as far as she's concerned, the Meaghan Morris guide to *feminist* travel—the article 'At Henry Parkes Motel'[18]—is 'wrong' at the most fundamental level:

> The already-gendered language of mobility marginalizes women who want to participate in cultural criticism. For that reason, I believe there is no point in tinkering with the vocabulary of travel (motels instead of hotels) to accommodate women. Crucially, this is still *the wrong language*.[19]

Wolff's critique is provocatively inclusive; *all* metaphors of *all* travel are suspect, at least for the time being. But precisely because she has raised a challenging issue, it is important not to let the matter rest there. At the very least mobility implies multiple vehicles, travelling at their own speed, for their own purposes, in all directions. A journey can be as long as Heyerdahl's (to the 'End of the World'), or as short as a trip to a motel in a Morris Minor; but the *journey* isn't predetermined as patriarchal even if the vehicle one borrows or twocs for the purpose is gender-built.[20]

If travel can be used to reach feminist as well as male destinations, and if a Morris Minor can be on the road alongside (pootling right on past) the heroic blokes of high modernism, then the familiar metaphors of not-being-positioned, such as indeterminacy, decentring and marginalization, do not have to be counted as loci of powerlessness. If 'unpositionality' is categorized not only as weak but also as somehow 'female', then it's not surprising that feminist suspicion falls on the language as well as its most prominent (male) speakers. But perhaps there is a problem (a strategic mistake) with the presumption that indeterminacy, undecidability and displacement are weak at all.

One possibility is that cultural criticism may be(come) successfully 'feminine'/feminist without regressing to traditional presumptions about where a woman's place might be. But in order to generalize the implications of the argument, I want to approach these questions of gender indirectly, via a detour around Japan, whose geopolitical indeterminacy is instructive in this context. And for this trip to Japan I'm twoccing from Mark Gibson.