Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

European Joint Master's Degree
in English & American Studies

FINAL THESIS

The End of the Road?

The American *Dérive* as an Aimless Drive.

Graduand
Christian Alexander Herschmann

Matriculation Nr. 847801
Academic Year 2014 / 2015

Supervisor
Prof. Dr. Simone Francescato
(University of Venice)

Second Reader
Dr. Georgiana Banita
(University of Bamberg)

He doesn't take his spoon or fork
He's seen too many eating in New York
He'll use his hands to pick and eat
The fruit he finds, he'll find it sweet.
(*Travel Light* - Diane Cluck & Jeffrey Lewis)

I am very grateful for the input and support provided by Karl Hughes who encouraged me to finish what I began, and for the never-ending helpfulness of my mother, Margit Herschmann. Beyond that, I am much obliged to a number of past and present friends and encounters on my own *dérives*, who were an inspiration and shaped my understanding of the world, among them Nikolaj Lehmann, Korinna Fritzemeyer, Mark Bechhofer, Philip Decker, Alexander Münch, Theresa Pleskotová, Monica Vercellino, Paolo Pitari, Marine Descamps and Alina Grung.

The End of the Road

-

The American *Dérive* as an Aimless Drive

This present work investigates the theme of the drifting and aimless journey, as it appears in American travel narratives in literature and film. The focus will be on Jack Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road*. Drawing from the situationists' *psychogeography* and its treatment of spatial organization, the exercise of power through built environments, and the individual within such boundaries, the concept of the *dérive* will be extended to include the open road and vehicle-related mobility, in order to examine notions of freedom, confinement and resistance in narratives in which a journey is undertaken. This will, it is hoped, expand the urbanist purview with regard to this relatively unexplored but connected area, as well as shed some light on the protagonists' motivation for setting out towards an unknown horizon and, in turn, address the question of what actually awaits them at the End of the Road.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

p.

1. Introduction: A Short History of Wanderlust 4

2. What Drives US to the Street 9

3. The State of the Psyche in Geography, or: 'No Playing in the Labyrinth' 16

4. A *Dérive* across the City 24

5. Or: a Drive across the Land 36

6. The Disenchantment *On the Road* 46

7. Following Beats - What Became of the Road 78

8. Conclusion: The Hope in Hoboism 99

List of Illustrations 104

List of References 105

1. Introduction: A Short History of Wanderlust

You know the first time I traveled
Out in the rain and snow
In the rain and snow
I didn't have no payroll
Not even no place to go.
(*On the Road Again* - Canned Heat)

She's Leaving Home by The Beatles was featured on the band's 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and deals with an actual incident described in the papers, one not unheard of among its late-sixties audience. The lyrics speak of a young girl who, one morning, sneaks out of her parents' home, escaping the environments she appears to have perceived as delimiting or oppressive, leaving behind perplexed parents who continuously stress they have meant well, 'giving her everything money could buy', providing a comfort zone out of which the estranged girl inexplicably fled into a supposed inner and ultimately outer hermitage. The song closes on the old couple, hands on the goodbye letter and an imaginable 'You know something's happening here but you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?' - expression on their faces. It is the template story of the runaway.

In fiction as in real life, there have been multiple reasons, excuses, explanations and justifications documented for taking to the road. One can find them in the accounts of people setting out from their familiar surroundings, like runaways abandoning their homes, out of a desire for freedom, self-fulfillment, curiosity or spirit of discovery. Countless people have embarked on the road, the river, the sea and into the air in order to encounter the world. In a vast number of traditional tales - which will not be investigated in the present work - the home is left in order to acquire one thing or overthrow another, to seek a fortune, to win out against strange forces, to reign, or to get the girl, or boy for that matter. Possibly and not uncommonly, it is all these things put together, at the end of a long voyage of proving one's worthiness of possession, fortune, happiness, and heirs.

The roots and traditions of the genre of road novels and films reach as far back into literary history as to Homer's Odyssey and, much later, the epic of the Middle Ages stands in line with the general assumption that a young nobleman has to show his virtue and value by going on adventures and defeating external dangers or internal fears, before he can rightfully rise to power and prove that his prosperity is divinely ordained. These themes continue to exist in pre-romantic and romantic writings, most notably in the *Bildungsroman*, Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795-1796), Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), to name but a few. What is left of those aspects in modern representations? What remains, if a material fortune is not likely to be made at the end of the journey, if there is not even the prospect of it?

The protagonists of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), as those of other countercultural American narratives mentioned in this analysis, would arguably have a better chance of achieving wealth and power were they to stay in stable, preferably urban settings, and pursue the more frequented paths laid out by established institutions and hierarchies. As will be seen in the viewpoints on society and the existing order, the journey undertaken by the heroes of these stories is one removed from commonly presumed comfort zones, towards an idealized other, more real or surreal, raw, original, less foreseeable and petrified. These American travel narratives explicitly or implicitly comment on society, and the individuals' relationship and connection to the space surrounding them. The investigation will demonstrate the ways the protagonists seek to test and enlarge their minds and experience, by revolting against preordained life paths. In a road narrative, the mental image of these paths and the plans and aspirations associated with them, always find expression in actual, physical movement.

It will become clear that the stories culminate in a disillusioned view of their heroes' hopes for geographical, political, spiritual and intellectual self-determination and possible fulfillment through mobility. Their voyage - if it is meant to transcend the ordinary, pragmatic and logical movement from A to B - is bound to be endlessly deferred, postponed till infinity, if the impossibility of the endeavor is not to be admitted. In order to illustrate this realization in an iconic countercultural original, the investigation will mainly focus on *On the Road*, as an initial turning point, a loss of innocence, a shattering of illusions, following its protagonist from hope to disenchantment. The analysis will show that the journey-without-end, the odyssey, has become progressively narrower, as 'space' in all senses has become increasingly appropriated and traduced.

A quick glance at some of the works that followed Kerouac in the 1960s and 1970s will try to highlight how the seditious undercurrent to the aimless, endless journey has become a mere trickle as all forms of dissent are thwarted and protest or deviation of any kind is marginalized to the point where it is either impossible or only expressible as 'terrorism'. Today's journey is truncated, it must either have the zealot's or fanatic's 'end' or purpose, or it cannot exist other than as part of an officially ordained tour, the adventure holiday, gap year, voluntary work, etc. - an enfeebled, diluted version of the voyage of self-discovery. Not to get carried away in disenchantment, the investigation will close on the hobo as a possibly still existent countercultural figure, which will close the circle and lead back to Kerouac, who knew a lot about the grace of these rootless wanderers.

One central question in the analysis is: What can be said about the protagonist's motivation? What is it about constant mobility, the aimless journey and open road that attracts him? How does his attitude towards the surrounding space inform his movement within its confines or his (constant) effort to escape them? Is he driven by a nostalgia for the past, a romantic longing for the American pioneering spirit, or does he maintain a future-oriented motivation? Has he, instead, become 'petrified' himself, in a static movement in the present progressive, leading nowhere? Can some of it still be seen as the logical continuation of the old-school quest for self-discovery, a broadening of personal horizons in a Romantic tradition, young adventurers seeing the world, coming of age, meeting women, learning about different cultures, customs, systems, some on foot, some on horseback, to return one day as wiser men, ready to integrate into society, to take responsibility, to lead - a refinement of the intellect, as sought by the likes of "Rousseau philosophising *à pied*, Goethe rattling into Switzerland in a coach, Cobbett on his clopping gee-gee, assorted Borrows and Stevensons plodding with their donkeys, Greene rocking on a train, Thesiger with a camel up his arse," (Self 2007: 12) as present-day psychogeographer Will Self summarizes the old luminaries of self-education on the go.

Can the 'drifters' in American narratives be in fact juxtaposed with the analytic and often very practical concept of *psychogeography*, a theory which was conceived in Paris at the same time as the novel *On the Road* was written in America, its main exercise being the *dérive*, an intentionally 'aimless' wandering through the streets of urban landscapes, many would translate precisely as 'drifting'? This work uses ideas formulated by psychogeographers to show how the *dérive* they invoke as a means to transcend urban space, maps, pre-set and -determined ways can be stretched towards the road leading away from the city, although many of them would deny it, possibly pointing out the limitations of the highway's mono-directedness and the car's banal suggestion of freedom. However, it is precisely in the sense and spirit of *dérive* that one can invert this perspective; thus the present study focuses on a character's decision to use infrastructure against itself, not in an ostensibly purposeful way as a directed, aim-driven, problem-solving endeavor.

It needs to be noted that nomads, gangsters escaping from the law, or fugitives are not included here. It is crucial that the situation of being on a journey is established through an internally motivated decision and, even if the movement seems endless or without alternative, the particular living conditions, background and status must, in theory, offer other possibilities. In order to parallel and combine the protagonists' search for liberation with their deliberate act of drifting, as in the psychogeography's *dérive*, the analysis is confined to characters who do have one liberty already: The ability to make the *decision* to leave. Thus, quite often, the problems under scrutiny are of a first-world kind. After all, as will be shown, these people heading 'back to the land' are city dwellers through and through.

2. What Drives US to the Streets

Honor escapes he who runs after it.
(Self 2007: 11)

Psychogeography, as the name of a field of studies, was established in the 1950s both by German-American psychoanalyst William G. Niederland in order to describe an analytical perspective, one that focuses on the individual and its geographical surroundings, as well as, almost simultaneously, by French philosopher Guy Debord, who framed a position on how to behave towards one's surroundings in urban situations. Although the latter will - in an extension beyond this mere urban space - be more important for analyzing the works presented in this paper, mention of the former is of worth as a topical *dérive* itself, in order to present some perspectives on the US collective mindset.

Niederland coined the term psychogeography to give a proper name to his studies of the psychological processes behind people's connection to their physical environment. Since then, it has been picked up by a number of scholars who exhaustively describe its implications and incarnations, notably the symbolism behind particular phenomena which organize human space, like natural and political borders, rivers and bridges. In its original sense, as Howard F. Stein outlines as editor of a collection of psychogeographic papers, the field investigates "how issues, experiences, and processes that result from growing up in a male or female body become symbolized and played out in the wider social and natural worlds, which serve as 'screens' for these inner dramas" (Stein 1989: xvii). One's particular room, house, neighborhood, city, land and country seem to infiltrate the mind as much as the mind projects meaning onto them. This is true for individuals and groups alike and, depending on situation and movement, can either be stagnant and inherited, or dynamic and immediate.

In order to locate the US collective psyche in geographical terms within the vast space of the North American continent, one needs to look back at the formative centuries of the nation, from the arrival of the original settlers to the days of advanced transportation and cultivation. "All groups have sacred places - from the Holy Mountain to Plymouth rock - to which the founding, emergence, or birth of their ancestors can be traced" (Stein 1989: xxi). The most important symbolic realm corresponding to Stein's description, a geographical drawing point for the self-awareness of the US, reaching back to the founding tales of the country, is rooted in the myth of the West, the original pilgrims' and settlers' direction into the new continent. The first generations to arrive, early ancestors of today's population, had already been on a demanding voyage before even reaching the untamed wilderness of America that lay in front of them. What is, however, as a movement, more significant for people's psychological unification, in its cutting of old ties and pushing towards a cohesion of nationality, is the following motion directed at and leading into the seemingly endless, open country, a mass movement happening at an unprecedented *speed*. Still, the seizing and taming of the land took centuries, long enough for the pioneers' pushing of the frontier and the semi-lawless Wild West to remain myths in the general consciousness. The greatest dangers and fortunes have been imagined in countless stories and Americans enjoy tracing back the comparably young factual history of their states and cities by linking it to settlers' tales and the heroes among them, who overcame hardships and faced the rawness of the land - a fascination that is still alive in the spirit of, for instance, *On the Road*, and its main protagonist Sal Paradise's encounters with what he conceives as 'original' Americans, as will be discussed below.

Notions of mobility and restlessness are inherent in the collective mindset of US citizens more than in other nations' set of identity-establishing ideas. They are fueled by the idea of American exceptionalism, the understanding that the New World will develop into an ideal Arcadia, as summoned in John Winthrop's *City Upon a Hill*, representing God's very own country. In order to achieve the human imperatives associated with that vision, the horizon was to be conquered and the West cultivated, as the manifest destiny suggests: Pioneers spreading knowledge, culture, infrastructure and communication throughout the wild, uncharted darkness of the western maps. For believers, the US remains the proverbial 'greatest country in the world' and, ever since, many psychological, cultural and political motifs were consciously or subconsciously informed or justified by this belief. The second founding myth of America, the story of Pocahontas, struggles to suggest an amalgamation of the old and the new world, a process of mutual rapprochement of the settlers and indigenous people; it is in fact evidence of another psychogeographical phenomenon within the conquest of paradise - the untouched natural beauty quite literally representing female virginity, as it is captured and bound by male joy of discovery.

> Fantasies of paradisiacal worlds have always led the more fearless to venture beyond present horizons. Underlying the advances in instrumentation and technology that now make extraterrestrial exploration possible are deep human desires. What drives us 'to strive, to seek, to find,' like long-wandering Ulysses? The impetus to explore new worlds can be thought of as sexual in origin. Ancient maps reveal that geography has always

> been presented anthropomorphically. In other words, the mental locus of the world image is the body image. (Stein 1989: xxii)

In the Odyssey, "the first one, the big one, the ur-road movie" (Higgins 2012), Odysseus' motivation for the journey is clearly defined. The hero is off to the Mediterranean Sea to get back to his home island of Ithaca, the End of the 'Road' being the reunion with his wife Penelope. After ten tiresome years of fighting in the Trojan war with his Greek brothers in arms, the tragic king is the last one to return, another decade passes until he finally arrives. His struggle has become a legend and an 'odyssey' is the winged word for describing a voyage in which the aim is lost due to mishaps, adventurous distractions or misguidance. In a way, one can regard Odysseus as literature's first example of a drifter, however superimposed his going astray is, and all the other journeys that will be discussed are odysseys for their part. It is through divine intervention, mainly caused by a conflict with the God of the Sea, Poseidon, that Odysseus loses his way and Homer's epic enjoys lingering on the many 'roadside' events, although the hero's basic goal remains the driving force behind his quest. He, as so many who will follow, seeks to (re-)claim the throne and, above all else, to get the girl (back). The sexual aspect is at the heart of the intention and remains vital for its distractions. Odysseus being a resourceful and desirable warrior and king, cannot avoid stirring up some curiosity in the female world (as the equally worthy queen Penelope, in turn, gathers no less than 108 suitors in the absence of her husband). From the initial years in Calypso's captivity, who falls for Odysseus, to Circe who demands his love in exchange for his men, the protagonist has to deal with covetousness in various guises.

Homer's Odysseus resists all temptations, while later Greek adaptations and sequels speak of children with Calypso and Circe (also Penelope, usually an idealized symbol of chastity and faithfulness, is depicted as having slept with every single one of the suitors). Even without the promiscuity of these reinterpretations and follow-ups, Homer does not entertain his audience with a hero who is beyond enjoying the treats and rewards awaiting him 'roadside' during the hardships of his travels. When things are straightened out between him and Circe, the two of them, together with his crew, enjoy something of an extended 'lost weekend' on her island, spending one whole year feasting and drinking. Even Raoul Duke, never shy of a hedonistic booze- and drug-infused hotel room escapade in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971), or Sal Paradise with his sleepless nights of Jazz frenzies in *On the Road*, would have gotten restless legs long before the moment when it is in fact Odysseus' friends who wake their king from his diversions to remind him of the *aim* of his journey. Persuaded to leave and apparently still in shape, he sets off again for more adventures to come. Blame it on a somewhat superlative presentation of noblemen favoring a 'work hard, play hard' attitude which will still be valid over 2,000 years later in the epic of the Middle Ages, but in this moment Odysseus is a lover of life and heeds the distraction more than the goal-directedness. He is *drifting* from the course and deliberately so.

A final aspect to highlight in Homer's epic, the original point of reference for the quarrels and temptations of travel in fiction, is another example in which Odysseus' spirit of adventure and eagerness for knowledge and experience wins out against his rationality and purposeful concentration, namely, the case of the Sirens. Too curious not to expose himself to their fatal power to seduce the traveler, Odysseus orders his crew to tie him to the ship's mast with everyone else plugging their ears with wax to stay immune. As anticipated, once he hears the beautiful creatures' enchanting voices, he is lured to his doom, determined to steer towards them and wreck the ship, but his men do not listen to his cries for freedom. Apart from Orpheus, who overcomes the sirens with his own, even more powerful music - but in doing so, cannot listen to their chants - Odysseus is the only mortal who can tell of the secret of the Sirens' beautiful but deadly song, as a symbol of bewitched curiosity being drawn to the edges of the known, the defeat of reason that is the forfeit of the life of discovery. Characteristically for many cultures, not only the Greek, this dangerous force of nature is female:

> Many cultural or 'ethnic' groups around the world depict their territory not necessarily as an abstract representation of the female - mother's - body, but literally, as if the

> sacred mountain peaks (e.g., the Teton Mountains in Wyoming) really were her breasts, forest clumps or lakes her pubis and vulva, and other natural features her extremities, eyes, and so forth. (Stein 1989: xxiv)

Jumping back ahead almost three millennia, and in keeping with the implications of geography's symbolism that affect people's concept of and their attitude towards their surroundings, psychoanalyst Reuben Fine, in his paper "Geography and the Superego: A Contribution to Psychogeography and the Psychology of Travel", gives an overview of a number of cases in which patients experience different effects through travel, leading them either to avoid certain places or be drawn to others. One of the examples where travel brings release is the case of a young man who had to quit the US altogether, in order to obtain a sense of liberation, one of a very psychogeographical kind:

> *Case 5.* A 22-year old boy, son of divorced parents, felt stranded after World War II. He went to college in Boston, but saw both the city and the college as constricted and inhibited. With no clear-cut goal in mind, he went to study in Paris under the GI Bill. This was in 1946. There he was intrigued by the existentialists, and went along with their theories. Self-expression, regardless of the consequences, became his creed. For a while he simply wandered all over Paris. Whenever the mood struck him, he would turn down another street. One day he had another inspiration. He went to the top of Au Louvre (one of the biggest department stores in Paris), took off all his clothes, and walked down the staircase and into the street stark naked. He walked a block before he was arrested and remanded for psychiatric observation. (Fine 1989: 216 f.)

This man's liberated passion for walking through the city of Paris develops into a visible violation of the rules of behavior in public, and social order demands he be put out of action. Today, a good sixty years later, a naked walker through the city creates less of a turmoil, for instance the performers in a video clip by French band Make The Girl Dance shot without a permit in Rue Montorgueil in plain daylight, do not receive more than a couple of glances by passers-by during their long walk down many blocks (Ultra Music 2009). Although Fine's young patient seeks further release and radicalizes his personal practice of traversing the town, in the beginning, when he 'wandered all over Paris', roaming wherever his mood led him and not in obedience to defined paths, a common direct route or established linear access to a destination, the man could have been a fitting inspiration for the concept of psychogeography, an approach towards urban space described by Guy Debord only nine years later, and in the very city where the 22-year-old American bared all. Most practicing psychogeographers are unlikely to create such controversy in the flashing attention spans of the streets, because their visible actions - based on a broader theoretical intention - are reduced to a still very common sight in cities: They walk. It is merely the routes taken and the aim of the motion that differ. Devotees to this approach towards mobility aim to create some confusion and disruption were they to talk about it; as present-day novelist, journalist and psychogeographer Will Self reports, who (in an actually non-purist manner) tends to combine his excessive walking with professional duties and transactions:

> To underscore the seriousness of my project I like a walk which takes me to a meeting or an assignment; that way I can drag other people into my geotechnical world view. 'How was your journey?' they say. 'Not bad,' I reply. 'Take long?' they enquire. 'About ten hours,' I admit. 'I walked here.' My interlocutor goggles at me; if he took ten hours to get here, they're undoubtedly thinking, will the meeting have to go on for twenty? As Emile Durkheim so sagely observed, a society's space-time perceptions are a function of its social rhythm and its territory. So, by walking to the business meeting I have disrupted it just as surely as if I'd appeared stark naked with a peacock's tail fanning out from my buttocks while mouthing Symbolist poetry. (Self 2007: 69)

3. The State of the Psyche in Geography, or: 'No Playing in the Labyrinth'

Let slide sweetly
The transformations
Of the thinking
(*On Ether* - Jack Kerouac)

OFFICIAL MAP OF:
NEW ORLEANS
EST. 2010
ALLIGATOR PO-BOY
DIRTY COAST
MISSISSIPPI

Paris is the setting which gave rise to the phenomenon of the *flâneur*: In the late 19th century, he appeared as a distinguished gentleman who, in full intellectual awareness of himself and the urban scene around him, strolled through town, half curious about observing society, but also half detached from the social realities beyond certain boulevards; a dandy more than a drifter, performing more a distinguished pastime (Charles Baudelaire's 1863 *The Painter of Modern*

Life) than a playful experiment and investigation. He tended to remain isolated and avoided delving into the vibrant life on street corners. Later, when confronted with the abysses of modern urban density, a *flâneur* could end up shocked and repulsed, as for instance the protagonist in Rainer Maria Rilke's 1910 novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* in Paris. If somewhat different in nature from the psychogeographical walkers, with their intentions of altering the perception of urbanity and their broader revolutionary ideas, the *flâneur* remains the prototypical city stroller, who wanders through town in a decadent, deliberately aimless fashion. He observes and reflects, however, his journey does not seek to subvert the boundaries and implications of the built environment.

Fifty years after Rilke's semi-autobiographical depictions of the horrors of the modern city there came a new generation of urban strollers, whose intent was to 'play in the labyrinth' and restructure the deformed urban experience. Between the post World War II years and the following phase of student revolt and counterculture, at the same time as *On the Road* was written, but still awaited its publication and groundbreaking success in the US, a group of Marxist intellectuals that were to become the Situationist International embarked on a Paris-set mission to reexamine and revolutionize everyday life, particularly the power structure behind a materialist society and its urban planning. Among a whole set of ideas aimed at reversing the degradation of the citizen and increasing the quality of life in times of advanced capitalism, the movement gave birth to an abstract concept formulated by their founding member, Guy Debord, that of psychogeography, and its practical application, the *dérive*: An exercise of the body which is aimed at the mind, to subvert the preconceived mapping of the urban order, "intended to outfox prescribed folkways" (Self 2007: 13). Ultimately, the *dériveur*, or 'drifter', reclaims the sovereignty over his spatial experience through his moving freely and spontaneously in the city. The outline of the paths citizens were 'advised' to frequent throughout history has naturally always been, and still is, in other sovereign hands, as Will Self detects:

> Most ancient cities are constructed around a citadel, within which the powers that be can retreat in times of riot, taking with them their idols and their gods. However, in the modern era these Kremlins have been replaced with broad boulevards, too wide for barricades, and allowing a clear line of fire for artillery. An important part of urban renewal has always been securing lines of retreat for despots and demagogues. Don't be fooled by all that tommyrot about affordable housing: look at Paris, for Christ's sake. (Self 2007: 99)

In 1910, one of the many early Parisian taxicabs, part of the ocean of streets and vehicles that startled Rilke into bewailing the city's total mobility and restlessness, was driven by Ukrainian immigrant and ex-revolutionary Vladimir Chtchegloff. Decades later, in a curious development, his 19-year-old son Ivan became the major inspiration for psychogeography, when he published a disillusioned but inventive account of Paris' strictly functional urban design in 1953, calling it *Formulary for a New Urbanism*. In this declaration, Chtcheglov (as he spelled himself then) laments the lack of poetry and room for play in urban planning and reality, repeating "We are bored in the city" (Chtcheglov 1953). He misses an atmosphere of inspiration and elements of magic in the economy-driven symbolism of capitalist modernity, complaining that "we really have to strain to still discover mysteries on the sidewalk billboards" (Chtcheglov 1953).

> We move within a closed landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past. Certain shifting angles, certain receding perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space, but this vision remains fragmentary. It must be sought in the magical locales of fairy tales and surrealist writings: castles, endless walls, little forgotten bars, mammoth caverns, casino mirrors. (Chtcheglov 1953)

Instead of offering satisfaction to people's desires for 'pointless' stimulation, for the magical and mythical, the urban space appears to be numbing its inhabitants. In Chtcheglov's eyes, the streets merely facilitate the shortest passage through an architecture that either alludes to the past or, if contemporary, refuses to distract the mind with any significance at all: "Pure plasticity, inanimate and storyless, soothes the eye. (...) We don’t intend to prolong the mechanistic civilizations and frigid architecture that ultimately lead to boring leisure" (Chtcheglov 1953).

It seems that, in this setting, there cannot be an open and inspired involvement with the surroundings, with the way people live or could live, since the very environment is a closed system shutting out any contradictory positions. Intentionally preserved buildings are, as the pockets of time they represent, impenetrable, used as pilgrimage sites, and their right to exist and significance is interpreted according to guide books and signs. Newly built structures, intersections and squares, instead of encouraging interaction, possible disruption and debate, affirm the status quo and catalyze its growth. The fear of a loss of convenience has deformed the citizens' desires, condemning them to immaturity and irresponsibility:

> A mental disease has swept the planet: banalization. Everyone is hypnotized by production and conveniences — sewage systems, elevators, bathrooms, washing machines. This state of affairs, arising out of a struggle against poverty, has overshot its ultimate goal - the liberation of humanity from material cares - and become an omnipresent obsessive image. Presented with the alternative of love or a garbage disposal unit, young people of all countries have chosen the garbage disposal unit. It has become essential to provoke a complete spiritual transformation by bringing to light forgotten desires and by creating entirely new ones. (Chtcheglov 1953)

As a revolutionary pamphlet, Chtcheglov's plans for the city of the future are ambitious and include visions of mobile houses, in order to integrate movement and stability; there are joyful or tragic districts that make an open connection between emotions and space; he also proposes an amalgamation of the botanic world with architecture, which since then has to some extent been implemented in urban agriculture, with more of a pragmatic or simply cosmetic intention, however. The value of these proposals lies in their refusal of the merely functional and of allegiance to the status quo, in the realization that urban surroundings constantly affect the reality of the people and potentially deprive them of their power to make conscious decisions for themselves, admitting, as de Certeau writes, "that spatial practices in fact secretly structure the determining conditions of social life." (de Certeau 1980: 96). There should be a free approach towards their reinterpretation, whereby "(...) architecture will, at least initially, be a means of experimenting with a thousand ways of modifying life, with a view to an ultimate mythic synthesis." (Chtcheglov 1953)

Like many others, the utopian aspirations in these theoretical visions of a transformation of architecture and space have not been realized, as they would require a political power to radically change urban space that, as mentioned before, other sovereign hands hold fast to, and advocates of utopian ideas seldom possess. However, as will be seen, one practical 'means of experimenting' with architecture, which Chtcheglov himself hints at and Debord will elaborate on, is still in use and will also be consulted in this work: "The main activity of the inhabitants will be CONTINUOUS DRIFTING. The changing of landscapes from one hour to the next will result in total disorientation." (Chtcheglov 1953, emphasis in original) Thus, drifting (*dériver / aller à la dérive*), through disorientation, creates a subversion of the existing order.

French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, an important figure of inspiration for Debord and the Situationist International, later summarizes his view on this existing order, the organization of the modern city as a 'social space', a place of gathering and interaction, in his major work *The Production of Space* in 1974. In his paper "The 'Disappearance of Public Space'", Gulick refers to Lefebvre's understanding of social space in advanced capitalist cities and beyond:

> The planning agencies reproduce the social relations of capitalism not only by rationalizing the movements of commodities, workers, and consumers or by arranging cheap housing for proletarianized peasants and immigrants, but also by inducing manifold 'splits' in popular consciousness. Sector-specific industrial districts keep workers in different industries from having the customary contact propitious for waging a general strike; neighborhoods deliberately split by national status foster ethnic chauvinism; the physical separation of the job from the household fragment concerns over wages and workers' control from concerns over gendered domestic roles and

> neighborhood well-being; the spatial isolation of hospitals, prisons, welfare agencies, and schools parcel out the various struggles against the bureaucratic state. (Gulick 1998:144)

Lefebvre and Gulick highlight the fragmentation of an imagined social unity (imagined on the model of the *United* States), their inhabitants, their culture and possible counterculture. Such control over spatial planning makes it more difficult, and less spontaneous, or 'situational', for a heterogeneous social community to exchange and collectivize ideas that may or may not lead to a subversion of the organization of living conditions, as it is installed and maintained by 'planning agencies' which compartmentalize space. The inhabitants are geographically, and therefore socially isolated; by cultivating existing and creating additional separations, new hierarchies and discrimination between them emerges. In *On the Road*, urbanite Sal Paradise has only vague conceptions of the different classes and communities within the society he lives in, he knows of them through books that he reads; during his initial, enthusiastic cross-continental voyage, by mending the 'splits in popular consciousness', he tries to fit his first-hand meetings with fellow citizens into a coherent picture.

Sal's innocent, lyrical, spiritual idea of American society and the myth of the West, acquired during the privileged fragment of his youth in New York, is sounded out in the face of both affirming and disenchanting encounters with classes, professions, lifestyles and world views from which he has hitherto lived isolated. His disobedience in respect of the compartmentalization of social space is embodied in his drifting through the country, not in search of a material fortune, but experience. He is fascinated by the geographically separated American people he meets along the way, while hitchhiking, walking, drinking with and sleeping next to migrant workers, hobos and other drifters. Sal embarks on a *dérive* out from the urban, onto the road and through the country, in order to put into perspective the urban reality of his youth. He is not interested in a short-term vacation, a mere interruption of his spatial routines. On a hike between Chicago and Iowa, a middle-aged woman "at one point insisted on visiting an old church somewhere, as if we were tourists" (Kerouac 1957: 13). Far from that, Sal seeks to expand the broader conception of his surroundings by delving into new ones, thus breaking away from the locational system that seeks to usher his individual short-range mobility and activity into a functional collective order. As Lefebvre understands it:

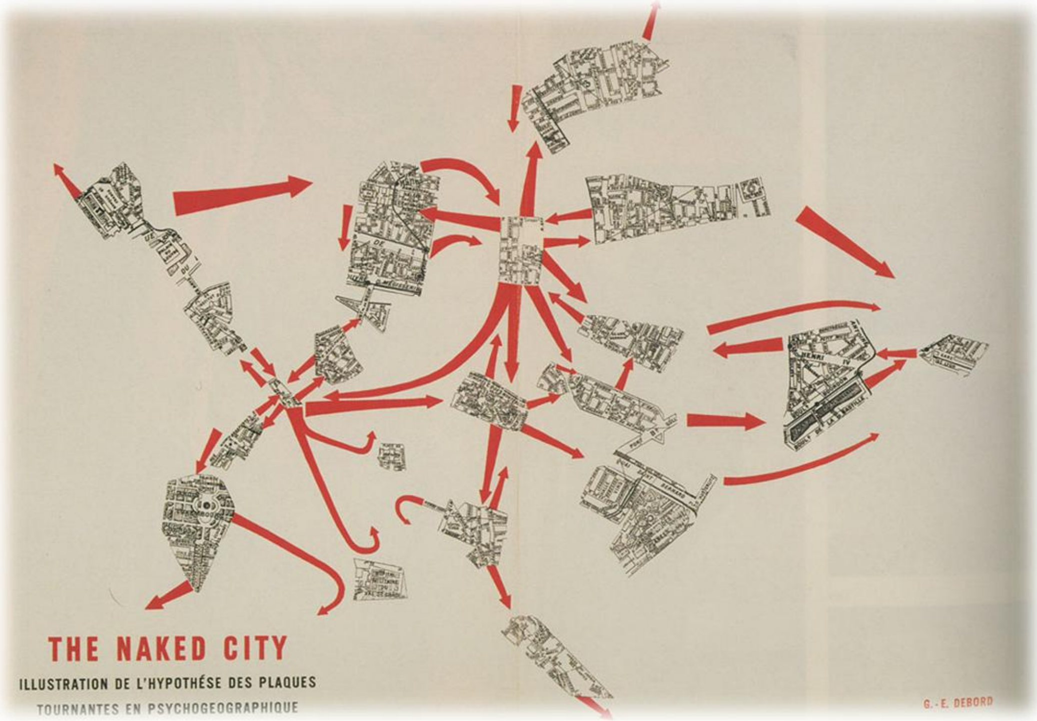
> People occupy, produce, and sustain a social space through their daily routines of working, shopping, cooking, attending meetings, minding children, recreating, etc. (...) the planners classify the concrete activities of human beings into functional, temporal, and locational categories and then apply this abstract knowledge in the remaking of the city's spatial form to serve social order and capital accumulation. (Gulick 1998: 144)

Fittingly, Sal, as many others, becomes a victim of his restlessness, tirelessly pursuing 'It', the sanctum that cannot be reached; with a limited attention span, chasing his dream, always suspecting providence has something else in store over the next horizon. Escaping the 'social order', he does not participate in 'capital accumulation', unless circumstances and travel expenses force him to reluctantly pursue his career as a writer. He is waylaid by constant distractions and passing, situational pleasures.

Kerouac's own three long road trips through the US, which form the basis of *On the Road*, commenced in 1947 (he refers to the actual time frame in the book), and four years later, in a famous three-week writing frenzy, he finished the original 'scroll' version of his recapitulation. However, it took until 1957 for the book to be published, addressing an audience that was, by then, already familiar with imagery of the young male rebel in conflict with middle-class, repressed society, and reacts with disengaged mobility; movies such as *The Wild One* (1953) with Marlon Brando, and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) with James Dean, had installed the aesthetic of a troubled youth revolting against the conservatism of their fathers and many viewers could identify with the heroes of a torn generation, caught between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, without feeling connected to, or responsible for either. "The romantic rebel had been replaced by rebels whose escape was simply driving, drivers without destination." (Patton 1986: 251) Youthful expression of revolt and counterculture had long entered the collective mindset in the shape of motorcycle gangs - whose special appeal Hunter S. Thompson later dealt with differently in his debut book *Hell's Angels* (1966), and whose aesthetics still find expression in *Easy Rider* (1969) - as well as car races - which play a significant role in many narratives, including *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971). Although theoretically somewhat dated in these fast-paced times of transformation and experimentation in society and literature, Kerouac's (especially early) enthusiastic, far-from-hopeless tone nonetheless reached the American and international youth in a groundbreaking way. Those US readers who were not only aware of the texts produced by their domestic Beat Generation, but also kept an ear to the ground of French avant-garde philosophy and Marxist writings, had, by then, had the chance to become intimate with the situationists' concept of psychogeography. One year later, in a time when 'drifting' seemed to be the word, Debord then transformed all these theses into a sort of guide book for individual experimentation, 1958's *Theory of the Dérive*.

4. A *Dérive* across the City

And while my original form disintegrates
I come to exist as a multiplicity of forms
That are not fixed but always redefined
By my continuous engagement
With the phenomena that surround me.
(Falke Pisano)


THE NAKED CITY
ILLUSTRATION DE L'HYPOTHÈSE DES PLAQUES
TOURNANTES EN PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIQUE
G.-E. DEBORD

Debord's psychogeography, as part of a broader political agenda, serves as a reevaluation of the present-day, and valuation of the possible future city, which - by overcoming the scourge of capitalist compulsion to maximize growth - will provide an urban architecture that no longer separates the functional from the playful and artistic. The situationists argue that, while there are multiple, yet separated districts and neighborhoods reserved for the duality of residence and labor, there is little space dedicated to life itself, to leisure-time social exchange.

On the road towards an ever inspiring, non-capitalist urban living experience, the logical first step is to understand the current obscured identity and hidden logic of a space by individually comprehending its emotional impact and thus lifting the veil that masks the built environment. Already in his 1955 *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography*, Debord had recorded the theoretical goals of something he called psychogeography:

> Psychogeography sets for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. The charmingly vague adjective *psychogeographical* can be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery. (Debord 1955)

The idea that the aim of urban planning is not only to facilitate, but also to ultimately control the inhabitants' mobility was especially popular with revolutionary circles. Even neutrally observed, however, infrastructure is designed to lead one down particular paths, visitors' guides highlight certain areas while dismissing, even excluding others, and the inhabitants' idea of their cities is informed by subway maps, which are distortion of geographical space. Neighborhoods become conceived as more or less significant and desirable or frequented by drivers and users of public transport on their daily repeated paths through known spheres.

> The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance that is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the terrain); the appealing or repelling character of certain places — these phenomena all seem to be neglected. In any case, they are never envisaged as depending on causes that can be uncovered by careful analysis and turned to account. People are quite aware that some neighborhoods are gloomy and others pleasant. But they generally simply assume that elegant streets cause a feeling of satisfaction and that poor streets are depressing, and let it go at that. (Debord1955)

Psychogeographical studies seek to address this distorted impression and mental image of urban space, architecture and infrastructure, and in particular point out and critique how meaning derives from habitual subordination to a common, superimposed mapping.

More powerfully than in many other environments, the political status quo shines through the complex density of cities, and the pre-conceived map of passages represent and affirm the ruling system, its particular design becoming an instrument of power. For some, escape is thus imperative. *On the Road*'s Sal Paradise embarks from New York, decidedly turning his back on the most prominent modern metropolis, which he knows well and about which he later replies to a country girl longing for the big city: "Ain't nothing in New York" (Kerouac 1957: 33). Michel de Certeau, the French Jesuit scholar and theorist of 'everyday life', summarizes his impression of Manhattan when looking down from the top of the World Trade Center:

> The gigantic mass is immobilized before the eyes. It is transformed into a texturology in which extremes coincide - extremes of ambition and degradation, brutal oppositions of races and styles, contrasts between yesterday's buildings, already transformed into trash cans, and today's urban interruptions that block out its space. (de Certeau 1980: 91)

In this light, the population's habitual, repetitive behavior constructs urban reality and it happens in an unconscious, somewhat immature and possibly guided manner. Even the map of Manhattan, which is after all, seen from such a distance, largely laid out on the comparably simple grid pattern, forces one's body into being "clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law," (de Certeau 1980: 92) as described by de Certeau. The simplicity of the factual street map, offering, in theory, ever-varying paths, is charged with meaning by orchestrating powers, suggesting certain ways, dismissing others. Consuming what urban logic they are presented with, citizens, on this view, become submissive to the 'tactics' of the power structures ruling over them.

Back in the Old World and its ancient cities, Self spots an increasingly clustered execution of power within the limited reaches of a historically inhabited space like London, which has grown, psychogeographically speaking, into an almost impenetrable palimpsest of built structures through the ages:

> The City of London is a bit of a nightmare for the psychogeographer; two thousand years of human interaction have worked over this tiny allotment of earth with savage intensity, digging into it, raising it up and covering over the watercourses. Now, as one of the three global financial centres, the poisoned air of the place ultrasonically whines with the electronic transmission of trillions, while sweaty-shirted clerks suck filter tips beneath the hard haunches of its institutions. (Self 2007: 138)

The 'intensity' of this weight is not merely made up by historical, somewhat 'natural' accumulation of layers and layers of construction, but also by manifold sudden and superimposed redesigns of existing structures, according to a sophisticated plan, to make them meet 'the requirements of the times'. One of the most deliberately imposed examples, with a still strikingly visible impact on an urban logic, was Baron Haussmann's profound mid-nineteenth century change of Paris' appearance and street map. It is often argued that his 'modernization' of the hitherto winding convolution of the French capital's medieval streets was intended to not only turn the city into a better representation of power and order, with its symmetry of axes cutting through the street blocks, but also to facilitate the execution of this very power over the inhabitants:

> Historical conditions determine what is considered 'useful.' Baron Haussmann's urban renewal of Paris under the Second Empire, for example, was motivated by the desire to open up broad thoroughfares enabling the rapid circulation of troops and the use of artillery against insurrections. (Debord 1955)

Citizens are subjected to an 'urban ratio' which is not necessarily their own, one that is "conceiving and constructing space" (de Certeau 1980: 94), intended for whichever purpose at the time, and contemporary "rational organization must thus repress all the physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise it" (de Certeau 1980: 94). In this light, the city itself becomes not only the symbol, but also the instrument of a ruling force that is able togovern space in accord with, but also against its momentary population.

> The city, for its part, is transformed for many people into a 'desert' in which the meaningless, indeed the terrifying, no longer takes the form of shadows but becomes (...) an implacable light that produces this urban text without obscurities, which is created by a technocratic power everywhere and which puts the city-dweller under control (under the control of what? No one knows). (de Certeau 1980: 103)

A skeptical observer, of course, would argue that it is first of all the silent consent of the masses which makes this control and consequent arbitrariness even possible. If, instead, resistance is the loudest voice - a much rarer case - the representative potential of space can be turned, and the perception of a neighborhood speaks of quite a different symbolism:

> A certain Saint-Germain-des Prés, about which no one has yet written, has been the first group functioning on a historical scale within this ethic of drifting. This magical group spirit, which has remained underground up till now, is the only explanation for the enormous influence that a mere *three city blocks* have had on the world.
> (Chtcheglov 1953, emphasis in original)

The counterculture of the 1950s-70s, the student revolts in Paris, for which the situationists and Saint-Germain-des Prés' philosophical think tank became a significant inspiration, alternative cultural experimentation and anti-establishment lifestyles, and beyond that, the Civil Rights Movement in the US, peace, sex, drugs, Rock 'n' Roll, and everything associated with it - these developments have a lasting impact on how people perceive the world today. If on the other hand, as Self implies, one were to look at the rent prices in former Marxist hubs on the Rive Gauche, the revelation will be: Political power has never been gained by these rebellious forces to such an extent that Debord's, let alone Chtcheglov's, and many others' utopian ideas could have been realized.

What remains, in the end, is the auxiliary autodidactic exercise of the consciousness, called *dérive* ('drift'). It is the experiment, the change of perspective, aimed at empowering the mind, becoming aware of and realizing the undistorted potential of space, achieving, as Self calls it, "absorption into the urban landscape" (Self 2007: 52). The *dérive* still exists, because it requires no victory over ruling powers, but exists solely as the practical field trial of psychogeography, an original invention to keep situationists' minds aware and ready for a possible transformation of their surrounding space. The *dérive* is, as de Certeau would say, one of "these multiform, resistance, tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised" (de Certeau 1980: 96).

> One of the basic situationist practices is the *dérive,* a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiences. Dérives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll.
>
> In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. (Debord 1958)

If one were to be presented with only this paragraph, the basic specifications of the nature of the *dérive* read like the blueprint of many aimless journeys in road stories, the author might just as well be writing about the protagonists' travels through the US in Kerouac's *On the Road*; Debord and other situationists then narrow down the definition and the both are further distinguished and separated. Psychogeography limits itself to the reclamation of the urban landscape, focuses on the urban drifter and wanderings that seek to heighten emotional experience within city borders. In contrast, the claim of this paper is that the main preconditions and effects of the *dérive* can in fact be applied to drifting in the open country - i.e. away from the city - as described in *On the Road* and some exemplary tales that are addressed in the following chapters.

In *Theory of the Dérive*, Debord mentions a study which shows that the urban pathways an ordinary citizen uses throughout a year are of frustratingly poor and limited variety. The habitual use of the easiest street or subway connections between a person's home, work and limited leisure activities, when drawn on a map, reveal a simple geometrical figure with very heavily inscribed lines. The situationists suggest a more varied, playful and emotional interaction with space and, ultimately, wish to subvert the submissive immaturity of the citizens, by, first of all, modifying what everyone does every day: walking; the basic, often involuntary, almost 'illegible' type of mass movement:

> The ordinary practitioners of the city (...) walk - an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. (de Certeau 1980: 93)

Usually unaware of their obedience to the disposition of space, to urban planning and its intentions for their behavior, inhabitants of cities nonetheless affirm the status quo in the way they move. The psychogeographers are convinced that it is mostly not based on active decision-making, but rather on an omission which could be amended without leaving the city borders, by means of a change of thinking, a 'mobility as resistance'. Indeed, the *dérive*'s original motivation has survived for the last sixty years; however, the respective implementation has been altered on the basis of personal preference.

> Although we psychogeographers are all disciples of Guy Debord and those rollicking Situationists who tottered, soused, across the stage set of 1960s Paris, thereby hoping to tear down the scenery of the Society of the Spectacle with their devilish *dérive*, there are still profound differences between us. While we all want to unpick this conundrum, the manner in which the contemporary world warps the relationship between psyche and place, the ways in which we go about the task, are various. (Self 2007: 11)

Although it assumes different shapes, the *dérive* is first and foremost about *desire*: the size of the area to be investigated, how to move in it, when to linger. The procedure is motivated by and further invokes a desire to purely engage with the surroundings in an un adulterated way. As a psychological as much as a physical act of mobility, it does not start or stop per se, only the particular temporal investigation, like a psychoanalytical session. "To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper" (de Certeau 1980: 103) To lack a place in walking can also be seen in another light: To untie oneself from an immobile place of conformity and its static paths, representative of the regime; to follow - in a voyage - any desire that is evoked by the situational appearance of the space around the traveler. For the time being, as situationists tended to phrase it, this can only be achieved within the limits of the resources available, as a first step in subversion: "We need to flood the market (...) with a mass of desires whose fulfillment is not beyond the capacity of humanity's present means of action on the material world, but only beyond the capacity of the old social organization." (Debord 1955)

One is reminded of the expression 'desire path', which refers to a casually made footpath. Chtcheglov also talks about 'bringing to light forgotten desires' and 'creating entirely new ones': A route created entirely by pedestrians themselves. Although in its nature neither individual nor aimless - on the contrary, the wisdom of the crowd produces a collectively used and functional shortcut, in order to get from A to B more easily - the desire path's similarity to the *dérive* is that both disregard and subvert officially sanctioned connections, the routing of the planned public infrastructure which, officially, is intended to provide citizens with a maximum of functional mobility. It stands as an act of disobedience in the face of the prescribed, what is provided by planners with its concomitant expectations of behavior - a natural 'move', as defiant as another example highlighted by Parker's quoting of an urban planner in his article "Power to the Psychogeographers":

> He also provides an apt metaphor for the consequences of bad planning: 'An experience I had as a developer was at a place called Winwick Park in Warrington. We needed to provide new nesting boxes for housemartins, it was a planning condition. The housemartins came back and built nests next door to the nesting boxes.' (Parker 2002)

The aimless journey of the *dérive* is meant to assist the mind in regaining just such an instinctive, 'wild' sense of authority over space - prior to obtaining the effective authority to build houses in a self-determined way like the housemartins. What makes the 'drift' subversive to begin with is the desire not to have a 'B', one that the traveler is aware of at the start, at least: An aim at the End of the Road that is to be reached a.s.a.p., like a destination on a subway plan. The found structures are instead used against the plan, a method the Situationist International (SI) would coin *détournement*: The act of 'flipping' the directedness of a relatively known object, symbol or message.

The "détournement of an intrinsically significant element, which derives a different scope from the new context" (Debord & Wolman 1956) usually offers the possibility of using material or intellectual property for opposite, different, or contrary purpose than the one originally intended. The 'detour' of significance remains a successful means of action for countercultural trends, for Culture Jammers, Adbusters, and in the Occupy Movement, using capitalist symbolism and infrastructure, or the industry's slogans and products against themselves. Out of the situationist world of thought have derived further methods and notions of social intervention, for instance, Asger Jorn's invention of three-sided football, the use of *Luther Blissett* as a pseudonym for many art pranks and hoaxes (out of which Italian author collective *Wu Ming* evolved), Stuart Home and his *Neoist Alliance* activities, and many more; ever questioning hegemony, representation, historical significance, and the putative importance of concepts and names; standing at an ever-imagined beginning of an alternative model; presenting themselves as the sorely needed corrective to advanced capitalism and the impression of its more and more overpowering omnipotence.

The material order-to-be-subverted during a *dérive* through the city can trigger frustration in the walker because of its restricting concreteness, as de Certeau observes, "it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g. by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g. by a wall that prevents one from going further), then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities." (de Certeau 1980: 98) As much as situational, emotional desire urges one to overcome a wall or jump down from a raised platform, those planned restrictions will usually mean the end of a *dérive*. Depending on their physique and inclination to take the playful experiment to its extreme, present-day theorists should be advised to incorporate elements of the originally French phenomenon of Parkour, maybe the cutting edge of subversion of the urban space and, as a physical, accelerated activity, the ultimate combination of *dérive* and *détournement*. Although free running is meant to be efficient and fast, the practitioners aim at using urban structures in a new way, offering a changed perspective on the city, its routes and obstacles, which may or may not be overcome. What planners use as a clear restriction within the population's habitual map of paths, can thus be 'detoured' into an instrument for one's very own purpose and path. This conclusive urban procedure is connected to the road by its need for speed. The possibly lingering, emotional contemplation of a *dérive* is replaced by quick spontaneity and impromptu inclination to movement. Surely, Parkour is the purest, 'wildest' subversion of urban spatial order, yet decidedly not through violence, but through mobility alone. Debord would most likely have endorsed it, as would de Certeau, who already evokes every necessary premise:

> And if on the one hand [the walker] actualizes only a few of the possibilities fixed by the constructed order (he goes only here and not there), on the other he increases the number of possibilities (for example, by creating shortcuts and detours) and prohibitions (for example, he forbids himself to take paths generally considered accessible or even obligatory). (de Certeau 1980: 98)

Such play need not necessarily involve the degree of physical exertion (not to mention agility and fitness) demanded by Parkour; the quest for aimless journeys has spawned a myriad of ideas for treating and interacting with space, "you read of such things, on the web, natch: proceeding across Toronto by throwing a dice, journeying to unlovely parts of Florence with carefully contrived non-deliberation." (Self 2007: 13) In the digital age inventive minds have not been slow in designing ways to lead people astray from their directed paths towards a destination; a number of apps for mobile devices have been invented which continue the idea of the *dérive*, among them *Serendipitor* (introducing detours in routings) and *Dérive App* (randomizing familiar surroundings). Their approach and underlying thought pattern is in accord with Debord, who suggested "psychogeographical maps, or even the introduction of alterations such as more or less arbitrarily transposing maps of two different regions." (Debord 1955) Spatial experimentation of any kind was generally embraced by Debord, as long as the intrinsically aimless voyage was motivated by revolt against prescribed mappings, stressing that these alternatives "can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but total *insubordination* to habitual influences." (Debord 1955, emphasis in original)

Self, as a recent advocate of psychogeography, has in fact moved on from many original concepts and restrictions. He does not appear to share Debord's insistence that a *dérive* is best set in a familiar place. Self simply chooses to walk and contemplate in various surroundings, often while discovering a new city or on his way to an appointment. When strolling through London, however, the journey in his mind is cluttered rather than liberated - the reason being precisely his familiarity with the place. "It's always thus: the first few hours of a long walk out of London. Gummed up with memories and referentia, my very psyche not only feels sticky - but thickening by the yard."(Self 2007: 22)

He departs one morning to Heathrow Airport on foot, not without an aim or goal - he actually does have business appointments in New York - but deliberately spends portion after portion of his walk in reminiscing about anything of interest and non-interest that he associates with his slowly changing surroundings - from models of cars, to recollections of old movies and suchlike. He seems to be convinced of the cathartic effect of his wanderings and thoughts, and before they are realigned and coherent in a new way, they simply pile up in layers, a stream of associations fueled by memories, parallels that are revived from personal experience, new only in their new order and amalgamation, "lost in my reveries; shitty little memories." (Self 2007: 32) His drifting stories are not far from the nature of some road narratives, with the difference that he insists on an (sub)urban setting and refuses to include journeys in a vehicle - a self-limitation which, again, stands very much in line with Debord's and psychogeography's dogma in general.

In the following sections, the focus will be on fictional and semi-fictional journeys that are less pragmatic and more phantasmal than Self's experiments, in that their motivation can be an elusive idea - chasing a nation's dream - and their design more naive: Not revealing a situational street corner secret, instead the testing of a common myth, without the plan to necessarily subvert, but rather the hope of affirming it. The scope of such drifting movement must be wider, the basis of exploration spatially extended - there is a need for speed. These sorts of *dérives* ultimately require the escape from the urban, stretched out over a country's complete expansion, towards the edges and into the corners, adhering to "the special status of the road in the metaphorical landscape of the American mind" (Patton 1986: 9). Subversion is achieved through the sounding out of the static by means of the vibrant and new, as much as through relying on the re-inscription of the prescribed within a collective mindset which has possibly gone astray.

5. Or: a Drive across the Land

There was no way to cope with it.
I stood up and gathered my luggage.
It was important, I felt,
to get out of town immediately.
(Thompson 1971: 129)

Anti City
AP001

The respective incentives of psychogeographical theory and American road narratives, in theory, differ on the proper point of application, yet they correspond in their mutual inclination to overcome the restricted and restricting scope of the present situation of life in the city - there is already a uniquely American skepticism towards cities per se. For those who wish to get the system in their sights in order to attack it, there is little doubt that urban spheres provide them with the clear target of concentrated representation of power.

Cities do play a significant role both in *On the Road* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. More than stages on the journey they become emotionally charged screens, be it for glorification, disappointment or horror. On many occasions, the standstill of lingering in urban environments is, after a while, perceived as an unpleasant imprisonment. The *dérive* to the road is thus often an escape, yet a political statement nonetheless. The subversion is that of the urban altogether, in the belief that there is as much to reclaim from the journey on the open road, as there is during the walk through town. As an outstretched, fragmented image of the same regimes, the rural country and small-town environments can be similarly sounded out, to verify their emotional impact or falsify representative images and hand-me-down mythologies.

Above all, it is the unique status of the American road that provokes the analogy: "There is nothing more American than being On the Road," (Patton 1986: 9) as observed by Patton in his long ode to mobility *Open Road: A Celebration of the American Highway*; the countrywide mapping of US roads and highways is as superimposed and function-oriented as the outline of city infrastructure. Both cut up the area on the basis of an economic pattern and are meant to allow purposeful, directed, economic transportation, travels from A to B with as little detour as possible and, obviously, the fastest feasible execution of political power if necessary. To even be able to feel and address the vastness of the US, it seems, one has always to remain on the go, as Kerouac's alter ego Sal states: "(...) all I wanted to do was sneak out into the night and disappear somewhere, and go and find out what everybody was doing all over the country." (Kerouac 1957: 67) Wyatt and Billy of *Easy Rider* (1969) go 'looking for America', as the ad line on the poster suggests. When they cannot find it, they remain in motion as long as they can. Finally, 'the Driver' and 'the Mechanic' in *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971) are stuck in their mobility, their impalpable state of moving torpor. Without any vital exchange, they move, because they would not know what else to do; they move because they have to.

There are the easiest, most direct, habitually traversed passages through the continent, as well as dark spots and unfrequented corners on the road, places inducing the recollection of very distant ones, uniting in a mental map which is independent of actual geographical relations: Psychogeography on the road. An important difference between the city and the inter-city areas as constant drifting grounds is that the latter require more speed to be sustained.

> Highways have made tangible the conviction that the truth about America, its heart and soul, collective and individual, is always to be found somewhere just over the horizon, somewhere around the next bend. Roads are a realm of signs, a set of clues to the constantly receding mystery of nationality. The culture they have fostered has become a physical model of the fact that the 'promise' and 'potential' of America have congealed into a permanent system offering one set of promises after another, with the easy recession and happy forgetfulness of a moving perspective. (Patton 1986: 13)

The emotional stimuli, the imagined potential behind the ever new horizon (as behind the next street corner) and its ever renewed promises are kept alive through permanent velocity; what is more (in a countercultural quest for new, as well as forgotten truths), the impression of the continuous narrow victory over the captivity imposed by the regime can thus be eschewed in restlessness, by always barely managing to escape from it. Although staying within the realm of the system, on the road that it maintains, and in the midst of this duality of looking ahead in hope and looking back in fear, uninterrupted mobility is upheld for the sake of (even the illusion of) freedom on a constant journey, where standing still would mean defeat, being captured, which in turn would mean the acknowledgment of the impossibility of the utopian counter project.

To whatever extent the road is celebrated by writers and filmmakers as a symbol of freedom, it is also as much of a planned, subordinating, restricting tool of power as Haussmann's Parisian boulevard, likewise a celebrated symbol of national glory and order. "American roads reflect a fundamental political and philosophical conflict between the systematic and the spontaneous, the national and the local, between roads from above and roads from below." (Patton 1986: 13) Due to this paradox, it is the roads - significantly cutting through a vast country almost as big as the entire continent of Europe - which provide the proper stage for the American *dérive*, as they themselves "reflect unconscious as well as conscious patterns of politics, economics, and culture." (Patton 1986: 13)

Debord repeatedly makes mention of the *dérive* having a "primarily urban character", declaring that, "the maximum area of this spatial field does not extend beyond the entirety of a large city and its suburbs", and further insisting that, "wandering in open country is naturally depressing, and the interventions of chance are poorer there than anywhere else." (Debord 1958) - quite obviously, the statement of a city dweller whose main concern is the realm of (European) urbanity. On the other hand, as Depétris observes, "American culture, thought, and social criticism are 'wild' in comparison to the 'urbanity' (in both senses of the term) of those of Europe." (Depétris 2008) Although it was deliberately laid out to exclude the psychology and spatial implications of the highway, the intrinsically urban concept of psychogeography can befittingly applied to those road narratives, whose protagonists are not countryfolk, but American urbanites who decide to quit the city and undertake their non-urban journey in the bid to escape the urban. The importance of the space/mind - relationship remains intact, as the heroes carry their concepts with them and wear themselves out on the realities. Usually, at the start, these ideas speak of opportunity and freedom; they are still nurtured by mythology.

"In America, highways are much more than a means of transportation. They come as close as anything we have to a central national space." (Patton 1986: 21) The magic, abstract potential of the path projecting into the West is as old as the foundational myths mentioned above. In his 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman composed the "Song of the Open Road", a poem which reads like a long American *dérive*, with presence of mind and searching soul, and it already pinpoints the road as the genuine US venue for it:

> (...) You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is here,
> I believe that much unseen is also here. (...)
> I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air, and all free poems also,
> I think I could stop here myself and do miracles, (...)

> From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
> Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,
> Listening to others, considering well what they say,
> Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
> Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would hold me. (...)
> (Whitman 1856)

In the desire to rid himself of spatial confinement, the 'limits and imaginary lines' of a settled existence, there is no material treasure at the end of Whitman's road, only the suggestion that by watching and listening carefully, by staying in motion, the traveler might (potentially) develop a sense for the hidden meaning of things, obtaining true knowledge and freedom, learning to 'do miracles' even. In *On the Road*, Sal Paradise's heartfelt fascination with the rawness, the genuineness of the West shapes his judgment and, at times, makes him believe he is advancing towards a more original America, one as prophesized, meeting unadulterated characters, farmers, workers, people who do jobs with their hands, instead of sitting around in libraries, writing theses like he and his intellectual peers; a seemingly decadent notion, on paper, in danger of coming close to Debord's detested tourism, as a cosmopolitan kid setting out in a fast car to hunt the promised land. On the other hand, he vouches for his genuine passion for involvement and the initially hopeful feeling of a possible re-summoning of the lost true spirit of America. The perspective of the outsider might even (peotentially) enable him to see the hidden essence of things, as Whitman implies. It is in pure and - as peculiar to the *dérive* - playful optimism that Sal follows in the tradition of Whitman: "I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever beholds me shall like me." (Whitman 1856)

The politics of space are emblematic of the New World, being, in essence, a new space to be traversed, subdued and distributed according to political interest. To see the country and try to grasp it, while staying within the mainstream 'American way of life', or choosing another running counter to it, no investigation like this can avoid the dominating role of the highway. Those who undertake the American *dérive*, "are often alone and often between identities.

They are abandoning old lives and looking for new ones, but are most themselves in the interval." (Patton 1986: 12) It is the typically 'flat' infrastructure of the US, with long distances to overcome, that makes the car so desirable. European urbanity and density suggests a whole different approach to means of transportation and planning, and suffers when its dominating cities try to incorporate the example of individual mobility as set by American capitalist standards, as Debord observes while looking at Paris' efforts and struggles to include more and more automobiles in its infrastructural design:

> Present-day urbanism's main problem is ensuring the smooth circulation of a rapidly increasing number of motor vehicles. (...) The present abundance of private automobiles is one of the most astonishing successes of the constant propaganda by which capitalist production persuades the masses that car ownership is one of the privileges our society reserves for its most privileged members. (Debord 1955)

If Debord's assumption is right, then America has been better 'persuaded' than any other country in the world. With the exception of microstates like Liechtenstein and San Marino, the US is still leading the world in numbers of motor vehicles per capita ("World Development Indicators" 2013). The car is embodiment of the quintessentially American belief in personal freedom and mobility are the foundation of the collective American Dream of discovery and self-fulfillment, the "national obsession with mobility and change, with the horizon, with the frontier." (Patton 1986: 12)

Revealingly, the same table discloses the magnitude of America's road network, by making visible the low ratio of US motor vehicles per kilometer of road. In the history of the taming of the gigantic continent, roads tended to come first and vehicles followed, whereas in Europe planners have to cope with a rising number of automobiles penetrating their long evolved, dense and winding urban structures.

> To want to redesign architecture to accord with the needs of the present massive and parasitical existence of private automobiles reflects the most unrealistic

> misapprehension of where the real problems lie. Instead, architecture must be transformed to accord with the whole development of the society. (Debord 1959)

To Debord's distaste, society developed towards embracing the car and has continued to do so. America's dimensions, relative youth, its national identity and basic understanding of self-realization as inviolably rooted in capitalism has made its citizens an easier target for car makers to convey the indispensability of a privately owned automobile. It is also a status symbol and offers spatial isolation from the mass - more than reason enough for Debord to demonize it.

In regarding the car as the ultimate symbol of atomized society under advanced capitalism, he finally reveals why he cannot draw the parallel that this paper wishes to draw; why he has to keep cars out of his conception of drifting; and why the incorporation of *dérives* through the rural, the inter-city areas not easily accessible to the pedestrian, and those leading out from one city and towards the next, are missing - they require the private automobile as a means of transport:

> A mistake made by all the city planners is to consider the private automobile (and its by-products, such as the motorcycle) as essentially a means of transportation. In reality, it is the most notable material symbol of the notion of happiness that developed capitalism tends to spread throughout the society. The automobile is at the heart of this general propaganda, both as supreme good of an alienated life and as essential product of the capitalist market: It is generally being said this year that American economic prosperity is soon going to depend on the success of the slogan 'Two cars per family'. (Debord 1959)

What Debord wishes to highlight about the car as a phenomenon is its blunt conformity with the capitalist system. Unlike individual pedestrians bracing their feet against the uniformity surrounding them, he ignores the corresponding possibilities of a driver who is equally inclined to move against the stream with a different set of tools. "America's restlessness is [also] its most mercurial trope." (Patton 1986: 12) A *détournement* redeploys the car against the ends prescribed for it- effectively facilitating the 'detour' - the car and the highway are used not in compliance with a function- and aim-driven system, but as a tool to trigger and ponder emotional involvement with the surroundings on an aimless drift. "We must replace travel as an adjunct to work with travel as a pleasure." (Debord 1959) In some stories, as in real life, the conformist aspect of hard-earned personal property can be steered clear of: As with many others, Sal's *dérive* is a hitchhiking trip, thus constantly making use of the property of others and momentarily collectivizing it in a long, variable stream of situational interaction. The individual use can even happen without the consent of the owner as with Raoul Duke's careless destruction of rental cars and, of course, Dean Moriarty's perpetual habit of stealing cars.

> All the cheap and obvious psychologizing about the automobile as castle on wheels, mobile mating den, symbol of power and status ignores the fact that the automobile was determined by where it goes. It is like looking at the television set without shows, the phonograph without the records, the computer without the programs, the hardware without the software. (Patton 1986: 15)

In whatever ways the mobility on the road may be altered and individualized, for some, the practice of the *dérive* remains a puristically non-motorized endeavor.

Self, the urban walker, declares he "dislike[s] cars more than trains - they con their autopilots with the illusion of freedom." (Self 2007: 70) However, it appears that a lack of freedom in the city can also call for desperate measures from time to time. Self heads out to the suburbs of London (using motorized transport to get there), announcing that "a major dérive is in order; we have to be yanked out of all this intense urbanity", still his desire for a sense of liberation does not lead him to the road, he remains convinced that "only the 'burbs have the requisite balm." (Self 2007: 154)

> I love those interzones, where country and city do battle for the soul of a place. I can sense the last few roads of semis below us in the valley, and beyond them the open fields. We're only a few miles from the village of Downe, where Charles Darwin lived out his years selectively breeding pigeons. I like to think he would've appreciated this dérive

> as a sound survival mechanism, the only possible way to stay mentally fit in the psychotic entrails of a twenty-first century megalopolis. (Self 2007: 154)

Barely surviving the urban craziness, Self conveys a feeling of finally being able to breathe freely here for a change, ruffled only by a slight longing for the open roads and fields that are at his feet. He does not seem to be cut out for a trekking tour and might agree with Debord's persuasion that 'wandering in open country is naturally depressing'. By also decidedly excluding cars, he has no choice but to re-enter London, consequentially exclaiming: "I (...) feel dreadful again." (Self 2007: 154) Alone in his despair, Self drifts in solitude.

> One can dérive alone, but all indications are that the most fruitful numerical arrangement consists of several small groups of two or three people who have reached the same level of awareness, since cross-checking these different groups' impressions makes it possible to arrive at more objective conclusions. It is preferable for the composition of these groups to change from one dérive to another. (Debord 1958)

Debord's instruction-kit details about favorable group size, duration and spatial expanse of an average *dérive*, and the influence of daytime or precipitation seem vague and somewhat arbitrary. The hitch in theorizing situations is that situations are momentary and subjective. Any objective specifics seem unfitting for a practice meant to bring forth individual emotional involvement and liberation of the mind, both very personal and beyond categorization. But in the effort to collectivize the results and make comparable the desires, it seems crucial to have a counterpart in order to manifest or clear fleeting impressions, to anchor the involvement in congenial exchange.

The purest forms of lived solidarity happen, of course, in the most extreme circumstances, for instance during an acid trip, as in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. The duo of heroes Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo take turns in serving as a point of reference to the respective other, calming him during phases of individual bad trips and mental incapacity, in order to prevent (or facilitate further) escalation. Through this mutual support, the two manage to avoid being taken into custody without having to dilute the intensity of their subjective experience. Typically male companionships, as a driving force enabling experience, are present throughout these works, Dean and Sal in *On the Road*, Wyatt and Billy in *Easy Rider*, the Driver and the Mechanic in *Two-Lane Blacktop* (also showing the problematic situation of solitude in the character of GTO). Being a team on the road is likely more rewarding than being a single traveler, and it is not rare that a duo is joined by some additional characters - significantly, yet probably unwillingly, Debord's limitations on the number of participants in a *dérive* are similar to the spatial limitations of the rapid *dérive* in a common car: "With more than four or five participants, the specifically *dérive* character rapidly diminishes." (Debord 1958)

6. The Disenchantment *On the Road*

Every night my dream's the same
Same old city with a different name
They're not coming to take me away
I don't know why, but I know I can't stay.
(*Keep the Car Running* - Arcade Fire)

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* depicts a long, restless, motorized *dérive* through the vast space that is the North American continent. It is Sal Paradise's journey through the country of his birth, on the hunt for experience and wisdom, for sensations, 'kicks', and a better (way of) life - one that is nonconformist towards society's function-oriented narrow-mindedness, yet still informed by and positively steeped in the characteristic imagery and mythology of the US as the new Arcadia of endless opportunity. Standing in this tradition, Sal's journey is illuminated in his own writing, particularly his first cross-continental hitchhiking voyage into the "so-longed-for West" (Kerouac 1957: 10). Sal inhabits the traditionally spiritual and emotionally charged elements of the US's self-conception, and frequently uses the corresponding vocabulary in his descriptions of the nation's staggering landscapes, as well as observations about what he considers to be genuine Americans.

The thought process behind this representation reveals Sal's readiness for abstract idealization. On quite a number of occasions, he has the tendency to mirror the factual geographical space he is experiencing with the hand-me-down, abstract qualities and beliefs it stands for in its self-created mythology. In an additional step, Sal projects these concepts and values onto people he encounters along the road. This includes enthusiastic, sympathetic characterizations of a number of travelers he meets, and who become the symbol of an imagined space through his perception.

> I said to myself, Wham, listen to that man laugh. That's the West, here I am in the West. He came booming into the diner (...) and he threw himself on a stool and went hyaw hyaw hyaw hyaw. (...) It was the spirit of the West sitting right next to me. I wished I knew his whole raw life and what the hell he'd been doing all these years besides laughing and yelling like that. Whooee, I told my soul (...). (Kerouac 1957: 19)

On the Road's approach to characterization frequently introduces emblematic travel acquaintances like this. Hitchhiking is Sal's way of getting in contact with the American people, facilitating all sorts of desired and undesired chance encounters, while at the same time obviating the capitalist, individualized isolation and vanity of automobile ownership. By contrast, space - the country itself - is described with the use of very human, likewise heroic attributes:

> Kerouac's nostalgia was for an American past he romanticized and mythologized, the prewar America of the Depression (...), the westward expansion, and the Old West, which he imbued with 'glee,' 'honesty,' 'spitelesness,' and 'wild selfbelieving individuality.' (Mouratidis 2007: 73)

Sal's restless travels are driven by his desire to see everyone reconnected with these national virtues, while his own role ranges from merely being a humble chronicler of the overwhelming potential of America to actually playing a vaunted part in the mission to (re-)discover and summon its spirit.

In 1947, when Kerouac's real-life hitchhiking odysseys began, they were quite the pioneering endeavor. He set out on an exploration of a not only socio-politically fragmented consumer society, but one that was torn apart by the country's expanse first of all; spatial and social distance displacing old utopian visions of a spiritual unity. The idealist's and nostalgic's fear was that the only remaining common thread within the population lay in the desire to escape into idyllic worlds, couched in the philistine triviality of materialism - a distorted version of the original American Dream in misfiring modernization. After World War II, "with conflicts seemingly resolved, the world settled back into its groove; peacetime offered prosperity and its strange bedfellow, conformity." (Maher 2007: 8) Jack's/Sal's narration speaks of the insistent motto of his *dérive* that there must be more about America which unifies the people's character than a middle-class, conformist existence in which every desire is level and insignificant, in which people indulge in taking their new car to do the shopping in drives through suburban neighborhoods. The functionality of motels, superhighways and drive-ins suggest the significance of the car and of mobility even in mainstream American culture, maximizing convenience, minimizing involvement. Sal's journey, his way of making use of existing means of transportation, is a subversion of this empty and mechanical paradigm.

The Myth of the West

The main character's enthusiastic, occasionally gospel-style parables and the hopes and questions he has for his country are not mere anachronisms, speaking of old beliefs that are bound to sound naive in the eyes of a pragmatic, disillusioned present. Combined with the spontaneous hipster talk of his contemporaries, the resulting synthesis in diction and symbolism integrates very old traditions with a very new guise. It draws a connection between well-known representations of American pioneer folklore - explorers on horseback and in wagons - and the present-day motorized drifting of a wild and frantic youth, a fast-paced run all over the country's established infrastructure. De Certeau identifies this parallel when he argues that "travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different", restricting the significance of individual travelling to being a mere "detour through distant places, and the 'discovery' of relics and legends." (de Certeau 107)

At the start of this movement, Sal's static life on the east coast as a resident of Paterson (NJ) in the New York City Metropolitan Area, having never participated in the great American migration west, brings out the urgent desire for departure, a feeling of restlessness and anticipation:

> I'd been poring over maps of the United States in Paterson for months, even reading books about the pioneers and savoring names like Platte and Cimarron and so on. (...) And for the first time, the following afternoon, I went into the West. It was a warm, and beautiful day for hitchhiking. (Kerouac 1957: 10 ff.)

In keeping with Debord, who defined drifting as a process that unveils the hidden potential of an urban realm, Sal's journey is meant to investigate the spatial dynamics of America and grasp its essence. This American version of the *dérive*, with the vast distances it has to overcome - from which its tradition of mobility necessarily derives - cannot do without motorized travel and is necessarily located on the highway. Sal has little money and does not own a car, thus he needs to rely on other drivers stopping for him, as well as the occasional concession of a cheap bus ride, whenever circumstances force him to spend what appears to him as an enormous, unnecessary portion of the travel budget he scraped together.

The hero's aimless journey implicitly subverts a prescribed use of space and types of transportation while, at the same time, paradoxically seeking to affirm his idealized concepts of them. What is running counter to the status quo is the free and careless attitude and the duration of the movement, its insistence on stimulation and drifting spontaneity. The desired state of elevated existence - represented by 'It' - continuously evades the protagonists, stays shrouded beyond the horizon, and, slowly but steadily, the disenchanting reality takes its toll. Defiance in constant mobility needs to be frantically upheld - which is, as Cresswell argues, as much in accord with old American restlessness, as effecting to subvert the existing tendency towards stability - in order to keep on looking and not give up hope.

> The geography represented in *On the Road* is both deeply antagonistic to and deeply rooted in the dominant mythology of America. While we have seen a dissatisfaction with small town orthodoxy and big city ugliness and the network of family, home and work, one part of the American Dream, we have also seen the affirmation of America as a land of wanderers, outlaws and hobos. (...) The clash of ideologies is a clash of two American ideals which seem unresolvable. Kerouac uses one view of what America really is to protest against another American vision more associated with the place-bound rooted world. (...)Any cultural myth as central as mobility will always be suitable for creative subversion. (Cresswell 1993: 260)

As always, Sal projects his hope for the survival of this national myth onto a person - here, onto his travel companion Dean Moriarty (the real-life Neal Cassidy), the most important of the symbolic figures, as he is the impersonation of the West and Sal's initial motivation to finally take to the road. Dean's authentic nature is charming and raw, uncompromising, of pure vitality - like the wilderness beyond an imagined frontier of stability and conformity. He also slowly burns himself out - as did the gradually fading space of uncharted, adventurous freedom of the 'Old West'.

The frontier, offering a possible escape from the restricting urban life, 'prescribed pathways' and regulated existence, is a unique element in American (literary) history, as Ireland explains (by drawing on Frederick Jackson Turner):

> The frontier acted as a 'safety valve' for the city. When social unrest caused by increased industrialization led to trouble in big eastern cities, the young and restless would leave the cities and set out for a new life on the frontier, much as new settlers to America had been doing for hundreds of years. (Ireland 2003: 479)

In keeping with this tradition of escaping from the city, in an effort to extract and immortalize the truth underlying their youthful quest, Sal maintains an aimless drifting with his fellow *dériveur* Dean as long as he can: "He and I suddenly saw the whole country like an oyster for us to open; and the pearl was there, the pearl was there." (Kerouac, 1957, p. 138). It appears to Sal that he just needs to unlock an inherent secret by applying the proper type of movement, and the reevaluation of space will be achieved. He believes that the key to his utopian mission is not to be found with intellectual pondering, as he was used to doing, but with Dean's instinctive connection to the soul of America as a whole:

> The 'pearl' is the essence of America and all the frantic transition and movement is actually a search for something permanent and transcendent; connected to what it is like to be an American in America rather than just a resident in 'anytown' USA. (Cresswell 1993: 260)

The imagined aim of this journey is to reach the nostalgic wilderness of the West lurking on the horizon, an untamed, free existence awaiting the traveler, but most of all the opportunity to discover not only new places, but to explore the 'permanent', the essence of oneself, as a pure American, in the face of and in relation to the country's vast, seemingly limitless space. The Old West as a poetic mental concept and the peculiar movement through space in order to reach a state of mind - using 'other routes' - fits de Certeau's understanding of different kinds of geography:

> A whole series of comparisons would be necessary to account for the magical powers proper names enjoy. They seem to be carried as emblems by the travelers they direct and simultaneously decorate. (...) A rich indetermination gives them, by means of a semantic rarefaction, the function of articulating a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning. They insinuate other

> routes into the functionalist and historical order of movement. (de Certeau 1980: 104 f.)

During what appears to be a form of psychogeographical exploration, the frontier is maintained as a mental border, it is the traveler's consciousness that is divided into the known, 'place-bound rooted world' and an imagined wild, uncompromising side beyond it. By daring to cross over into the unknown, it appears as if 'It' may come within reach with each further mile of the road, by each further step into a broadened consciousness - awaiting is the soul of America, the 'pearl' of true wisdom handed to the traveler. However, the first of a number of disenchanting encounters with the actual West and how it became distorted by capitalist contamination already occurs during Sal's first trip to Denver:

> 'Hells bells, it's Wild West Week,' said Slim. Big crowds of businessmen in boots and ten-gallon hats, with their hefty wives in cowboy attire, bustled and whoopeed on the wooden sidewalks of old Cheyenne (...). Blank guns went off. The saloons were crowded to the sidewalk. I was amazed, and at the same time I felt it was ridiculous: in my first shot at the West I was seeing to what absurd devices it had fallen to keep its proud tradition. (Kerouac 1957: 30)

Sal's images of the West get sounded out in moments like these and thus rapidly change during the journey, just as his own psychogeographical, mental map of the US is altered throughout the narrative - often he is longing for the next stage of his trip, with places drawing his desire closer and others receding into distances further than actual geography would permit. Gulick states that "the bonds of affinity or the anxieties of alienation lend certain artifacts and places encountered in social space a symbolic prominence, producing mental maps that may achieve expression in (...) intimate individual topographies." (Gulick 1998: 144) Namely New York, Denver and San Francisco are Sal's focal points and, although spread all over the expanse of the US, they are drawn together by their personal significance - experiences, encounters and desires he associates with them. Debord's procedural blueprint for the *dérive* is extended beyond the confines of the city and takes the psychogeographical lesson one step further than its author intended:

> Beyond the discovery of unities of ambience, of their main components and their spatial localization, one comes to perceive their principal axes of passage, their exits and their defenses. One arrives at the central hypothesis of the existence of psychogeographical pivotal points. One measures the distances that actually separate two regions of a city, distances that may have little relation with the physical distance between them. (Debord 1958)

Sal's years on the road through America are fueled by the desire for a utopian state of mind, like the life in Chtcheglov's ideal city was meant to offer its inhabitants at every moment. His imagined 'CONTINUOUS DRIFTING' provides permanent stimulation, a procession of 'kicks' in Kerouac's understanding.

The Beats had a less pronounced political agenda than the situationists, yet it is inherent in their writings and the individual behavior towards the world there described. *On the Road*, for that matter, discusses one long drifting escape from the oppression of imposed limits. If beauty is found in the landscape and heart of people along the way, it is gratefully included as proof of a possible destination yet to be reached, the potential of this spiritual, but also political journey. Creating an alter ego named 'Sal Paradise', Kerouac's own travelling was meant to revive the belief in a less materialist, more transcendentalist American Dream, trusting self-reliance and individual exploration, providence awaiting the willing seeker. Christopher Adamo deconstructs the meaning of Utopia as 'U-topo'(no-place) in this connection:

> Certainly the description of an ideal personal life, as opposed to the ideal city, changes the literary form the utopian vision must take. But ironically, an additional reason this form must change is precisely because the hegemonic grip of the present society has virtually foreclosed setting a spatial political utopia anywhere on this planet. (Adamo 2012: 38)

Distrusting present society, impulsively escaping it, consciously and unconsciously subverting its values and symbolism, while at the same time seeking to transform it, results in a "seemingly paradoxical relationship between man and society," (Cater 2013) as Cater argues, in building a bridge between the Beats and Transcendentalist authors. The latter, too, advertized an ideal of self-reliance and realized that the self-sufficient individual is "simultaneously aware of and deferent to his status as one part of a spiritual, universal whole. The aim, in all cases, is to motivate personal, fundamental changes in the way that man relates to his self and his surroundings." (Cater 2013) By trusting one's own feelings instead of following "the obfuscating tendencies and arbitrary limitations of societal norms" one will develop a natural relationship with "one’s true needs and desires."(Cater 2013)

The American *dérive* of *On the Road* encompasses - in a nutshell - this stance on man facing collectivity, as well as the mentioned paradox: A quest of the individual for the 'universal whole', motivated by the desire to overcome detachment - for which the individual is willing to detach him- or herself most frantically and restlessly in exactly those moments when attachment actually seems to become attainable. There is the impression that this American dérive, like any other, happens within the boundaries of a system which will not be overthrown by it. For the Beats, as opposed to other devotees to subversion, revolution was not even the intention. There may have been an expanding "vast middle class whose main tasks were to consume and conform," (Davidson 1989: 25), but the Beats "did not presume to stand above or beyond that society and judge from some 'higher' cultural vantage. (...) Rather, they acted out or celebrated certain alternative mythic possibilities already present in American life." (Davidson 1989 25) They sought to serve as living examples of free development of the individual, *practicing* a change of perspective (i.e. the *dérive*) rather than writing its theory. They did not refuse to accept being nourished by their country's system of values and set of myths - they merely opposed those aspects that were limitations on their personal freedom, and highlighted those which offered liberation.

By "rejecting all official, institutionalized forms of social protest," the Beats, unlike the collective of situationalists, "naturally rejected group and party affiliations. Their political beliefs stressed individual conscience over group action, personal testimony over ideology, anarchism over collectivism." (Davidson 1989: 24) In his personal testimony, Jack/Sal takes and reoccupies essentially American symbols that were invaded and watered down by the present consumer society, and uses them for his own means and in his own style. This particular development of one individual who takes to the open road - attaching a different value to mobility and transport, stressing freedom and seeking sensations - might or might not affect other people's desires. If it does inspire to action, the consequent collectivity is one rooted in personal experience and conviction, not in theoretical dogma, as William S. Burroughs identified: "You can't tell anybody anything he doesn't know already. The alienation, the restlessness, the dissatisfaction were already there waiting when Kerouac pointed out the road." (qtd. in Davidson 1989: 28) By relying on the myth of the freedom of the West, Jack/Sal sets himself an elusive goal that recedes into distance whenever one seems to get near it. Chtcheglov hints at the danger of relying on outdated, unattainable myths, while at the same time denying the technological age its ability to create new ones:

> The various attempts to integrate modern science into new myths remain inadequate (...) - while the promised land of new syntheses continually recedes into the distance. Everyone wavers between the emotionally still-alive past and the already dead future. (Chtcheglov 1953)

Where he is right about the West and the frontier being an emotionally still-alive, yet unattainable past which will eventually seal the fate of *On the Road*'s impossible *dérive*, he - as the situationists will - excludes one seductive, mythological object which modern science brought forth and which pushes the American *dérive* onwards and towards its limits: The car.

As opposed to the relaxed strolling of the *flâneur* and in an amplification of the psychogeographer's 'rapid' physical movement, automobility is needed to create a similar rush of sensations and impressions in taking the *dérive* to the road. William F. Buckley introduced Kerouac on his show *Firing Line* in September 1968, by saying: "Mr. Jack Kerouac over here became famous when his book *On the Road* was published. It seemed to be preaching a life of disengagement, making a virtue out of restlessness," ("The Hippies" 1968), a description Kerouac would not argue against on the show (admittedly, he was in a state of inebriation). This 'virtue' of restlessness had by then, eleven years after the publication of *On the Road*, found its way into popular culture and spawned many 'free riders', informed by a since then established Beat mythology of its own; mobility and speed had become not only the emblematic subject matter of road narratives but were, at times, also hailed as the precondition for spontaneous, natural creativity, creating a legend out of Kerouac's writing process in an "apparent frenzied channeling of a true-life story; the never-ending roll of paper billowing from the typewriter like the imagined road (...)." (Cunnell 2007: 2)

> Movement is not a means to an end but an end in itself. This cult of energy is buttressed by an Emersonian belief in the identity between natural forces and the mind, a relationship that may be activated by writing at great speed, without constraints and without revision. (Davidson 1989: 63)

Submitting himself to this (drug-infused) 'cult of energy' resulted in Kerouac's original scroll of *On the Road* (that was, in fact, to be edited and revised before its publication in 1957), an uninterrupted representation of restless mobility, or as Patton puts it, "an essay on the phenomenology of pure driving, of encounter and abandonment," (Patton 1986: 241) of always staying on the go and, by that, in between.

Kenneth Rexroth, a father figure to the San Francisco Renaissance of which the Beats were part of, wrote in his original review of *On the Road* that it is in no way revolt against society that makes the protagonists behave in this way, just a frantic, youthful version of mainstream philistine demoralization. Their subversion of the existing order happens *en passant*, without their scheming or being able to control it:

> On the other hand, they are not in revolt against the society which has produced them. Their talk is not of either the yogi or the commissar, but of corny entertainers, ham TV programs and the advertised virtues of the latest cars. Their values are those of the most conformist members of the middle class they despise, but enormously hypertrophied. They are demoralized and unsuccessful little Babbitts. This novel should demonstrate once and for all that the hipster is the furious square. (Rexroth1957)

It is not as simple as that of course. Admittedly, as Cresswell puts it, "often expressions of discontent can exhibit highly ambiguous relations to dominant cultural norms, reproducing them as much as they challenge them." (Cresswell 1993: 257) Rexroth's initial judgment highlights that those statements addressing society found in *On the Road* are in no way expressions of fierce revolt. Naturally, there are much more rebellious, political messages circulating and, as much as Kerouac likes to present his characters as outlaw riders on the American road hunting the soul of the country, most of his characters (with the obvious exception of Dean) descend from protected, privileged middle-class surroundings.

Kerouac's heroes might have grown up in safety, with a certain romanticism towards 'Americana' glorification, but it is in their - less theorized than lived - behavior towards what they are offered, their renouncement of materialism for the sake of it and authoritarian rules of self-limitation that they instinctively - and however decadently - reveal their perplexity with the society they originate from. In order to deal with and hopefully fill this void, the protagonist Sal, in an act of freeing his (and mainly his) consciousness, uses the modern incarnation of the American myth of mobility - the car - and goes on a fast-paced nation-wide journey, in order to look for affirmation of the old myths of his country - whose existence were promised him during his upbringing. In doing so, he discloses where America's soul might have gone astray. More than ever, the *dérive* is subversion of the status quo *en passant*. As Cresswell argues, "in this story we have not seen the existence of a dominant ideology (place) and an attempt to replace it wholesale with a resistant alternative (mobility)." (Cresswell 1993: 260) To stress the paradox, he states that "mobility is clearly used as a rebellion against authority and cultural norms. Simultaneously, however, the mobility theme fits into the central pioneer image of mobile Americans." (Cresswell 1993: 249)

Driving a car on the road that cuts through the continent, also in its modern shape as the American superhighway - as such a part of and tool for the system - is also the most potent remaining symbol for the original infinite freedom, Wanderlust and restlessness of raw American character. "Just as any domination is never complete, resistance is never total." (Cresswell 1993: 252) Although itself symbol of capitalism and the superimposition of the system, the map of roads also facilitates the *dérive*, a mobility running counter to the system, not submitting to the logic of function and economy. However, in its effort to achieve this, the subversion is again limited to the confines set by the system, and a society driven by growth and accumulation of property that thinks of "mobility (...) as a means to get somewhere." (Cresswell 1993: 259) Therefore, the central aspect never lies in the fact of using preexisting structures and vehicles, but merely in the way they are used and, by that, their significance is altered:

> Both social and spatial mobility are encouraged and connected as long as they result in 'improvement'. Mobility which is apparently purposeless and seems to result in poverty rather than 'social climbing' is not generally encouraged. This is reflected in geography. Migration studies purport to be about movement but use the push and pull factors of points A and B as explanations. People leave point A because point B appears to be favourable. It is never the case that both point A and B are unbearable and that the motion in between is the 'pull' factor. (Cresswell 1993: 259)

It is not the business of arriving, but the business of getting there that is crucial to stories of aimless travelling. In this light, Self's critique of the 'illusion of freedom' granted by the car, together with the general psychogeographical conviction that the American highway - as a mono-directed path - can thus not serve as the venue for the *dérive* becomes irrelevant. The direction of the mobility is of lesser importance than the fact that one maintains it and the manner in which one does. The unchangeable course of the Mississippi could also be seen as a confinement to Huckleberry Finn's travels on it. However, he manages to maintain the life of a drifter and an advocate of a free-spirited lifestyle in the way he travels on the river; a gigantic stream that was, after all, of crucial importance for the American modernization and development of its economic system - transporting goods as well as slaves - and, in itself, served as the symbolic frontier for a while; a significance that does not escape Sal:

> I (...) drove clear through the rest of Illinois to Davenport; Iowa, via Rock Island. And here for the first time I saw my beloved Mississippi River, dry in the summer haze, low water, with its big rank smell that smells like the raw body of America itself because it washes it up. (Kerouac 1957: 13)

Having located the venue of his *dérive* on the highway, the car becomes Sal's fetish of opportunity and movement, without most of the usual materialist implications. Throughout the book, he never owns one vehicle himself. The car is still the moving refuge of his *dérive*, not meant as a means of isolation, but one that provides the opportunity of getting in contact with the country and its people. His presentation of automobility is "a portrait of pure intent - to move" (Cresswell 1993: 256), and driving at top speed is the only way he might reach the desired 'dreamlike' state.

> I wasn't frightened at all that night; it was perfectly legitimate to go 110 and talk and have all the Nebraska towns (...) unreel with dreamlike rapidity as we roared ahead and talked. It was a magnificent car; it could hold the road like a boat holds on water. (Kerouac 1957:231)

Since the frontier has disappeared in actual American geography, the desired escape from the reaches of consumer society becomes a permanent state of mobility, an aimless drive. The destination is an idea of a utopian realm, not to be found by physically traveling through existing space. By chasing an idea, the dream of the West, Sal inherits another original American notion, that of restlessness.

On numerous occasions throughout his story, Sal states he cannot bear to stay in one place any longer and has to move on. Often, he dreams of one place - the next step on his voyage - only to arrive and feel restless again after a short while, eager to travel on to the next town. The speed of modern motorized mobility shortens distances, making it possible to reach the next longed-for place in a short time. A feeling of restlessness can thus be augmented and satisfaction is never actually achieved. After arriving in Denver for the first time, a town he described as "looming ahead of me like the Promised Land" (Kerouac 1957: 14), Sal spends some good times with his friends, but it does not take long until he starts to realize that "My moments in Denver were coming to an end (...). Beyond the glittering street was darkness, and beyond the darkness the West. I had to go." (Kerouac 1957: 58) The utterance becomes something of a mantra for the whole book: 'I have to go':

> In *On the Road* there is a repeated pattern of excitement with the prospect of a new city, a period of exploration then dejection and sadness followed by continued travel. (...)Sal leaves one town sad and soon builds himself up for the next melting pot of sensation, wherever it may be, but is soon overdosed in that as well, and leaves again. (Cresswell 1993: 254 f.)

The problem of maintaining this type of mobility for a *dérive* that is meant to offer salvation is that one can in fact reach the geographical End of the Road: In Sal's case, this is the West Coast, California, the place where the myth must therefore come true, otherwise there is nowhere else to go. San Francisco is what he at first believes to be the aim of his aimless journey and the special status of the town as a drawing point for countercultural activity would remain intact, as Michael Davidson writes in *The San Francisco Renaissance*:"The most generative myth of the period was the myth of San Francisco and the West, both as geological fact and as metaphysical principle." (Davidson 1989: 9)

Naturally, Sal arrives in San Francisco with great anticipation, stays with an old friend, sees the town, finds work as a security guard in some barracks during night shifts -and is soon caught in routines that become unbearable for him, a static life of disappointment. During one night, another guard, Sal's colleague, desperately insists on making an arrest, because the sailors that would leave the next morning were partying too loud. Sal vents his displeasure, admitting: "It was embarrassing. Every single one of us was blushing. This is the story of America. Everybody's doing what they think they're supposed to do. So what if a bunch of men talk in loud voices and drink the night?" (Kerouac 1957: 68) Sal, for whom a night out with drinking buddies is not an unimportant way of expressing his own freedom, is frustrated to understand that people in California do not act in any way different than anywhere else, and that everywhere people are not free but constrained, doing only what 'they're supposed to do'. It does not take much longer until he finally and characteristically asserts: "The time was coming for me to leave Frisco or I'd go crazy." (Kerouac 1957: 73)

Sal realizes that the destination - the geographical place of the West - cannot provide him with what he was looking for - the myth of the West. De Certeau argues that there is "a crack in the system that saturates places with signification and indeed so reduces them to this signification that it is 'impossible to breathe in them.' (de Certeau 1980: 106) He pays a visit to Los Angeles, the quintessentially mobile city, the place whose infrastructure is built in such a way that a car is almost indispensable, spotting "stucco houses and palms and drive-ins, the whole mad thing, the ragged promised land, the fantastic end of America." (Kerouac 1957: 83) But it takes him only a short while to acknowledge that this accumulation of extreme mobility together with its position at the western-most edge of America makes "LA (...) the loneliest and most brutal of American cities." (Kerouac 1957: 86) The reason it is so 'brutal' is that there is no more escape. In repression or defiance, for not having found what he was looking for at this end of the horizon, which is also the end of the frontier, Sal turns around to look east again, his restlessness becoming unlimited. It is revealingly in a place called 'Arcadia, California' that he states "We were pointed toward the American continent." (Kerouac 1957: 89) As Davidson writes, "(...) the story of California was often a fall *out* of Paradise rather than a discovery of an untouched wilderness." (Davidson 1989: 9) Because the promised land was always suspected to be here, it now feels farer away than ever. The only remaining thing for Sal to do is to revisit the vast continent, but the movement needs to be justified, even glorified, otherwise his *dérive* would lose its meaning:

> Here I was at the end of America - no more land - and now there was nowhere to go but back. And before me was the great raw bulge and bulk of my American continent; somewhere far across, gloomy, crazy New York was throwing up its cloud of dust and brown steam. There is something brown and holy about the East; and California is white like washlines and emptyheaded. At least that's what I thought then. (Kerouac 1957: 77 f.)

This description puts another complexion on California, being rather dull in all its seeming white purity and Golden State charms. The deeper tones of the East suddenly appear more desirable, maybe uglier, but also more complex. Sal's desire is for a darker shade, turning his back on bright sunlight in exchange for old New York, 'gloomy', 'throwing up its cloud of dust and brown steam', but also, or maybe therefore, somewhat 'holy', as he can judge now due to its familiarity. Debord warns that the *dériveur* should "not at all [be] interested in any mere exoticism that may arise from the fact that one is exploring a neighborhood for the first time. Besides its unimportance, this aspect of the problem is completely subjective and soon fades away" (Debord 1958), although one could argue that this is exactly what situations are: subjective and fading. After this initial journey on his own, Sal's spirit of discovery needs to be rekindled - which is only achieved a year later, by the magic instigation skills of his ecstatic travel partner Dean Moriarty. Only with him in the driver's seat is their restless and self-navigated American *dérive* really driving in accordance with Debord's original suggestions: a 'rapid passage through varied ambiences', 'playful', while letting oneself 'be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters' one finds there.

The Coming of Dean

Dean Moriarty is raised to a status of superhuman grandeur in Sal's depictions, the vocabulary used to capture his aura and movements points beyond the limits of physicality. Dean flies like 'an angel', leaps, sprints, jumps and roars off in cars. He has an irrepressible excitability and an amazing lust for velocity, carelessly and restlessly seeking experience and insight, sexual encounters and ecstasy. His presence seduces not only, but especially Sal who wants to believe in the existence of the purity and rawness of the utopian West, as a place rather than a concept. He finds reassurance in the apparition of Dean who was literally born "on the road (...) in a jalopy" (Kerouac 1957: 1), and becomes the embodiment of the West and Sal's charismatic, prophet-like instigator. Arriving in New York after his release from reform school, Dean is ready and able to work frantically, without interruption, finding fulfillment in a modest service - decidedly modest in spite of his singular skills, like the chosen one who kneels down to wash feet:

> The most fantastic parking-lot attendant in the world, he can back a car forty miles an hour into a tight squeeze and stop at the wall, jump out, race among fenders, leap into another car, circle it fifty miles an hour in narrow space, back swiftly into tight spot, *hump*, snap the car with the emergency so that you see it bounce as he flies out; then clear to the ticket shack, sprinting like a track star, hand a ticket, leap into a newly arrived car before the owner's half out, leap literally under him as he steps out, start the car with the door flapping, and roar off to the next available spot, arc, pop in, brake, out, run; working like that without pause eight hours a night, evening rush hours and after-theater rush hours, in greasy wino pants with a frayed fur-lined jacket and beat shoes that flap. (Kerouac 1957: 6)

The car is an extension of Dean's body, empowering him, catalyzing his message. He commands the machine in an untamed, graceful and perfected style. The choreography appears miraculous - like a wild horse confined in an enclosure, Dean rushes back and forth within the narrow walls of the parking lot, tragically imprisoned in Debord's urban microcosm, but without complaining. The reader anticipates Dean's setting free onto the American highway like an undomesticated species being reintroduced into its natural habitat after a painful captivity in the city. When this moment is finally there, even the unhurried Greyhound bus, departing from New York to Chicago, with Dean as a passenger, becomes inflamed to "roar off into the night." (Kerouac 1957: 7)

Sal has to wait a little longer, until he can join forces with this unique find - the natural born American *dériveur* - and finally take to the road together, away from their urban restrictions, with Dean's otherworldly driving skills. Phil Patton writes that "roads are social models at least as much as buildings or parks, a sketch of how we deal with human freedom and interaction, human ability and inability. Roads are designed around the abilities and limitations of the individual driver." (Patton 1986: 16) By taking Dean's 'abilities' into account, this American *dérive* seems to be freed of all its 'limitations'. There is no-one better for the job, for "the purity of the road. The white line in the middle of the highway unrolled and hugged our left front tire as if glued to our groove. Dean hunched his muscular neck, T-shirted in the winter night, and blasted the car along." (Kerouac 1957: 135). Sal admits about himself that he is "not much of a driver" (Kerouac 1957:13), but frequently refers to other drivers, whose speeding is always a positive, uncompromising character trait. He tells of riding with a truck driver who "yelled me the funniest stories about how he got around the law in every town that had an unfair speed limit, saying over and over again, 'Them goddam cops can't put no flies on *my* ass!'" (Kerouac 1957: 14, emphasis in original) During these *dérives*, the execution of power must be undermined when the limitation of the citizen's freedom is perceived as 'unfair' - if that is the case, rebellion against law enforcement becomes a virtue. Among other examples, a pair of farm boys stand out, two brothers, "the most smiling, cheerful couple of handsome bumpkins you could ever wish to see" (Kerouac 1957: 22), who drive their truck back and forth through the country, transporting machinery and picking up every hobo and hitchhiker they meet along the way. Later, Sal will be critical of what he perceives as ignorant country folks, detached from the world, but at this early stage, the brothers become glorified images of the healthy and positive worker, living the free life of the West:

> They were having a hell of a time. They liked everything. They never stopped smiling. I tried to talk to them - a kind of dumb attempt on my part to befriend the captains of our ship - and the only responses I got were two sunny smiles and large white cornfed teeth. (Kerouac 1957: 24)

In this early stage of humble belief, the act of addressing them is what is presented as 'kind of dumb'; another Sal at another time will give in to the temptation of judging a taciturn response like theirs as dull. But their skill in driving their enormous vehicle, instinctively "gunning the truck to the limit" (Kerouac 1957: 25) lets them partake of the image of reckless freedom on the road.

> Kerouac's heroes always drive well, but too fast, taking some imagined existential risk for discovery. Speed and danger are part of the thrill of Kerouac's road, the heat and pressure in which the driver can forget himself and concentrate only on the beat of the wheels. (Patton 1986: 241)

Sal Paradise is far from being a passive character and tries to pursue his wishes for experience and freedom, yet, whenever Dean Moriarty enters the scene, Sal becomes more of an observer, like an evangelist, following and chronicling the life of the real protagonist of *On the Road*, a man on a constant *dérive*. Having grown up with an alcoholic father and finally released from reform school, Dean is in search of his lost youth, incapable of growing up - like a pubescent, overly excitable Peter Pan, willing to resort to criminal acts if necessary. His shining recklessness persuades his companions to 'roar off' with him towards the road, escaping realities and, not uncommonly, the problems he himself created in careless hedonism and promiscuousness. Constantly tempting and sparking his surroundings for sensations, he lives the American myth on Benzedrine, always present, spontaneous and zealous for life. The restlessness has taken visible control of his body:

> We followed sheepishly (...). He had become absolutely mad in his movements; he seemed to be doing everything at the same time. It was a shaking of the head, up and down, sideways; jerky, vigorous hands; quick walking, sitting, crossing the legs, uncrossing, getting up, rubbing the hands, rubbing his fly, hitching his pants, looking up and saying 'Am,' and sudden slitting of the eyes to see everywhere; and all the time he was grabbing me by the ribs and talking, talking. (Kerouac 1957: 114)

Sal's and other's fascination for this beat, youthful prophet of pure and raw energy goes a long way. They are lured into following him to fly away high-speed to a Neverland of 'kicks', which can only be maintained in motion, by constantly escaping from its own fallout.

> 'Whooee!' yelled Dean. 'Here we go!' And he hunched over the wheel and gunned her; he was back in his element, everybody could see that. We were all delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*. And we moved(Kerouac 1957: 134, emphasis in original)

Only in the 'noble function' of moving in restless mobility, ironically, can a moment of seeming clear-sightedness occur, urging the impulsive Dean to preach 'the Word' to his three fellow *dériveurs* in the speeding car:

> 'Now dammit, look here, all of you, we all must admit that everything is fine and there's no need in the world to worry, and in fact we should realize what it would mean to us to UNDERSTAND that we're not REALLY worried about ANYTHING. Am I right?' We all agreed. (Kerouac 1957: 134, emphasis in original)

Chtcheglov already points out that "a dérive is a good replacement for a Mass: it is more effective in making people enter into communication with the ensemble of energies, seducing them for the benefit of the collectivity." (Chtcheglov 1953) However, as seen above, Dean's insistent assurance that everything will be fine is brought about by the relief of having left behind the (self-induced) 'confusion and nonsense' endured in the dense urban surroundings of a New York chapter. "Being with Dean represents a regression to a more immediate life, one free of adult cares and anxieties." (Davidson 1989: 70) This includes lesser care for the long-term consequences of one's behavior, as well as a pronounced existentialism regarding basic, physical needs; Dean is often very hungry, very thirsty or very sexually aroused. This unadulterated relationship with the necessities of life and Dean's readiness to adopt all sorts of measures to satisfy them, is yet another sign of his freedom in Sal's eyes. His delinquency stands more in a nostalgic tradition, he appears as a romantic outlaw: "His 'criminality' was not something that sulked and sneered; it was a wild yea-saying overburst of American joy; it was Western, the west wind, an ode from the Plains, something new, long prophesied, long a-coming.' (Kerouac 1957: 7 f.)

Although being wildly enthusiastic about his partner in crime, Sal, in taking "a literal and a figurative 'back seat' to the voluble, sociable Dean Moriarty" (Davidson 1989: 65), always manages to partly maintain the observer's perspective and the ability to reassess. He sees himself following in the wake of people 'who interest him', the 'wild ones', like Carlo Marx (Allen Ginsberg) and Dean:

> They rushed down the street together, digging everything in the early way they had, which later became so much sadder and perceptive and blank. But then they danced down the streets like dingledodies, and I shambled after as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes 'Awww!' (Kerouac 1957: 5 f.)

For quite a while, Dean's persona manages to distract Sal and he "invariably appears at a moment when Sal's life has become static, when he has been too long living at home or when a relationship threatens to tie him down. At this moment, Dean shows up and offers 'the road' as a panacea." (Davidson 1989:

70) He infects with further, defiant drifting, but gradually cannot hide the damage done by his uncompromising lifestyle anymore. In the end, Dean, "as the embodiment of and vehicle for a potential authenticity is doubted." (Mouratidis 2007: 75) His compulsion to leave everything behind has served as seductive inspiration, but later reveals itself to be not a harmless drift that passes through space, but a capricious intervention of spiraling (self)destructiveness. Dean's *dérive* turns more and more into an escape not only from a restrictive system he does not fit into, but from the consequences of his own deeds. Although the *dérive* is not meant to intervene with space in an aggressive way, the desires involved can escalate and become destructive, as with Chtcheglov, whose personal *dérive* led him to a mental institution, when he and a friend were caught on *Rue Mouffetard* with a rucksack full of dynamite, on their way to blow up the Eiffel Tower, defending themselves by explaining that its "blinking lights (...) used to disturb them greatly" (Mension 1998: 96 f.) when they wished to sleep.

The incurable Dean Moriarty appears madly superior until he is finally examined and unveiled as feasting on his surroundings, destroying them and moving on. The tale of Moriarty is of an original drifter who goes all the way, whipping up his peers until they uncompromisingly follow or reject him. In the long run, Sal and Dean, having not found the utopia roadside - by chance - and prolonging their state of escape from realities, don't know where to turn anymore and lack justification of their travels. "Sal has relied too much on the road as a value in itself and on Dean's energy as a sustaining power." (Davidson 1989: 70) Dean's example shows that the individual might stay in constant motion, but will have to learn that the still-standing world in the rear mirror, in turn, moves in the opposite direction. The non-stopping *dériveur* through a vast space, instead of achieving a holy unity with the old soul of it, is instead inevitably alienated and his constant *dérive* through this place becomes a stress test to his very connection with it. Sal has an apocalyptic vision of Dean on the eve of their last drift together, after he hears that his old travel buddy is on the road from New York to Denver, rushing west to meet Sal and join him on his trip to Mexico. Dean is like a "burning, shuddering, frightful angel", destroying even the 'holy' road behind him:

> I saw his huge face over the plains with the mad, bony purpose and the gleaming eyes; I saw his wings; I saw his old jalopy chariot with thousands of sparkling flames shooting out from it; I saw the path it burned over the road; it even made its own road and went over the corn, through cities, destroying bridges, drying rivers. It came like wrath to the West. (Kerouac 1957: 259)

The End of the Road

One important aspect that distinguished Beat writing was, as Mills writes, the fascination with and the effort to include - if sometimes clumsily - the minorities of American society, which have been called the *Fellaheen* by Kerouac, borrowing the Arabic word for peasant. The author of *On the Road* experimented with drugs, explored his homoerotic desires, worshipped the African American Bebop Jazz musicians and, not unusually, tried to think of himself as a Hobo. These insights from the margins of society, their signs and codes, were to be included in the writing and transformed into a style that befit the free and optimistic lifestyle advertised by the Beats. "Fascinated with the ways in which meaning could be appropriated and subverted, they admired - even glamorized - these minorities who created insurrectionary insights out of the building blocks of the status quo." (Mills 2006: 37)

If a *dérive* is to reveal the soul of America, there is the question of how to genuinely cross the lines that separate these minorities from a middle-class white male in the US society of 1950. At one time, Sal bluntly states his desire to be black himself:

> At lilac evening I walked with every muscle aching among the lights of 27th and Welton in the Denver colored section, wishing I was a Negro, feeling that the best the white

> world had offered was not enough ecstasy for me, not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night. (Kerouac 1957: 179 f.)

Another, more elaborated stage of the story lets Sal actually believe he has adapted a different ethnicity, if only for a short while. In a bus travelling through California, Sal meets Mexican girl Terry and they both indulge in a short-lived love affair. At first, Sal finds everything desirable about the young, vulnerable mother who grew up in underprivileged conditions, on the edge of American society. By devoting himself to the relationship, the hero is actually enabled to delve into and explore the idealized life at the margins - eager to investigate the realities behind another romanticized image he fantasized about.

> What Terry offers (...) is Sal's passport to the *Fellaheen*. With Terry as his girl, Sal gains access to a subculture he could not otherwise experience. Finally within reach of a racial mystery he craves more than cinema's cowboys, Sal cancels his trip home. (Mills 2006: 45 f.)

With Depression-era pictures of the raw life in Steinbeck novels in his head, Sal tries out the hard routines of a day laborer, picking cotton, enjoying Mexican food and company, supporting his young 'family' on a day-to-day basis. However, as Mills shows, his restlessness kicks in again, after having seen what he came to see about this form of semi-stable life. When he then "escape[s] once the winter winds howl around the tent corners" (Mills 2006: 47), he banalizes the hitherto passionate and committing statements. The once heartfelt attachment has already made way for a nervous longing for mobility and change:"'Sallie, I want to go to New York with you.' 'But how?' 'I don't know, honey. I'll miss you. I love you.' 'But I have to leave.'" (Kerouac 1957: 100) Sal can be seen as a privileged tourist within a power imbalance - subverting his own journey and hunt for authenticity - since "financial autonomy and mobility distinguish him from Terry and her family. He leaves Terry *before* he picks up his aunt's check, thereby avoiding any question of whether he should give her some of his money to help her through the winter." (Mills 2006: 47). In the night, he enjoys sex with her one last time, in the morning she brings him his breakfast, but he does not seem to care anymore. Although caring is a precondition of the journey's meaning, the essential mobility could not be upheld if he were not to put an emotional distance between him and her, bringing yet another 'field trip' to a close, an investigation of the realities behind his mental images:

> 'See you in New York, Terry,' I said. She was supposed to drive to New York in a month with her brother. But we both knew she wouldn't make it. At a hundred feet I turned to look at her. She just walked on back to the shack, carrying my breakfast plate in one hand. I bowed my head and watched her. Well, lackadaddy, I was on the road again. (Kerouac 1957: 101)

Towards the end of the story, during their trip back to New York, Sal and Dean create a miserable impression, exhausted, disillusioned, even wounded. They seem to slog along the old road, after having travelled back and forth like hunted men, Sal's impression is that they are imposing prophets, selling lies as the Word: "I realized I was beginning to cross and recross towns in America as though I were a traveling salesman - raggedy travelings, bad stock, rotten beans in the bottom of my bag of tricks, nobody buying." (Kerouac 1957: 247) The feeling of deception is not limited to his own lost utopian cause, but is rooted in a disillusionment with the superficial American society, which, after all, has proved to value appearance and words over authenticity and action. Throughout the novel, the reader can identify:

> this sense of authenticity as something that is a presence only in its conspicuous absence, as something presupposed, and which only exists in its potentiality; as long as the ideal of authenticity remained intact, so too did the possibility of its realization. (Mouratidis 2007: 73)

This is true not only for *On the Road*, but for all road narratives that use the *dérive* of their characters in the same way as Debord did - as a way to keep body and mind engaged and involved with the actual space, while in fact keeping the faith that there could be a better version of it, if only its ideal 'authenticity' could be re-summoned. The traveler's belief is the crucial element of this type of movement directed at the 'authentic', as Mouratidis argues:

> The quality of life which, for Kerouac, existed outside objective boundaries is incumbent in the socioculturally transgressive pursuit of authenticity, the search for the beckoning 'pearl' handed to the traveler on the road, the promised 'paradise' at the end of the journey. (...) The attainability is all built on Jack/Sal's faith, and his movement driven by it, rather than any *knowledge* of its imminent realization. With the pursuit of the imponderable 'IT' the only way to go is in a decentralized fashion, to go 'every direction' and never be 'hung up'. However, we see that Jack/Sal is indeed hung up. (Mouratidis 2007: 75)

Sal's and Dean's *dérive* is lost without the faith that the 'pearl' is waiting somewhere if one were to keep looking for it. Later, many road stories to come would have their characters embark with an already shattered belief and even Kerouac will "acknowledge authenticity's unattainability and the loss of the ideal form it may take or upon which it is projected." (Mouratidis 2007: 75) With Sal, this disillusionment is concerned with Dean, but also with the space traversed on their travels through the West - two things that are closely connected in his consciousness. Even the once so romanticized non-urbanites and their simpler lifestyles and joys seem fake to him, now:

> I took up a conversation with a gorgeous country girl wearing a low-cut cotton blouse that displayed the beautiful sun-tan on her breast tops. She was dull. She spoke of evenings in the country making popcorn on the porch. Once this would have gladdened my heart but because her heart was not glad when she said it I knew there was nothing in it but the idea of what one should do. 'And what else do you do for fun?' I tried to bring up boy friends and sex. Her great dark eyes surveyed me with emptiness and a kind of chagrin that reached back generations and generations in her blood from not having done what was crying to be done - whatever it was, and everybody knows what it was. (Kerouac 1957: 244)

The Old West is explicitly included when Sal insists that, although all generations could have put their fingers on 'It', they chose not to pursue their 'authentic' destiny. He, in turn, is fixed on the next sensation, yet no longer as part of a deeper soul-searching of what he now considers as ignorance surrounding him, but as shallow entertainment - Sal describes the girl's appealing physique and dismisses her 'dull' naive mind and habits, her lack of sophistication - something he would have once celebrated as purity. The kneejerk impulse to flirt is contaminated by the frustration of unanswered, yet vital questions: "'(...) What are we all aching to do? What do we want?' She didn't know. She yawned. She was sleepy. It was too much. Nobody could tell. Nobody would ever tell. It was all over. She was eighteen and most lovely, and lost." (Kerouac 1957: 245)

After having looked everywhere, Sal finally admits his defeat and turns his attention elsewhere, stays in New York, enjoying some money from selling his book. He seems to have abandoned the road in bitterness, realizing that with constant disengagement, he can put down no roots in the holy American soil on which he traveled so much. "Place and roots imply future generations. The idea of place extends deep into the future and reaches far back into the past for its roots." (Cresswell 1993: 258) When he examined some photos of one of Dean's babies sometime earlier, Sal bemoaned the realization that:

> these were all the snapshots which our children would look at someday with wonder, thinking their parents had lived smooth, well-ordered, stabilized-within-the-photo lives and got up in the morning to walk proudly on the sidewalks of life, never dreaming the raggedy madness and riot of our actual lives, or actual night, the hell of it, the senseless nightmare road. All of it inside endless and beginningless emptiness. (Kerouac 253 f.)

Their legacy seems even more fleeting than anybody else's. Sal cannot avoid the lurking desire for some stability. Out of the midst of this disenchantment - the slumber of the cold months having made way for spring's restlessness - emerges the desire for another, a last 'major *dérive*', like an involuntary twitch of a dead muscle, but this one will be the concession of looking for solace in a whole different realm. Sal plans a trip to Mexico, which he suddenly describes as the *real* promised land, marked out by a *real* frontier, behind which there is only sweet stimulation, cheap drugs, beautiful girls and a never-ending succession of 'kicks' waiting.

This drifting journey will turn out to be the sellout of the initial concept, as the *dérive* becomes an escape entirely, leaving that space altogether which was to be appropriated for the better. The reader cannot help but acknowledge the realization of defeat that the voyage stands for, when Dean positively proclaims: "Now, Sal, we're leaving everything behind us and entering a new and unknown phase of things. All the years and troubles and kicks - and now *this!*" (Kerouac 1957: 276, emphasis in original) Presented like an afterlife following the painful defeat on the American road, Mexico will be "the magic land at the end of the road" (Kerouac 1957: 276). De Certeau writes about an exile like Mexico - or the West before it - that produces "precisely the body of legends that is currently lacking in one's own vicinity; it is a fiction, which moreover has the double characteristic (...) of being the effect of displacements and condensations." Eventually, both *dérives* can be regarded as "practices that invent spaces." (de Certeau 1980: 107) By leaving everything behind, the heroes will not have to care about anything anymore - caring being the impetus of any valid *dérive* which is not only mobilized hedonism.

They now undeniably indulge in Debord's hateful tourism, which Sal's convictions once saved his US travels from. They do not seduce the women but visit the whorehouse. Of course, they would also lack the linguistic capacity, so they just enjoy the sheer convenience of cheap prices and the easy position of wealthy Westerners. Speaking of Kerouac's travels to Mexico, Roger Bill argues that "they may be interpreted as a search for reality in other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles, but it is clear his foreign travels also included an element of exploitation," (Bill 2010: 402) and that Kerouac was not unaware "that he was the guest who enjoyed some advantages in the power relationship with his hosts." (Bill 2010: 403) In *On the Road*, Sal delightedly notices how little money they are spending. Suddenly, space becomes idealized because everything is affordable, money is their fetish for the first time:

> We bought three bottles of cold beer - *cerveza was the name of beer* - for about thirty Mexican cents or ten American cents each. We bought packs of Mexican cigarettes for six cents each. We gazed and gazed at our wonderful Mexican money that went so far, and played with it and looked around and smiled at everyone. (Kerouac 1957: 276)

At the beginning, Sal vows he "couldn't imagine this trip. It was the most fabulous of all. It was no longer east-west, but magic *south*" (Kerouac 1957: 265), betraying the hitherto holy West. Later, already near the Mexican border, he unconsciously includes his own party when he reasons about the border area to which he himself fled: "It was the bottom and dregs of America, where all the heavy villains sink, where disoriented people have to go to be near a specific elsewhere they can slip into unnoticed." (Kerouac 1957: 273)

Sal and Dean, together with a young excitable boy called Stan, embark after a wild night which already let their off-balance, vulnerable state shine through discretely: Sal cracks a bone in his finger, Dean, between drunk phases of extremely excitable and sociable unrest, needs breaks of silence to recharge the all too frivolously spent energy. Right away, Stan is bitten by a bug, resulting in an enormous painful swelling. Sal incredulously registers: "It had come out of an American afternoon."

> Here we were, heading for unknown southern lands, and barely three miles out of hometown, poor old hometown of childhood, a strange feverish exotic bug rose from secret corruptions and sent fear into our hearts. 'What is it?' 'I've never known of a bug around here that can make a swelling like that.' 'Damn!' It made the trip seem sinister and doomed. We drove on. Stan's arm got worse. (Kerouac 1957: 268)

The exotic insect's frightening bite is a herald of doom. They drive on until the swelling is finally taken care of in a hospital. The team's means of transport is another signifier of this lost trip. When he decides to join Sal, Dean takes his romantic outlaw existence to another demoralized level and, in spite of being a notoriously broke father of four children from different mothers, spends all his money on a car for the Mexico trip, "a '37 Ford sedan with the right-side door unhinged and tied on the frame. The right-side front seat was also broken, and you sat there leaning back with your face to the tattered roof." (Kerouac 1957: 265) The significantly half-dead vehicle is falling to pieces and can only be revived to some extent by Dean sitting at the steering wheel. He revealingly proclaims that they will "go coughing and bouncing down to Mexico; it'll take us days and days." (Kerouac 1957: 265) By breaking with the understatement of his gravitational force, as if to convince himself, he utters the word: "'Man, this will finally take us to IT!' said Dean with definite faith. He tapped my arm. 'Just wait and see. Hoo! Whee!'" (Kerouac 1957: 265) Eventually, Sal will pay the price for his belief and, while lying in bed sick with dysentery in Mexico City, curse at Dean the former prophet, calling him a "rat" (Kerouac 1957: 302) for having driven off early, leaving Sal in his sickbed in a strange place.

The drift is marked by a succession, from Sal's initial hope of finding his imagined ideal version of his country, to the lurking realization that the hope is utopian and the journey will remain a never-ending escape from realities. It recalls the difficulty of avoiding the prescribed pathways in urban environments, in that there always needs to be an element of creativity, until one runs out of options. The reader ends up with the feeling - as in the city - that, in the end, all paths are already trodden. The success of a *dérive* is not about the route one takes, but the attitude one has towards it. However, the individual is limited and cannot just always drive on the street in the wrong way. When Sal loses the attitude that was once so naive and optimistic, his *dérive* breaks down. The question thus remains if the *dérive* is effectual as a form of subversion. Without existing infrastructure there is no *dérive*. One cannot deviate unless there is something to deviate from. With an ongoing drift through existing structures, the effect might as easily be the *dérive* being subverted by the status quo.

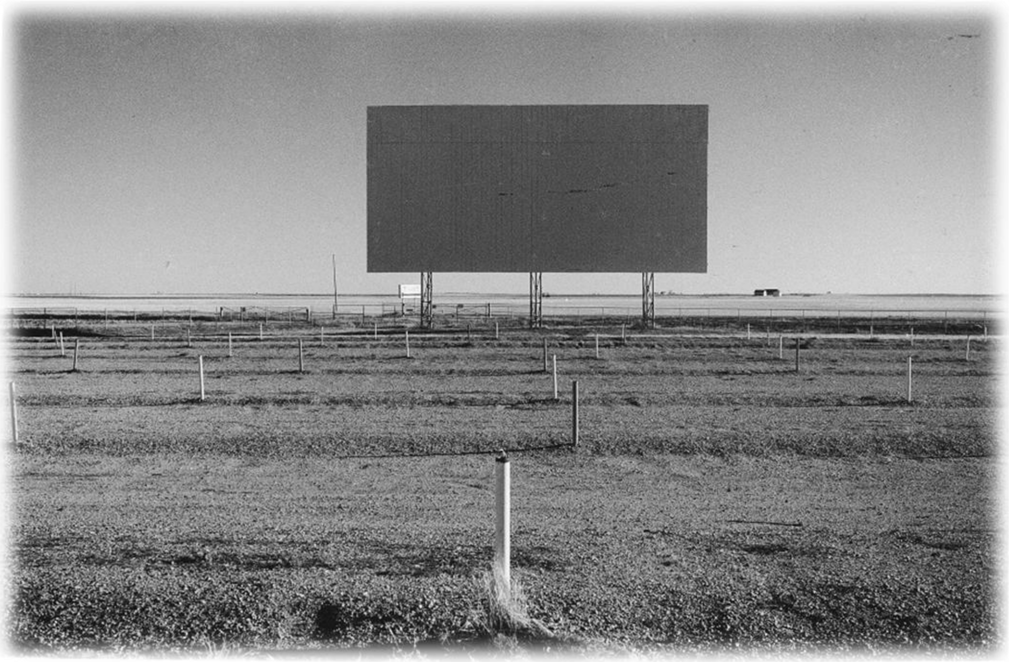
If the road is chosen as the center of one's life and the journey on the road becomes the affirmation of life, then death is the eventual End of the Road, a haunting figure in the rear mirror, bound to overtake everyone eventually. Sal once opens up to Carlo Marx about a dream that reveals the other, the final instigator who is even more powerful than Dean:

> I told him a dream I had about a strange Arabian figure that was pursuing me across the desert; that I tried to avoid; that finally overtook me just before I reached the Protective City. (...) Something, someone, some spirit was pursuing all of us across the desert of life and was bound to catch us before we reached heaven. Naturally, now that I look back on

> it, this is only death: death will overtake us before heaven. The one thing that we yearn for in our living days, that makes us sigh and groan and undergo sweet nauseas of all kinds, is the remembrance of some lost bliss that was probably experienced in the womb and can only be reproduced (though we hate to admit it) in death. (Kerouac 1957: 124)

7. Following Beats - What Became of the Road

'You boys going to get somewhere, or just going?'
We didn't understand his question,
and it was a damn good question.
(Kerouac 1957: 20)



Some of the aspects which had been introduced and negotiated in the story and style of *On the Road* were continued and reexamined in a number of road narratives in the years that followed, adapted always to the historical evolution of countercultural imagery and its treatment of space within the discourse of American identity. As will be seen hereafter, in a selection of three exemplary tales of drifters, the impression of a shrinking world, confining conformist mainstream as much as efforts to subvert it, is more and more pronounced, increasingly limiting the potential of the *dérive*. The dream of a utopian vision of a different world is abandoned, the aimless journey is truncated to the mere physicality of motion, and left in favor of an escape or hermitage within. The consequent alienation brings forth a decline in communication between the fellow *dériveurs* - an exchange which Debord, as has been shown, saw as a crucial element in sounding out the individual's experience - to the degree that their roaming alliance is left as a mere function, instead of mutual interaction and inspiration: *Easy Rider*'s separated motorcyclists, whose *dérive* is like an expulsion from 'Paradise', the semi-mute pair of constant drifters in *Two-Lane Blacktop*, and finally the escape from realities and whirling interactions during the physical and mental *dérive* that is *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

Easy Rider (1969)

As early as 1964, in building a shaky bridge between the Beats and the still emergent Hippies, Ken Kesey with his 'Merry Band of Pranksters' went on his infamous 'Furthur' bus trip across the country, as recorded in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968). The number of participants, of course, by far exceeded Debord's limitations, and an ensuing American *dérive* in a packed vehicle like this was often more concerned with itself than with the environment. Any lingering concerns about giving in to narcissism were outscreamed with an especially colorful vehicle that painted over realities - the resulting explosion on wheels was less likely to take in the American space than to put a kink in it by simply passing through. To legitimize the claim of a continuation of countercultural tradition, Neal Cassidy was brought in as driver of the extravagant vehicle.

America's social and political landscape significantly changed during the twelve years between the publication of *On the Road* and the release of *Easy Rider*, and, by 1969, the road had already become "one of the most powerful metaphors of transformation in American pop culture." (Mills 2006: 38) Comedies for the masses had discovered the appeal of the racing automobile in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963), *The Great Race* (1965), and the American public had never looked on chopper motorcycles the same way since the rise of the Hell's Angels. Flower Power struggled to include or exclude the old road romanticism of (imperialist / capitalist) opportunity, and the counterculture used and provoked ever more radical measures. In this context, the low-budget surprise hit *Easy Rider* epitomized some of the notions and tensions which united and separated different fragments of American society, at a moment when the wave of the Hippie movement reached what Hunter S. Thompson described as its "high water-mark" (Thompson 1971: 68).

For over a decade, the American highway system had been under construction in the implementation of the *Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, and, as a result, "in many states, highway building in the 1960s accounted for well over half of all public capital spending." (Patton 1986: 93) One could call it the Haussmann moment in the history of the American network of interstate roads."The superhighways gradually domesticated the wilderness of the old roads, settling and closing the frontier, eliminating the possibilities of escape." (Patton 1986: 241) Resulting from a drastic measure of exercise of power, these roads cut through previously untouched land and may have given the *dériveur* an impression of not only rediscovering, but actually discovering pure American space, driving on a path through the seemingly endless western wilderness, with no other built structures to contaminate the view. Nevertheless, the freedom is a chimera, as one actually stays within America's sociopolitical realities, the more so with this particular infrastructure.

Wyatt (Peter Fonda) and Billy (Dennis Hopper), two hippies from the west coast, embark on a motorcycle ride from California to New Orleans, a *dérive* that "begins with only the vaguest notion of motivation". After a lucrative cocaine deal, they plan to retire to Florida with their earnings. Their destination, Mardi Gras, "is rendered largely arbitrary; that the men focus on the event more than the place that hosts it is key." (Orgeron 2008: 106 f.) They quit the urban, superficial realm (apparently they were performers in a stunt show) and will spend the bulk of the film in rural surroundings, with the exception of their bad trip during Mardi Gras. Since they choose the kicks rather than the place, they cannot halt and abandon the *dérive* even when afforded chances to do so.

> The rancher's house and the hippie commune are both viable possibilities, and Wyatt even vocalizes his approval of both of these social alternatives, one of the antiquated, patriarchally organized domestic variety and the other a more countercultural, though still *cultural*, variation. Yet Wyatt and Billy take pleasure in the disconnect of the road, in their silent and blind drift across the country. (Orgeron 2008: 107)

In a hippie commune, they are offered more permanent residence, and although it seems tempting, even Wyatt, calmer, more introverted than his counterpart, responds with the notorious, almost involuntary motto: "I just gotta go." (Hopper 1969) He explicitly appreciates the pre-industrial, but also conservative-patriarchal plain living they experience with the rancher and his Mexican wife. Still, neither the curious attraction of the traditional nor the obvious lure of the nouveau alternative lifestyle offer enough to make stability more desirable than mobility. With the prospect of further kicks, but also the seduction of disengagement, of leaving everything behind again, they continue their *dérive*. If the vague intention behind an aimless journey like this is to go 'look for America', then the picture one will piece together - while all the time staying thus disengaged - displays severe gaps. "Road-bound travelers are forced to accept the fact that the missing elements are precisely those the road seems to lead away from: community and communication." (Orgeron 2008: 108) Stability might corrupt, but mobility is, if constantly upheld, a life spent in-between.

At the beginning of Wyatt and Billy's American *dérive*, the dynamic of their joy of cruising on the lonely highways, accompanied by a driving rock soundtrack, make them seem in tune with America's foundational virtue of freedom. Their drifting is per se different than Sal Paradise's, since with their hippie looks alone they attract attention, and provoke reactions when facing society; added to that is the motorcycle as means of transport, which exposes the rider to the environment and possible dangers, it makes him both more visible and less protected. This journey eastward runs contrary to the original settlers' way, to manifest destiny, the trek of civilization. They take the route back into the heart of the nation and, in this sense, the promised land is what they embark from - the "counter-cultural mecca" (Cohan & Hark 1997: 182) where hippie lifestyle and looks are more common - and even with an altogether capitalist, 'mainstream' fortune in their hands, which they came upon at this End of the Road. "*Easy Rider*'s west-to-east trajectory would be an example of how this particular film demonstrates the end of the frontier and the hopes it held for individual freedom and national progress." (Cohan & Hark 1997: 190)

The hopes, as in *On the Road*, again speak of a common nostalgic (cultural, not countercultural) illusion of freedom and opportunity, from which even the two protagonists of *Easy Rider* are not immune; this belief includes the traditional idea of the frontier being able to absorb all different kinds of refugees from urbanity: "While the film inserts the counter-culture into the wilderness, the presence of hippies does not automatically derail the nationalistic symbolism so intimately associated with the grand scenery." (Cohan & Hark 1997: 191) From a distance, Wyatt and Billy fit into this picture rather well, like cowboys on horses, riding through the Old West by day, and camping outside at night, admittedly because they are not accepted at the motel - the image "suggests (...) that this territory still promises freedom, diversity and tolerance, and a continuing influx of new pioneers." (Cohan & Hark 1997: 191) Point-of-view shots and an enhancing soundtrack convey the protagonists' experience of freedom and the beauty they traverse. In the end, although *Easy Rider* appears to set out to become a contemporary story of countercultural martyrs, Cohan and Hark see it as ambiguous and stuck in between old and new imagery and mythology, arguing that:

> The film is at once a travel poster proclaiming the continued presence of the grand Old West and its historical and mythic associations, and a nightmarish portrait of small towns, cities, and the end of the frontier (and the world). It is a celebration of the freedom of the road and the beauty of the landscape and a dissertation on the end of the road and the repulsive banalities and industrial blight that disfigure the scenery. (Cohan & Hark 1997: 199)

As in Kerouac's novel, the idea of a true soul of America is not abandoned in mere escape, but revisited through a *dérive*, thereby negotiated, acknowledging its potential as "a space by definition democratic since in theory no class systems or unfair hierarchies exist there." (Cohan & Hark 1997: 188)

However, the protagonists and viewers find out that these hierarchies do in fact exist and are often linked to one's physiognomy alone. The rooted, stable world reacts to them in a hostile way, a motel owner (silently) denies them a room, by turning the sign to 'No Vacancy', in another town they find themselves in actual confinement - thrown into prison for a night - for having had no permit to ride along a parade. By containing both the possibility of freedom and the narrow-minded intolerance, *Easy Rider* juxtaposes:

> 'America the beautiful' with 'America the ugly': the pristine wilderness of the landscape, representing the great potential of the country's historical past, with the profane sentiments of its fascistic and bigoted inhabitants, threatening the very foundations of democracy in the present. (Cohan& Hark 1997: 181)

The two characters themselves comprise the ambiguous: Antagonisms, both within themselves and in confrontation. Neither is an idealist and they have "internalized (brought with them) the pressures of conformist society." (Laderman 2002: 76) They pull a dubious drug deal and take the money as a reason to set out on their voyage; instead of picking up girls in New Orleans, they pay prostitutes to accompany them through the craziness of the city; finally, they plan their retirement in Florida, of all places; in short, they are more than ready to submerge themselves in hedonistic escapades. They rarely talk to each other - the spatial distance of the motorcycles forbids it - and when they do, they often reveal very different character traits. "The breakdown of these two characters rests in their inability to reconcile these two "distances" - to achieve spatial distance together, while not submitting to social distance from each other, those they encounter, etc." (Orgeron 2008: 120) Not only in their personae, but also in their appearances, they are anything but alike - instead they combine, between the two of them, nostalgic and future-oriented hope:

Buckskin and beard here, alluding to frontiersmen - and shiny Stars-and-Stripes look there, Wyatt's nickname Captain America implying some sort of superhero who might set America back on the track. In moments of rest and possible interaction, the repeated campfire scenes "expose the tension between Billy and Wyatt, who get on each other's nerves when they stop." (Laderman 2002: 75)

> As it rewrites the landscape according to the youth and Civil Rights movements of the time, it seems only to document and embrace a transitional nationalism that attacks the presuppositions of a formerly stable Americanism. The journey of the hippie protagonists of *Easy Rider* reveals a geographical regionalism politicized according to the radical movements of the time. (Cohan & Hark 1997: 182)

It is in the South, the momentary destination of their journey, that the two heroes are confronted with ignorance, discrimination, and hatred. The landscape becomes industrial, grey, and the people more hostile. The mood of the *dérive* changes when the South is reached, there is urban confinement and conservative hierarchies. There is the need for subversion again.

As hinted at by Cohan and Hart, they could have anticipated the adverse environment by merely listening to the lyrics of the 1969 US Billboard No. 1 hit single "Okie from Muskogee" by country musician Merle Haggard: "We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee / We don't take no trips on LSD/ We don't burn no draft cards down on Main Street / We like livin' right, and bein' free". Feeling everything *but* free in the urban situation of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Wyatt and Billy soon feel compelled to take drugs in spite of this advice. With their two girls in arms, they experience the event on foot, without the refuge of the road, in a sensitized, borderline paranoid state of consciousness, being exposed to extreme density and the crowded Carnival parades, with their myriads of bizarre figures and costumes. Some disturbing urban vibes are condensed into an overwhelming nutshell of a filmic montage, encounters with passers-by, roaming about through industrial architecture, seeing a dead dog in the gutter - when they somehow retreat and drift off to the cemetery, its above-ground Louisiana-style vaults obscure the view even more, and hinder free movement in a confining microcosmic city of death itself. As always, "they become vulnerable to society's shackles whenever they stop moving." (Laderman 1996: 47) In an effort to free their minds from these impressions, they drop acid and their wild bad trip becomes a mental *dérive* through the claustrophobic realm of the cemetery. Quick cuts of swirling images and religious voice-overs try to capture what is, in the end, their central urban experience - the hope for imagined freedom, instead violent, heavy restriction.

The two hippies deliberately set out and leave their paradisiacal west-coast environments, challenging reactionary society with their otherness - their looks and deeds are exactly what a conformist surrounding fears - and they are punished for it, first with disillusionment, and, in the end, with their death. The South "bears all of civilization's maladies, including small-town racial prejudice, xenophobia, and the negative effects of modernization, urbanization and industrial growth." (Cohan & Hark 1997: 192) Because they threaten social values, the pair of 'troublemakers' is killed by a group of rednecks in a truck, in an act they might themselves consider to be an exercise of their freedom. "Bought and sold in the marketplace, conformist Americans will kill to prove they are free, even if they kill what they fear." (Laderman 2002: 75)

Two-Lane Blacktop (1971)

After "*Easy Rider*, in some ways, initiated the popular growth of the concept, signaling its studio viability" (Orgeron 2008: 101), others were to follow to the road and, in times of countercultural downfall, the rebel journey's chance of success and assertion of individual morality were presented less and less optimistically, in films like *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), *Vanishing Point* (1971) *and Badlands* (1973). "The early-70s road often leads nowhere in particular, sometimes in circles, invoking a forlorn mood of wandering" (Laderman 2002: 83), an existential movement and, in the case of Monte Hellman's nihilistic *Two-Lane Blacktop*, movement alone is existence. As Huck Finn muses over almost a century earlier, "It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn’t ever feel like talking loud." (Twain 1885) His romantic suggestion is that in moments of drifting through the beauty of nature, the need for human interaction fades into the background. One just *keeps going*, silently, being absorbed into the flow, moving - while, at the same time, being still. This type of movement becomes a permanent state in *Two-Lane Blacktop*.

The film shows the absolute *dérive*, and also its negation, because there is no more purpose. It reaches a peak point in the representation of a 'rapid passage' taking on a life of its own, in fact, becoming the real protagonist. The film stands as the final and multi-leveled renunciation of the American Dream and present society, with its four main characters being aimless social dropouts of different variety. There is little to no sentiment, only a blank movement ahead, a constant escape from stability and the system, as fast as possible. The surroundings are exchangeable and the state of the nation is neither addressed nor analyzed, except through its absence in uninterrupted spatial transition. This fatalistically disengaged journey signifies not only the End of the Road, but also the end of the American *dérive*:

> The dérive is certainly a technique, almost a therapeutic one. But just as analysis unaccompanied with anything else is almost always *contraindicated,* so continual dériving is dangerous to the extent that the individual, having gone too far (...), is threatened with explosion, dissolution, dissociation, disintegration. And thence the relapse into what is termed 'ordinary life,' that is to say, in reality, into 'petrified life.' (Knabb 2006)

The drive is never urban, but neither does it celebrate the open road. The characters just need it and "grimly reject Turner’s conclusion that the frontier is closed, thereby maintaining the illusion that endless freedom is available if only they do not settle down and face the grim reality of everyday American society." (Ireland 2003: 480) By leaving out any real involvement with that society, *Two-Lane Blacktop* manages to become a swansong to the mobility it initially seems to advocate, in that movement thus becomes compulsive to its four protagonists, that it equals stability again - worse, it becomes a state of involuntary torpor. Ireland describes the pure existentialism behind the driven protagonists:

> The characters (who are named only 'the driver,' 'the mechanic,' 'GTO,' and 'the girl') exist just to be. They lack emotion, a goal, or a philosophy for life. They make up their own rules and accept that the choices they make will lead to a lonely, fragmented, and isolated existence. (Ireland 2003: 480 f.)

'The Driver' (James Taylor) sits at the steering wheel, riding shotgun is 'the Mechanic' (Dennis Wilson)."These character names signify non-characters, pared down to a function deriving from the car" (Laderman 2002: 94) - fittingly, the final credits also feature the cars as appearing in the movie, same as the actors. The human bond is not based not on friendship, but dependency and a single shared interest - the one cannot do with the other. They both have a tremendous understanding of their domains and earn enough money in car races to survive. Instead of narration and character development, the two protagonists keep on moving through America, challenging other drivers to race against them - additional mobility, no matter where - in order to win money and keep going. Their cross-continental trips are shown only as a physical and not a mental transition, their "driving as an enigmatic ritual." (Laderman 2002: 93)

> The automobile and its highways froze the values of the frontier by making movement a permanent state of mind, turning migration into circulation. The wave of migration, having carried to the West Coast, rebounded with the closing of the frontier, the completion of the expansion, into an echoing succession of movements. (Patton 1986: 13)

The space traversed rushes by unnoticed and the two are "just passing through" (Hellman 1971), as the Mechanic says repeatedly. Space is only there to cut through, to provide the ground for races. Their detachment makes them unsure of spatial-temporal realities, wondering "It must be Saturday." (Hellman 1971) More than in previous examples, the Mechanic and the Driver affirm Orgeron's observation that "the road movies protagonists are curiously inarticulate individuals whose motion seems, in many ways, to stand in place of communication." (Orgeron 2008: 106) Abandoning Debord's demanded exchange, they seldom speak to each other and if they do, it is about cars, "driving being the all-consuming mental and emotional activity." (Laderman 2002: 96) The characters' fusion with their car is complete, their exercise being the constant maintenance and improvement of the Chevy's performance, stating that "You can never go fast enough" (Hellman 1971); the dependence on the capability of their vehicle is a professional, but also existential fear - if it were to break down, they would be deprived of their *raison d'être* - i.e. upholding their *dérive*. Unlike *Easy Rider*, the ties to romantic cowboy imagery are completely abandoned - they do not cruise through beautiful wilderness on choppers reminiscent of horses; their vehicle speeds through the land with unnatural stamina. Of course, it needs fuel (an extraordinary amount, as mentioned once) and the Mechanic's expertise. Without interest in status symbols beyond that, the two live in a parallel consumer society of their own: "With the car, one could consume space itself." (Engelhardt 1995: 145)

At one point, they pick up the young hitchhiking 'Girl' (Laurie Bird), or rather, she chooses them by simply climbing into the parked car with her laundry bag while they rest at a gas station. She is the only main character to actually represent hippie counterculture in an aimless drift of her own. The two males agree to take her along without really saying anything and, although displaced in the silent pointed microcosm of their car, the Girl explains that the experience in the truck before was still worse. The hippie driver "wouldn't even be awake yet when he would want to smoke up a joint. We were supposed to go to the Grand Canyon but he kept getting stoned and pulling off the side of the road." (Hellman) While staying attached to the hippie aesthetics in her behavior, attire and talk, she distances herself from this kind of lack of drive and buy-in hippie counterculture, as Raoul Duke does in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. In free-roaming carelessness, being as unimpressed with the car's potency as with any materialist fetish, "surprisingly, she becomes the most road movie-esque character in the film, (...) she rides as passenger in a more pure wanderlust." (Laderman 2002: 103) Like Sal Paradise, she is a hitchhiker who remains in contact with society, while being detached from it at the same time;

like him, she takes the backseat to the men in front, until "all this (male) driving seems for her an unsatisfactory series of distractions from a more real journey, a more authentic mobility." (Laderman 2002: 103)

Giving the impetus to a lot of this male driving is arguably the most elaborated and interesting character in *Two-Lane Blacktop*, a slightly older, well-dressed man (Warren Oates) in a GTO, whom they meet at a gas station, and who challenges the two others into a race from New Mexico to Washington, D.C. While agreeing to this race, the three men talk "only of what each car can 'do,' a kind of distilled machismo exchange where, in a way, the cars speak through them. The race they establish seems a half-baked attempt to fill the void of their aimless mobility with an 'aim'." (Laderman 2002: 97) The prize of winning the loser's car gives everyone reason to keep on going for a long time, another empty *dérive* with a forced aim, symbolic of even more mobility.

> It's a scene that defines the film and lays the groundwork for the strange mixture of tenderness and disconnection that develops between these four people. More correctly it is tenderness via disconnection, because the remoteness they all share provides a barrier that makes it safe for them to relate to each other. Everybody except Laurie Bird's petulant hitcher is magnetised to one another, and without the bond of conflict they remain undefined. (Jones 2004: 181)

GTO rides his fully-equipped fast car through the country and appears to have nothing left, he lacks even the races that the others have. He is last of the aimless wanderers, a *dériveur* lost in limbo. Once mentioning scars from the past while talking to himself, he must have obtained enough money in a former life to be able to afford everything that facilitates his truly and finally aimless drift. His character seems to be a cipher who has nothing left but the road. When he is about to explain something about the reasons for being a drifter, he is cut off by the driver who replies "I don't want to hear about it; it's your problem, not mine." (Hellman 1971) Back stories would eliminate their pure relationship as an antagonistic group pointed down the same highway.

GTO's constant *dérive* as an escape from whichever past experience he endured has emptied his persona to such an extent that it has became a moving, elusive matter itself, maybe eluding him more than anyone else. He changes his biography with every person he encounters, but his essence is nothingness, there is nothing left of him other than a body in motion. He aches for a connection with the surrounding world, but has himself nothing to offer but shape-shifting superficiality, being "lost in his mind as he is lost on the highway." (Laderman 2002: 105) He habitually stops for hitchhikers and, when they tell him their destination, his reaction is always a smiling "Well, then you're in luck!" (Hellman) He will drive anywhere - nothing is a detour because everything is already. Trying to impress his passengers with invented stories, he also has any sort of music on board. GTO once says to a hitchhiker, in referring to his car, GTO: "Performance and image. That's what it's all about." (Hellman 1971) If Emerson states that "there is no truth but in transit" (qtd. in Patton 1986: 12), then *Two-Lane Blacktop* debunks even this attempt at summarizing American restlessness. For the Driver and the Mechanic, there is no truth achieved in constant mobility, just a blank state of avoidance of lies. GTO, however, is a tragic impostor lost in desperately trying to fit in, already in his "physical maladaption – he can’t even lean against a building comfortably." (Jones 2004: 183) He is unable to extract anything from his personal *dérive*, because the stakes - what he brings with him - are not his, but made up of forlornness; Jones correlates his example with American society:

> It is really a film about self-delusion. Warren Oates’s GTO driver is every born-again Christian, every pontificating drunk or junkie, every young person who marries or has a baby or moves to another town because they think it will change their life, every sharp young tycoon in training who plans to make a killing in real estate and then rest on easy street. (Jones 2004: 184 f.)

The hitchhiking Girl is open to briefly give her attention to any of the three male characters, more and more her "affinity becomes a contentious issue, as she switches from car to car." (Laderman 2002: 94); the Driver talks to her about the Florida beaches they could visit together, actually showing some weakness, a certain attachment and the readiness to linger (abandon the car) somewhere, all for her. He is, of course, surpassed by GTO, who, in a monologue while she falls asleep, imagines an impossible stable life with the girl, the home they would build - revealing his deepest wishes. The Driver she will refuse, with GTO, she does not even listen:

> We’re gonna go to Florida, and we’re gonna lie around that beach and we’re just gonna get healthy. Let all the scars heal. Maybe we’ll run over to Arizona. The nights are warm... and the roads are straight. And we’ll build a house. Yeah, we’ll build a house. ‘Cause if I’m not grounded pretty soon... I’m gonna go into orbit. (Hellman)

Having had enough of all of them, the Girl spots a biker about to hit the road, and effortlessly switches to his company, or just the next piece of the road, offering yet a new bite of flitting life. Her laundry bag has no place on the bike so she leaves it lying on the parking lot, as if abandoning with ease the very last items that have attached some gravity to her roaming existence.

"In its extreme minimalist narrative, *Two-Lane Blacktop* reconfigures road movie rebellion as existential modernist fragmentation - a 'rebellion' not so much against conservative society as against coherence itself." (Laderman 2002: 96) All four characters, after their random encounter, and after revealing some hidden hopes and desires, are dispersed in different directions again, looking straight ahead again, without further disillusionment. They had no illusions anyway. In contrast to the *dérive* in Easy Rider, no-one was looking for America here. The journey *sans* destination has no beginning and no end, and the film merely demonstrates "an exploration of the meaning(lessness) of road travel." (Laderman 2002: 94) In distancing the work from spiritual journeys or those in which faith is lost or sought to be found again, Jones claims that, for Hellman and *Two-Lane Blacktop*, "the question of God doesn’t even come up" (Jones 2004: 182)

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1971)

Nevada, 1971. Journalist Raoul Duke speeds through the desert in a luxurious red convertible, on a fast ride from Los Angeles to the sinful modern Babel, the city of Las Vegas, where he and a travel companion, his 'lawyer' Dr. Gonzo, expect to find what has become of the American Dream. As in *Easy Rider*, the starting point of this journey is California, which again "represents the end of the road for the American Dream. The Dream is either shown to have been a myth, or if it once did exist in concrete achievable terms, it is now ruined." (Ireland 2003: 476) To be first-hand witnesses to this downfall or the possible resurrection and recrucifixion that the Dream might suffer elsewhere, the two protagonists embark on their trip to the desert; what ensues is a crazed, drug-infused *dérive* around the glistening light of the Las Vegas Strip, in and out of casino-hotels, in anticipation and fear of being able to somewhere find and penetrate the midst of it, and burn oneself in the epicenter of the 'Entertainment Capital of the World'.

> It was a classic affirmation of everything right and true and decent in the national character. It was a gross, physical salute to the fantastic *possibilities* of life in this country – but only for those with true grit. And we were choke full of that. (Thompson 1971: 18, emphasis in original)

Despite this cynical glorification, it is in horror and wicked humor, by mixing fact and fiction, that Hunter S. Thompson tells of his own and his friend Oscar Zeta Acosta's 1971 drifts through a city where shallowness and bigotry lurk behind a papier mâché set of shining facades. He describes it as a daring pioneering adventure in the American tradition, as a desperate effort to flee from present-day reactionary USA, a step into the lion's den, to hide "from the brutish realities of this foul year of Our Lord, 1971." (Thompson 1971: 23)

During the year preceding Thompson's initial publication of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as the cover story of Rolling Stone Magazine #9, written under the pseudonym of Raoul Duke, it seemed the idealism of the 1960s had finally been crushed, old legends of rock had rapidly faded (the Beatles break-up, Elvis Presley meeting Nixon, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison all dying within a year), and the government had resorted to violence on all levels (the killing of unarmed students in the Kent State shootings; the leaked Pentagon Papers showing the real dimensions of the Vietnam War). In a climate that turned oppressive and decadent at the same time, Thompson took the opportunity presented by a journalistic assignment to cover the Mint '400' off-road race in Las Vegas, in order to confront this symbolic "Sin City, a place that is simultaneously a bastion of law and order and the American capital of sex shows, plentiful booze, quick marriage, easy divorce, and legal gambling." (MacFarlane 2007: 176).

In their aimless *dérive* through Vegas, Raoul Duke's and Dr. Gonzo's semi-psychotic excesses stand in relation to the excesses of the pleasure-seeking going on all around as a distorting fairground mirror to a freak show, in which Thompson’s reflection offers a contorted, screaming grimace of simultaneous abandon and revulsion: The two maintain their free state of constant subversion, while at the same time indulging in their very own unbridled hedonism. Their communication is often aimed at keeping the other barely on the track whenever he is about to drift off by himself. The madness of constant intoxication, what one could term an uninterrupted aimless mental *dérive*, an inner hermitage, is ironically - in their view - what keeps the pair sane in the grim face of all-powerful triviality and reactionary forces of law and order around them (especially when they find themselves attending the 'National District Attorneys Association's Conference on Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs'). Duke makes a point about "how the real and surreal are often indistinguishable, how our ideals of free expression have been greatly compromised, and how the garish extremes of modern culture have become a form of hallucination." (MacFarlane 2007: 182)

The two drug abusers insist on being distinguished through their refusal of hypocrisy, in that they do not deny their own rottenness. "In a closed society where everybody’s guilty, the only crime is getting caught. In a world of thieves, the only final sin is stupidity. (Thompson 1971: 72). While seeing himself as an advocate of freedom, Duke would accept his guilt, if he were to be put up against the wall - thus he is forever on the run, in permanent escape mode, and in a consequent state of agitated paranoia, knowing that regional laws have nothing against binge-drinking, but may impose sentences to 20 years for possession of marijuana. This society is more than ready to decadently wallow in everything conformist, permitted within the framework of existing legislation, and forcefully crushes everything that points in another direction. Traversing this space in disbelief, but also cynical anticipation, while staying completely twisted on drugs for the whole duration of the investigation, "the author's eye is both absurdist and acerbic as he constantly mines the American landscape for veins of political and social hypocrisy." (MacFarlane 2007: 177) His unmasking of unquestioning, conformist ignorance does not stop with the mainstream square world, but includes the counterculture as well, in a retrospective view on the 60s and "all those pathetically eager acid freaks who thought they could buy Peace and Understanding for three bucks a hit." (Thompson 1971: 178) Thompson was far from hiding his hedonistic side and does not seem to have been as anti-materialist and anti-capitalist as some of his peers; he was "a fixture of the counterculture as a writer and self-described drug dilettante, but arguably never a hippie." (MacFarlane 2007: 176)

As Chtcheglov indicates, the economic structuring of space and time is vital for the survival of capitalism, thus an advanced capitalist system cannot embrace people's needs for elements of magic, fairy tales and surrealism in its architectural representation, but must isolate them in pockets of space and time reserved for leisure activity, such as museums or theme parks.

The *dérive* in Fear and Loathing is as much a factual voyage, as it is a drug-infused 'trip' and broadening or alteration of the consciousness. Since the stimuli that, according to Chtcheglov's original theses, should be provided by the built environment, are missing or completely misfire, Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo embark on an aimless journey into the city and through the doors of perception. Akin to the psychogeographers, who subvert their urban environment in a *détournement* against itself, the two protagonists use the means provided by a professional assignment in order to undermine the components of the system and its organization of space and time: An earnest journalistic coverage, a deadline, expectations of economically determined travel, behavior, and a quality product - a business trip, as short and professional as possible, the symbolic objective being a report about a microcosmic voyage in itself, a race, going from A to B in a directed manner, luring participants with a prize, an accumulation of capital. Instead, the two race wildly through town devoid of aim or destination, completely wrecking their expensive rental car.

> Duke could excuse his moral excesses with the knowledge that in a social system that supported war in Vietnam, racial prejudice, a massive gap between rich and poor, and a crooked president, Duke’s moral indiscretions were minor in comparison. (Ireland 2003: 476)

This curious revolt happens in the monstrously overblown curiosity that is Las Vegas - and therefore in one of the pockets of space that function-oriented urban planning has set up in order to address people's needs for the illusory promise of plenitude, of easy riches and easier sex, a fairytale cornucopia, reserved for the type and amount of individual leisure time that capitalism allows - each according to the limit of his or her credit line. This produces scenes like the speculation on having finally found the center of the American Dream during a mescaline high in the Circus-Circus, a place that is more heart of darkness than center of pleasure:

> 'I hate to say this,' said my attorney (...) 'but this place is getting to me. I think I'm getting the Fear.' 'Nonsense' I said. 'We came out here to find the American Dream, and now that we're right in the vortex you want to quit' (...) 'You must *realize*' I said, 'that we've found the main nerve' 'I know,' he said. 'That’s what gives me the Fear'. (Thompson 1971: 47 f.)

If the vortex of the modern American Dream is but a shallow delusion, then its real and honest potential has died. With the changed and ever-changing perspectives their *dériving* provides, Duke and Dr. Gonzo do not look as they are supposed to look. Naturally, the town and the system behind it are revealed for what they are, and the dark corners, which the machinery of entertainment needs to uphold in order to keep going, are illuminated under the evil eye of Thompson's exuberant and ghastly vision. It is the capitalist deformation of the dream-like, innocent realm of magic, illusion and enchantment, it is the tragedy of the human condition, that a space like this attests to, and further cultivates, that is feared and loathed. "Unlike Twain's Huckleberry Finn, which criticized society while accepting without question the inherent worth of the American system, Thompson's Fear and Loathing questions the very nature of the system itself." (Ireland 2003: 478) Duke agrees with Sal Paradise in his nostalgia for an American Dream of individual freedom, but, unlike *On the Road*'s protagonist, his is not a vague imagination of an American past, but the recollection of a time five years prior to the story. He experienced a fleeting version of the Dream at this time, only to lose it almost at once. And like the first wave of a high, it slipped away too soon - now it is the object of a doomed pursuit, forever out of reach.

> There was madness in any direction, at any hour. (...) You could strike sparks anywhere. There was a fantastic universal sense that whatever we were doing was *right*, that we were winning.... And that, I think, was the handle - that sense of inevitable victory over the forces of Old and Evil. Not in any mean or military sense; we didn't need that. Our energy would simply *prevail*. There was no point in fighting - on our side or theirs. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave.... So now, less than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost *see* the high-water mark - that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back. (Thompson 1971: 67 f., emphasis in original)

With Thompson, the involvement of the *dérive* becomes an imperative for journalism. The journey of his alter ego Raoul Duke is a deeply personal account. He himself, and his subjective observations and behavior become part of the scene he undertakes to cover in this 'Gonzo' style of journalism - and, along the way, he takes the liberty of constantly digressing, both physically and mentally. He surely avoids the 'prescribed folkways', as Self puts it.

One should not get too carried away in assuming the tendencies apparent in the late American *dérive* are limited to more recent narrative examples such as Thompson's novel. The seeds of the Gonzo-style *dérive* in Anglo-American literature are, for example, there 150 years before *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, in British journalist and author William Hazlitt's essay *The Fight*. Also assigned to cover a sports event, in his case a boxing match outside of London, Hazlitt continually digresses throughout the piece and, for an extended part of the coverage, concentrates solely on the *getting to* the venue of the fight, i.e. not on the destination itself. McCutcheon comments that "digression itself, an improper formlessness, is the principle of the work's form." (McCutcheon 2009) Hazlitt rides different high-speed carriages on the road leading out of the urban, stating that these objects of fascination "cut through the wind like an arrow" or appear "as if they would devour the ground before them." (Hazlitt 1822) In what the established order might consider an excess, he readily indulges himself in the thrills of this velocity, almost for the sake of it: "The essay's seemingly disproportionate account of the trips to and from the fight celebrate precisely the modern networks of communication that produce middle-class anxiety about the promiscuous indiscretions of 'mass circulation'." (McCutcheon 2009)

Hazlitt's style of writing, and presumably of living, seems to anticipate a number of elements that were highlighted in this investigation. The joy of speeding in wheeled transport is reflected in all of the above-mentioned road narratives. He makes a virtue out of the free-roaming and self-referential style of his account in "rhetorical digressions, several of which are digressions about his tendency to digress" (McCutcheon 2009). As contemporaries, Kerouac and Thompson would have appreciated Hazlitt's incorporation of what could be coined the 'hipster' talk of the time. "Hazlitt loves and celebrates passionate, popular English speech, which he sees as the fountain of liberty in the culture. It shapes radical journalism and glories in giving as good as it gets." (McCutcheon 2009) A Thompsonesque hedonistic bent surfaces when he speaks of staying at an inn on the way, excitedly describing all his personal encounters during a sleepless night of intoxication. He is surrounded by drunk peasants and gentlemen alike, and one individual in particular, whose qualities as an instigator bring back memories of Dean Moriarty in that he is so inflamed with passionate monologues, provocations, complaints and wisdom, that he keeps Hazlitt up all night. One can easily picture Sal Paradise's posse, the 'mad ones' walking down the street, in the following passage from Hazlitt:

> Toms and I, though we seldom meet, were an *alter idem* on this memorable occasion, and had not an idea that we did not candidly impart; and 'so carelessly did we fleet the time,' that I wish no better, when there is another fight, than to have him for a companion on my journey down, and to return with my friend Jack Pigott, talking of what was to happen or of what did happen, with a noble subject always at hand, and liberty to digress to others whenever they offered. Indeed, on my repeating the lines from Spenser in an involuntary fit of enthusiasm, *What more felicity can fall to creature, Than to enjoy delight with liberty?* (Hazlitt 1822, emphasis in original)

8. Conclusion: The Hope in Hoboism

To the centre of the city where all roads meet, waiting for you,
To the depths of the ocean where all hopes sank, searching for you,
I was moving through the silence without motion, waiting for you,
(*Shadowplay* - Joy Division)

This investigation sought to analyze the example of the US road narrative on the basis of geography, the aim of the traveler, and the outcome of the journey. Many such stories throughout the cultural history of the North American continent are informed by the nation's - and, by extension, the world's - imaginative fascination with the road of discovery leading west into the continent, towards the horizon and the frontier, behind which there is only wilderness and freedom awaiting the seeking wanderer. The idea of finding an untouched, promised land of opportunity was the attraction of emigrating to the New World, and the seeming endlessness of the vast country kept the influx coming. At times when urban centers on the east coast were already thriving and bursting with people, the west remained a scarcely populated hinterland, which promised self-fulfillment, freedom, refuge and escape. Most of all, it fueled the imagination of those who had not yet arrived. Stories about these times often deal with adventure and bravery, be they about pioneers, outlaws, or farmers and workers who cultivate the land and spread civilization. The Western genre is a peculiar, international phenomenon, and its content and aesthetics have been and still are reinterpreted countless times. The freedom offered by the open space makes all the difference. What should have become clear is that the historical possibility of being able to step beyond the border of civilization has at a certain time ceased to exist in the spatial reality of America, but not in the collective imagination of its population. The hopes and dreams of exploration, opportunity, and also that of consequent personal success - the American Dream - have remained in the heads of writers, filmmakers, and their audiences.

With the automobile revolution of the 20th century came a profound change in transportation and personal mobility. It became possible and increasingly affordable to 'go see America' for oneself in a convenient way. The nation is particularly enamored with the car because of its own sheer dimensions. Infrastructure provision was a national mission to interconnect the country's regions and enable transportation. The result was that the still mythical American space could actually be traversed quickly through personal automobility. Ironically, the moment of definite death of the frontier was the one that facilitated the fast-paced chase of the collective dream of finding it. In a car. On the road.

A critical analysis of representations of American space, mobility and infrastructure cannot succeed without granting the car the significance it has had for the integration of America in a period of advanced capitalism. The 1950s and 60s brought forth a generation in revolt against the ruling powers, and against an established order this counterculture saw dominated by racial discrimination, materialism, and violence. The literary and filmic expressions emerging from the minds of this anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist generation are interesting in their treatment of American space and mobility insofar as they often reveal an ambiguous relationship with built environments: Although constructed and maintained by the system to be undermined, the road, especially driving along the one leading out from the city, can become a magical attraction, in that it offers escape from the confinements of consumer society - still, the act of taking advantage of the infrastructure is per se an act of consumption. It is then in *the way* roads are travelled, that a subversion of the logic of the highway can be achieved, not using it in a function-oriented, economical, directed fashion, but in a non-linear, spontaneous and aimless drift.

In examining the critique of European urban density, and borrowing its theoretical framework, this paper introduced the concept of psychogeography and its simple urbanist practice, the *dérive*, which was described in 1958 by French Marxist philosopher Guy Debord. This exercise of the body and the mind was conceived and practiced by the situationists in Paris and is usually restricted to individual, aimless, impulsive walks through urban surroundings, which are intended to foster the personal consciousness and awareness for the emotional impact of the surroundings on the *dériveur*. The hope was to realize the power relationship between the individual and the superimposed built structures and maps that direct and confine movement. With the deliberate decision to subvert the planned infrastructure in drifting walks without destination, the *dériveur* wished to avoid the otherwise habitual subordination to prescribed routes, and, by that, take a first step towards the ideal city of the future. Debord's focus of attention was the urban realm, and he restricts his theory to walking, a consequence of his aversion to the omnipresence of the car, deforming the city, the status symbol of capitalist alienation. Contemporary psychogeographers tend to stick to the puristic insistence on walking.

In making explicit what the theory already implicitly contains, the chain of thought of this investigation was finally the analogy of this urban drifting to America's emblematic road. In order to address the vastness of American space, its history, its present geographical and infrastructural reality, the thought process of the *dérive* can be adapted and extended to the highway. By means of elaborate detailed analysis of *On the Road*, and a number of references to following road narratives, this work sought to highlight the fact that the drifting protagonists of such fiction deploy their mobility in a way similar to the *dérive*: The deviation from directed paths through aimless spontaneity, an escape from the established order and passing recovery of personal freedom. The transitional period in the US history, from which these narratives originate, give the characters' motivation a more multi-layered and ambiguous shape - some aspects of American society are to be subverted, but, at the same time, others are to be affirmed. The pronounced or silent hopes and dreams hidden behind all of these drifts on the road are revealing in that they are often not subversive of anything, but deeply rooted in American collective tradition, and still shaped by its mythology: The restlessness of finding what was promised about America being the promised land. Since there is no frontier awaiting them at the End of the Road anymore, the movement needs to be continued in other directions.

Although momentary liberation does happen, the inherent hopes and disappointments of the American consciousness can only be addressed, but not healed by the *dérive*. Those protagonists who are not willing to accept this and keep on seeking, can end up in limbo. The state of being adrift cannot be maintained infinitely; the realm of the drifter's dreams - being nourished by a mythology of the Old West, of the American frontier - lies always at an infinite distance. The *dérive* in these road narratives thus becomes as tragically unworldly and utopian as the plans for an ideal city formulated by the situationists in Paris.

Who is then on a constant *dérive* and unscathed by it, successfully escaping spatial hegemonies? "Sal's first cross-continental trip brings him into contact with the lifestyle of hoboism, which, unlike Dean's lifestyle, is never repudiated in *On the Road*." (Adamo 2012: 39) Staying in California, Sal once watches a group of hobos stepping out of a freight train, attesting their "grand style" and shouting "Hooee! It *is* the promised land." (Kerouac 1957: 91, emphasis in original) Kerouac had a deep affection for the lifestyle of the homeless who where "literally, of no-place (*u-topos*), (...) in constant movement." (Adamo 2012: 39, emphasis in original) They are something of a surviving hope, their *dérive* is constant but not harmful, their revolt is not narcissistic, they do not fall for materialist seduction. In the short story *The Vanishing American Hobo*, Kerouac describes the grace of this endangered species: "There's nothing more noble than to put up with a few inconveniences like snakes and dust for the sake of absolute freedom." (Kerouac 1960: 173) For those who are interested in this lifestyle of absolute freedom, but who would prefer to have a trial phase before going all the way, Kerouac has a suggestion: "In Paris you can be a bum - in Paris bums are treated with great respect and are rarely refused a few francs." (Kerouac 1960: 178). Although, for that particular inquiry, one might as well consult Debord. Also, hitchhiking seems a fitting start to self-liberation and most of the practitioners in the above-mentioned examples come off well. It is a personal *dérive* of complete surrender to the dynamics of the road, as these verses express, found by the author:

The hardest part, uncertainty, but in a way the heart of it
To standing road-side at the mercy of passing glances
Which have but a flashing moment to judge correctly, they will say
To see if I could slaughter them or if I seem the weirdo kind
They wouldn't say, they wouldn't stop
Were I to act accordingly, excluding signs of desolation
Fatigue, puff from cigarettes, or glance from under hanging hair
For them an unexpected mannequin, strolling down ever instant catwalks
A wrong impression, and the cause is lost, another light is passing me
Depriving shelter, opportunity, to make it to a better place
Facing them as bad as
Looking straight the other away
I'll have a thousand speed dates today and who is shouting 'Next!' but me?
Until the road is my subject again, I'll be the one giving everything
And spending nothing but
This rainy day.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Title page

Prieur, Sylvain-Emmanuel. *Road*. Photography, 2011. Web. 11 Aug. 2015.
http://onwhitewalls.blogspot.de/2011/04/sylvain-emmanuel-prieur.html

p. 9

de Chirico, Giorgio. *L'Énigme d'un Jour*. Painting, 1914. Web. 25 Aug. 2015.
http://dbprng00ikc2j.cloudfront.net/work/image/98662/slide/1.jpg

p. 16

Dombey, Henry, Alexis Pappas. *Official Map of New Orleans*. Photography, 2012. Web. 31 Aug. 2015.
http://www.drawsalot.com/

p. 24

Debord, Guy. *The Naked City*. Illustration, 1957. Web. 6 Sep. 2015.
http://www.ryanraffa.com/parsons/blog/urban-drifts/

p. 36

The RIBA President's Medals Student Awards. *Anti City*. Illustration, 2014. Web. 2 Sep. 2015.
http://www.presidentsmedals.com/showcase/2005/l/1745_1.jpg

p. 46

Frank, Robert. *The Americans*. Photography, 1958. Web. 3 Sep. 2015.
http://fadedandblurred.com/spotlight/robert-frank/

p. 78

Kerr, Richard. *Last Days of Contrition*. Movie still, 1986. Web. 25 Sep. 2015.
http://mikehoolboom.com/?p=234

p. 99

Prieur, Sylvain-Emmanuel. *Sunfish 13*. Photography, 2009. Web. 16 Sep. 2015.
http://tryitillyoumakeit.com/sunfish13.html

LIST OF REFERENCES

Adamo, Christopher. "Beat U-Topos or Taking Utopia on the Road: The Case of Jack Kerouac". *The Philosophy of the Beats*. Ed. Sharin N. Elkholy. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2012. pp. 33-45. Print.

Bill, Roger. "Traveller or Tourist? Jack Kerouac and the Commodification of Culture." *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 34 (3), 2010. pp. 395-417. Print.

Cater, Caitlin. "In Search of America: Nature, Spirituality, and the Self in American Transcendentalism and Beat Generation Literature". *The Oswald Review*. Vol. 10 (1), 2013. Web. 25 Sep. 2015 http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1091&context=tor

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 1980. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984.Print.

Chtcheglov, Ivan. *Formulary for a New Urbanism*. 1953. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 31 Aug. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/Chtcheglov.htm

Cohan, Steven, Ina Rae Hark, eds. *The Road Movie Book*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Cresswell, Tim. "Mobility as Resistance: A Geographical Reading of Kerouac's 'On the Road'". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol. 18 (2), 1993. pp. 249-262. Web. 29 Mar. 2015. http://www.jstor.org/stable/622366

Cunnel, Howard. "Fast This Time: Jack Kerouac and the Writing of 'On the Road'". *On the Road: The Original Scroll*, by Jack Kerouac. Ed. Howard Cunnell. New York: Penguin, 2007. pp. 1-52. Print.

Davidson, Michael. *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Print.

Debord, Guy. *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography*. 1955. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/urbgeog.htm

---, Gil J. Wolman. *A User's Guide to Détournement*. 1956. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 10 Sep. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/detourn.htm

---. *Theory of the Dérive*. 1958. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm

---. *Situationist Theses on Traffic*. 1959. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 12 Sep. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/3.traffic.htm

Depétris, Jean-Pierre. *Ken Knabb, the Situationist International, and the American Counterculture*. Trans. Kevin Knabb. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2008. Web. 30 Aug. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/recent/depetris.htm

Engelhardt, Tom. *The End of Victory Culture*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Print.

Fine, Reuben. "Geography and the Superego: A Contribution to Psychogeography and the Psychology of Travel". *Maps from the Mind: Readings in Psychogeography*. Eds.Howard F. Stein, William G. Niederland. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1989. pp. 211-226. Print.

Gulick, John. "The 'Disappearance of Public Space': An Ecological Marxist and Lefebvrian Approach". *The Production of Public Space*. Eds. Andrew Light, Jonathan M. Smith. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. pp. 135-156. Print.

Hazlitt, William. *The Fight*. 1822. Blupete, 2013. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Essays/Hazlitt/Fight.htm

Hellman, Monte, dir. *Two-Lane Blacktop*. Universal Pictures, 1971. Film.

Higgins, Charlotte: "The Odyssey by Homer - The First Step". *The Guardian*, 30 Jul. 2015. Web. 15 Aug. 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2015/jul/30/journeys-in-literature-the-odyssey-by-homer-the-first-step

Homer. *The Odyssey*. The Internet Classics Archive, 2009.Web. 20 Aug. 2015. http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.html

Hopper, Dennis, dir. *Easy Rider*. Pando Company Inc., 1969. Film.

Ireland, Brian. "American Highways: Recurring Images and Themes of the Road Genre". *The Journal of American Culture*. Vol. 26 (4), Dec. 2003. pp. 474-484. Print.

Jones, Kent. "The Cylinders Were Whispering My Name: The Films of Monte Hellman". *The Pathos of Failure: American Films in the 1970s - Notes on the Unmotivated Hero*. Ed. Thomas Elsaesser. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press, 2004. pp. 165-194 Print.

Kerouac, Jack. "On Ether". *Collected Poems*. New York: Library of America, 2012. p. 417. Print.

---. *On the Road*. 1957. 50th Anniversary Ed. New York: Viking Penguin, 2007. Print.

---. "The Vanishing American Hobo". *Lonesome Traveler*. 1960. New York: Grove, 1988. pp. 172-76. Print.

Knabb, Ken. Translator's Notes. *Theory of the Dérive*. By Guy Debord. 1958. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 7 Sep. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm

Laderman, David. *Driving Visions: Exploring the Road Movie*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2002. Print.

---. "What a Trip: The Road Film and American Culture". *Journal of Film and Video*. Vol. 48 (1-2), Spring-Summer 1996. pp. 41-57. Print.

McCutcheon, Mark A. "On 'Vulgar Exhibition': Hazlitt, 'The Fight' and the Pornography of Popularity." *William Hazlitt*. Ed. James Mulvihill. Spec. issue of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 36 (1), 2009. Web. 8 Jul. 2015. http://auspace.athabascau.ca/bitstream/2149/3294/1/McCutcheon_OnVulgarExhibition%28Hazlitt%29_C19Prose%2809%29.pdf

MacFarlane, Scott. *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2007. Print.

Maher, Paul Jr. *Jack Kerouac's American Journey: The Real-Life Odyssey of* On the Road. New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2007. Print.

Mension, Jean-Michel. *The Tribe*. 1998. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. San Franciso: City Lights, 2001. Print.

Mills, Katie. *The Road Story and the Rebel: Moving through Film, Fiction and Television*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2006. Print.

Mouratidis, George. "'Into the Heart of Things': Neal Cassidy and the Search for the Authentic". *On the Road: The Original Scroll*, by Jack Kerouac. Ed. Howard Cunnell. New York: Penguin, 2007. pp. 69-81. Print.

Orgeron, Devin. *Road Movies: From Muybridge and Méliès to Lynch and Kiarostami*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Parker, Simon. "Power to the Psychogeographers". *The Guardian*, 22 Feb. 2002. Web. 16 Sep. 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/feb/22/urbandesign.architecture

Patton, Phil. *Open Road: A Celebration of the American Highway*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986. Print.

Rexroth, Kenneth. Review of *On the Road*, by Jack Kerouac. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 Sep. 1957. Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Web. 10 Sep. 2015. http://www.bopsecrets.org/rexroth/essays/kerouac.htm

Self, Will. *Psychogeography*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.

Stein, Howard F., William G. Niederland, eds. *Maps from the Mind: Readings in Psychogeography*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Print.

"The Hippies". *Firing Line*. PBS. WOR-TV, New York. 4 Sep. 1968. Television.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. 1971. London: Harper Perennial, 2005. Print.

Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. 1885. Projekt Gutenberg, 2006. Web. 3 Aug. 2015. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/76/76-h/76-h.htm

Ultra Music. *Make the Girl Dance 'Baby Baby Baby'*. Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, 8 Sep. 2009. Web. 26 Aug. 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHF3X8tQYPU

Whitman, Walt. *Song of the Open Road*. 1856. The Poetry Foundation, 2015. Web. 15 Aug. 2015. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/178711

"World Development Indicators: Traffic and Congestion". *The World Bank*, 2013. Web. 19 Sep 2015. http://web.archive.org/web/20140408034906/http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/3.13

It may not last forever
Nothing ever does
And there's nothing quite so fickle
As a travelling lover's love
(*Not Done Travelling* - Laura Marling)