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THE NOVEL AND THE PASSPORT

TOWARDS A LITERARY HISTORY OF MOVEMENT CONTROL

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This article explores the links between the novel and the passport system as one of the defining legal institutions of modernity. Building on the observation that the emergence of the modern novel overlaps chronologically with the rise of modern regimes of movement control, I argue that these regimes make up a neglected,¹ yet crucial historical framework for the transformation of the novel on the cusp of the nineteenth century. The connection between the two is perhaps most immediately visible in the proliferation of motivic references to passports in fictional literature of this period. However, the literary impact of movement control extends beyond the level of motifs. Thus, the new strategies for controlling mobility that spread across the European continent in the late eighteenth century bring about a profound reconfiguration of political space which was now no longer freely transversable, at least not for people without status and means, but criss-crossed by internal and international borders. This process is of signal importance in terms of the history of the novel – partly because it undoes the nexus of space, mobility, and narrative on which the eighteenth-century novel was typically based, and partly because it forces the genre to invent new plot types acknowledging that mobility is now subject to restrictions and intense control. Linking social change and generic

evolution, this essay takes a first step towards a literary history of movement control.

When considering the *longue durée* of the novel, it is apparent that mobility has served as a major source of narrative for most of this genre's history² – in fact, the “novelties” referred to by the English genre designation typically played out on the road, at a distance from the social coercion and predictability of settled life. From the Hellenistic novel through the courtly romance of the Middle Ages to the type of modern novel that originates with *Don Quixote*, novelistic narratives have relied to a significant extent on movements taking place within a space untouched by political control. Importantly in the present context, this paradigm of mobility remains dominant throughout the eighteenth century even as alternative types of novels begin to emerge. As J. Paul Hunter has noted, the novel of this period “nearly always involves extensive moment through space”, and even narratives of imprisonment or quarantine such as Richardson's *Pamela* or Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* confirm this rule since it is precisely “the unavailability of free movement [...] that gives them their sense of compressed energy and frustrated threat.”³

This narrative emphasis on free mobility originates in historical environments where the state apparatus is still relatively weak. Modernity, however, is precisely not an age of unlimited freedom of movement, but one of borders, passports and visas, identity documents, and migration policy – in short, of movement control. While passports did exist earlier, it was only in the mid-eighteenth century that governments had acquired the administrative resources necessary for effectively

controlling the movements of people within their territories.⁴ In a complex and discontinuous process that began at the height of Absolutism, continued during the French Revolution, and reached its (first) climax during the post-Napoleonic Restoration, modern passport systems of increasing technological sophistication were established across continental Europe. Subject to a range of sometimes conflicting aims and ideologies, these control regimes placed significant restrictions on what was seen as socially undesirable forms of mobility and meant that passports were required for domestic and international travel alike. The repercussions were profound. First, going back to the late Middle Ages, the widespread use of *internal* borders between different administrative regions as well as between the city and the surrounding countryside was crucial in reducing the nomadism of the poor and enforcing a uniform, settled way of life across the entire population. Secondly, the introduction of secure *external* or international borders, which is a later phenomenon, belonging essentially to the early nineteenth century, helped create the compartmentalized political geography characteristic of modernity, reoriented movement control towards a principle of national rather than social discrimination, and thereby facilitated the rise of the modern nation-state. Most importantly in the present context, the rise of modern movement control fundamentally altered the status of mobility itself from a matter of individual volition to something requiring prior governmental sanction in the form of a passport. In this historical setting, travel was no longer a right, but a privilege granted only upon application.⁵

My overall claim in this essay is that this juxtaposition of the traditional mobility of the novel and the movement control of the modern state is able to deliver

new insights in terms of literary history and criticism. However, the link between the two should not be studied as an exercise in *Motivgeschichte* content to enumerate the occurrences of passports in the modern novel, nor should it be seen as a relationship between text and context, especially not if contextual factors are used simply to pinpoint the historical “truth” of the literary work. Aiming rather to highlight its inherent dynamism, I conceptualize this relationship as an *interface* between specific historical regimes of movement control and specific historical modalities of the novel. Systematically, this interface offers an opportunity to study how novels engage with the control regimes of their historical surroundings, how this engagement shapes their narrative dynamics, and how this in turn enables them to produce narrative interpretations of movement control as a favored instrument of state power. Historically, it allows us to rethink a transformative shift in the evolution of the novel involving the decline of one narrative paradigm – that of open roads and free mobility – and the rise, not only of more settled or domestic narratives, but also of a type of novel that directly addresses the modern proliferation of passport requirements.

In the following I undertake a comparative analysis of the novel/movement control interface as it manifests itself in British, French, and German literature in the period from the mid-1700s, when passports were first deployed as part of a modernized, systematic regime of movement control, to the mid-1800s, when this regime was gradually dismantled. Through discussions of individual novels I establish a historical typology comprising three successive modalities linked respectively

to the passport regimes of Absolutism, the French Revolution, and the Post-Napoleonic Restoration.

Narrative, movement control, utopia

One of the few critics to have reflected explicitly on the nexus of movement control and the novel is the Romantic literary historian Friedrich Schlegel. In his 1812 lecture series *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, in a discussion of Spanish literature of the *siglo del oro*, Schlegel makes the remarkable prediction that the increasing sophistication of passport measures will eventually lead to the demise of the novel as a genre. As he argues, the concept of the novel is virtually synonymous with lawlessness and crime, and the novel would therefore lose its connection with reality if these behaviors were eradicated through the introduction of modern police measures. Writing at spatial and temporal coordinates where movement control was particularly intense – Metternich’s Austria at the height of its struggle with Napoleon – Schlegel associates this utopian strengthening of civil order with the passport, stating that once border control has been perfected and passports equipped with “a thorough biography and a faithful miniature portrait”, the novel will die out “since nothing at all could happen in real life that [...] could provide plausible materials for it.”⁶ This passage is not without an ironical undertone. Nevertheless, it identifies for the first time a contradiction within the contemporary novel that was becoming increasingly acute, namely that between the mobility of traditional novelistic narratives and the anti-nomadism of the emerging passport system. While this fault line never caused the upset to the genre that Schlegel antic-

ipated, it did contribute to the structural transformation of the novel that was already underway at this time.

Expanding on Schlegel's reflections, I want to highlight, as a first step in reconstructing the literary history of movement control, how the perceived dangers of free mobility were addressed in the eighteenth-century novel, and specifically how a range of authors sought to overcome it by developing literary equivalents to the passport regimes that were being rolled out at the same time – that is, narrative strategies designed to contain, control, and ultimately bring to an end the socially and morally questionable mobility of individuals. If the solutions attempted at the beginning of the period seem both superficial and somewhat unsuccessful, it is not by coincidence. For one, this was still a time of porous borders and ineffectual bureaucracies, and historical reality offered few models for a “demobilization” of novelistic space. More importantly, the novel and the passport system were in fact, as Schlegel suggests, contradictory entities that could not be reconciled without major formal innovation. Thus, novels of the road often revolve around encounters with the socially exotic in the form of thieves, gypsies, discharged soldiers, travelling theatre companies, circus artists, beggars, and absconded wives and lovers. Yet, these characters were precisely the key constituents of the hotch-potch category of “suspicious persons” whose mobility the contemporary passport regimes were designed to curtail. In fact, as Scott McKenzie has pointed out, eighteenth-century legal specifications of this category often read like the *dramatis personae* of a picaresque novel.⁷ As a consequence any attempt to exercise movement control within a novel would risk bring the plot to a sudden standstill.

As a novel that advocates spatial segregation as the only means of eliminating the dangers of mobility, J.G. Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* (1731-43) illustrates the conflict between narrative and movement control in exemplary form. This massive, four-volume work brings together two of the major novelistic traditions of early modernity, the castaway novel and the utopian novel,⁸ whose partially overlapping emphasis on seclusion and social perfection have an obvious bearing on the question of movement control in the novel. The narrative centre is the story of Albertus Julius, a German, who in 1646 suffers shipwreck in the South Atlantic and, as one of only four survivors, is cast ashore on the small, uninhabited island of Felsenburg. With no prospect of being rescued, and after the deaths of two of his companions, the entrepreneurial Albertus sets to work building a model society, at first only with the assistance of his wife Concordia, but eventually supported by a growing family as well as a number of later immigrants.

The fictional universe of the novel is morally divided between the extremes of vice and virtue. As a first step towards establishing a well-ordered society, Albertus gives spatial form to this conceptual distinction by enforcing a strict separation between the virtuous Felsenburg and Europe, which in this novel is consistently associated with greed, lechery, and violence. This is achieved in two steps. First, the protagonist conducts an "ethical cleansing" of the island by eliminating one of the original castaways, Captain Lemelie, who as the novel's epitome of undiluted, diabolical evil for a time threatens to confound the utopian schemes. Secondly, Albertus closes off the island to the outside world as a means of safeguarding its moral purity. As is also the case in More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, the

emphasis on border security is prefigured in the island's topography: already remote in terms of its geographical location, Felsenburg is surrounded by a steep and virtually unbroken mountain range that makes the sanctuary inside both invisible and inaccessible. However, in the early history of the settlement Albertus not only perfects this natural barrier by means of chiseling and blasting so that "not even a cat could climb up and reach the crest", but also confirms its status as a border by erecting guardhouses in the four corners of the world.⁹

These acts of territorial enclosure are politically foundational and confirm that Felsenburg depends for its moral purity on the severance of all bonds with wicked Europe. The problem is, however, that absolute and unthreatened virtue is a poor basis for novelistic adventures. Once the island community has cordoned itself off from the outside world, it has essentially exhausted itself in terms of narrative.¹⁰

A particularly instructive example of this narrative exhaustion is the "general inspection" conducted by Albertus 80 years after the shipwreck. Providing the structure for more than half of the novel's first volume, this undertaking involves a circular journey to each of the island's nine settlements. Since Felsenburg is the embodiment of political and social perfection, the venerable ruler inevitably finds everything in a state of complete perfection. As a result, the linear narrative is replaced by cartographic, enumerative, and archival strategies of representation better suited to the task of detailing the social wonders of the island. Joseph Vogl, drawing on Foucault's governmentality studies, has related the novel's persistent inventorializing to eighteenth-century endeavors to optimize the projection of state power through detailed knowledge of the territory and its human and natural

resources.¹¹ This is historically convincing, yet in terms of the narrative logic of the novel, Albertus's island tour could not possibly fulfill this function of optimization since the utopian harmony on Felsenburg leaves no scope for social improvement. With this in mind, the strategies of enumeration seem instead to be a sign of narrative bewilderment – a result of the association of social order with closed borders which makes the island an infertile ground for novelistic plots.

In order to overcome this impasse, Schnabel introduces a movement control regime designed to allow the novel to import narrative material from Europe while at the same time preventing these European contacts from compromising the island's moral purity. Crucial in this respect is the fact that the novel at regular intervals receives new momentum from the arrival of additional European immigrants whose detailed life stories (22 in all) make up the bulk of the second and third volumes and, in the words of Arno Schmidt, transform the novel into a "symphony of biographies".¹² Each of these inserted biographies relates the story of an individual who in Europe endures some variety of persecution before finally escaping and finding a sanctuary on Felsenburg. In this way, the biographies not only repeat the master narrative of Albertus and reaffirm the novel's moral Manichaeism, but symbolically re-enact the story of the island's political founding which was predicated on a similar erasure of European vice. At the same time, the immigrant tales are evidently meant to serve as proof of the individual's moral character, and insofar as telling of one's life story appears to be a precondition for being granted permanent residency on the island, they effectively function as passports enabling a successful transition between the novel's two moral universes.

In this way, Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* dramatises a problem inherent in the eighteenth-century novel, namely the latent conflict between narrative and social order. Writing a utopian novel within this framework is the literary equivalent of squaring the circle: emphasize one aspect and the other retreats out of reach. The solution in this instance therefore only circumvents the problem. First, Schnabel creates a border separating different moral and narrative universes, thus ensuring that the lawlessness associated with novelistic plots is contained at a safe distance from the island paradise. Yet soon after, when this absolute closure threatens to bring the novel to a narrative standstill, he renders the border porous, allowing a sufficient influx of narrative material in the form of immigrant autobiographies. The movement control regime that results from these negotiations is the structural crux of the novel inasmuch as it allows a successful compromise between the utopian politics and the form of the novel.

Security and Freedom

In spite of its structural sophistication, Schnabel's "spatialization" of the conflict between narrative and social order remains an early and incomplete attempt to address this issue. As a second step, I want to demonstrate how, later in the century, attempts are made to acknowledge and narratively integrate the rise of movement control within a single and unified novelistic space. Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) is a case in point and can serve to illustrate the direction of my argument. As a London magistrate and a writer of political pamphlets, Fielding was an active campaigner against the vagrancy of the poor, which he regarded as a major cause

of crime, and even put forward a detailed proposal for a British passport regime that would have banned the lower classes from travelling without approval in the form of a “Pass or Certificate”.¹³ In the light of these proposals, it seems paradoxical that the plot of *Tom Jones*, which was written at almost exactly the same time, should be based to such a degree on the free mobility of its vagrant characters. Yet, Fielding’s novel also includes an element of authoritative oversight, evident, not only, as John Bender argues, in the “fantasy of omniscient authority” implied by his choice of narrator,¹⁴ but also in the introduction of a teleological structure that gives direction to the protagonists’ wanderings and eventually guide them home. My contention is that these formal innovations must be regarded as instances of literary movement control, once again containing the anarchy of free mobility while at the same time exploiting its narrative potency. The aim, then, is the same as Schnabel’s in *Insel Felsenburg*, yet by integrating movement control as a formal feature of the novel, Fielding is moving towards a type of novel that no longer depends on the contingencies of unrestricted mobility.

These early attempts to exercise movement control within fictional universes are limited by their counterfactuality – that is, by not being modeled directly on the passport regimes of their time, since these were still porous and relatively ineffective as instruments of control. The ambitious passport reforms initiated in the wake of the French Revolution – not just in France itself, but across the European continent – fundamentally changed this situation and created a wealth of factual blueprints for the fictional articulation of movement control. These gradual reforms, which continued well into the post-Napoleonic restoration, proceeded

along three main axes: they involved administrative changes in the form of increased border security and improved bureaucracies; technological changes evident in the adoption of modern practices of identification and document security; and legislative changes that would eventually end the social discrimination of eighteenth-century passport regimes and replace it with the nation-state's discrimination between citizens and aliens.¹⁵ Just as importantly, the French parliamentary debates surrounding the issue of movement control established a new discourse that cast the passport as an instrument of omniscient authority and, on this basis, pitted the security of the state against the concern for the freedom of the individual. This major political fault line, which continues to inform present-day controversies concerning movement control, was brought out in exemplary form in the most important passport debate of the era, taking place in the Legislative Assembly in January 1792. In John Torpey's apt characterization, the adversaries in this debate spoke "as if the very fate of the revolution hung on the outcome of the passport question".¹⁶ Representing the statist view, Claude Le Coz praised the proposed passport system as an all-seeing "Argus of the *patrie*", capable of keeping the enemies of the revolution under constant surveillance and transforming the individual French municipalities into a system of "patriotic echoes corresponding tirelessly for the sake of national peace".¹⁷ On the opposite side, Stanislas Girardin attacked the proposals with reference to the constitution claiming that a "revolution that commenced with the destruction of passports must ensure a sufficient measure of freedom to travel, even in times of crisis."¹⁸

It is not so much the practicalities of passport control itself, but rather this polarised vision of passport control as the embodiment of either benign or malignant authority that starts impacting the novel as of the 1790s. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96) is a prominent – although perhaps not immediately obvious – example of the statist attitude towards movement control. Often described as the prototypical *Bildungsroman*, this novel is divided into two major parts joined by an intermezzo. Comprising five of the novel's eight books, the first part was conceived separately in the late 1770s and early 1780s. It relates how the young protagonist, unwilling to follow in the footsteps of his merchant father, joins a travelling theatre group and experiences a succession of adventures on the road, culminating in his lead role in a performance of *Hamlet*. Significantly in the present context, the fictional universe is underdetermined in terms of time and space; while intermittent references are made to contemporary issues and events, the action is set in a mediaeval world untouched by technological and political modernity. Thus, the characters are able to move about freely, never harassed by police or government authorities, and never having to obtain passport for their travels. As is also the case in Schnabel and Fielding, the plot is heavily dependent on this freedom of movement, which is once again associated with unconventional or morally questionable activities such as love affairs, illegitimate children, identity confusion, as well as an abundance of travelling circus artists, musicians, and actors – itinerants of the kinds targeted by contemporary passport legislation.¹⁹

In the final two books of the novel, however, Wilhelm leaves the theatre troupe and instead joins the mysterious “Society of the Tower”, a philanthropic fellow-

ship with freemasonic undertones. After receiving his formal initiation and thus ending his “apprenticeship”, the protagonist learns that the Society has kept him under close surveillance throughout his travels; thinking himself that he acted freely and unseen, he was in fact being “observed and even guided” by his future friends.²⁰ While older scholarship typically saw the Society of the Tower as a manifestation of providence, more recent contributions have discussed it in the light of Foucault’s notion of panopticism as a technology of power predicated on constant surveillance.²¹ Yet, the Society’s monitoring of Wilhelm lacks the confined and totalizing character of the panoptic prison and should instead – since it operates at the territorial level – be seen as a movement control regime within the novel. It is worth noting in this regard that the brethren’s philosophy of education (or *Bildung*) contrasts two key terms, *Irrtum* (“error”) and *Leitung* (“guidance”), both of which are linked etymologically to physical mobility in, respectively, free and restricted forms; in this sense, it epitomizes the compromise that the novel tries to strike between utilizing and containing mobility.²² More to the point, the Society’s “guidance” retroactively transforms the fictional space of the novel’s first part, erasing the contingency and freedom of the open road on which the plot was originally based. What emerges is a world of all-seeing authority and teleological necessity where the movements of the individual have been reinscribed as stages on the path to personal maturity.

The opposite attitude towards movement control, which sees this strategy of governance as an infringement on personal freedom, comes to the forefront in a novel contemporary with Goethe’s, but in most respects profoundly different

from it: William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). The narrative centre of this novel is the persecution inflicted by the sinister Squire Falkland on his former secretary, the protagonist Caleb Williams. In the opening chapters, the well-intentioned Caleb discovers his master's deepest secret, namely that he, many years earlier, killed his abrasive neighbor and subsequently had two innocent men convicted of the crime. Falkland immediately learns that he has been found out. Not wanting to commit another murder, yet determined not to be exposed, he opts for a strategy of containment and movement control designed to ensure that the inquisitive secretary is kept under constant surveillance. Initially, Caleb is confined to the estate, but when he escapes, the zone of control is gradually expanded to encompass the entire national territory. When he decides to flee to the continent, however, Gines gives him this message:

It is my business now [...] to see that you do not break out of bounds. [...] As long as you think proper, you are a prisoner within the rules; and the rules with which the soft-hearted Squire indulges you are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of these climates. The Squire is determined you shall never pass the reach of his disposal.²³

The significance of this plot goes far beyond that of a simple conflict between private individuals. As is well known, Godwin conceived *Caleb Williams* as a "novelization" of his anarchist political philosophy set out the year before in *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (1793), and in the preface he openly announces that the

novel is intended as a narrative analysis of how “the spirit and character of government intrudes itself into every rank of society”.²⁴ This stated intention is borne out by the development of the storyline. As the limits of Falkland’s power are extended from his estate to the nation as a whole, he himself is likewise promoted from a county squire to an embodiment of the tyranny of national government; in the words of the protagonist, he exhibits “upon a contracted scale [...] a copy of what monarchs are”.²⁵ Yet, if Falkland is cast as the incarnation of government, government itself is represented metonymically via movement control as its most heinous and invasive manifestation. Characterized as the “eye of omniscience” and likened to “the omnipresent God”,²⁶ Falkland exercises power over Caleb precisely by keeping him under strict surveillance and restraining him within fixed boundaries. Conversely, Caleb strives to disentangle himself from these quasi-governmental strictures by asserting his right to free mobility, and his final fight-back is a direct response to Falkland’s movement control – an attempt to break out of the “lines of circumvallation” that his former employer has drawn around him.²⁷ These contrasting endeavors, which dictate the narrative development of the novel, are closely aligned with the discursive framework established in the French parliamentary debates concerning movement control: Falkland embodies the focus on the security of the state while Caleb, with the strong support of the author, is a champion of individual freedom.

Different as they are in terms of form and ideology, *Wilhelm Meisters Lebrjahre* and *Caleb Williams* have hitherto not been made the subject of a comparative analysis. Yet, as the preceding discussion reveals, the two novels share a common pre-

occupation with movement control that derives, it may be surmised, from the political topicality of this issue in the early 1790s. Departing decisively from the narrative paradigm of free mobility, both novels introduce literary movement control regimes, but do so in very different ways. A first difference lies in the political attitude towards movement control: whereas Goethe casts the guidance provided by the Society of the Tower as a mild form of paternalism that gently corrects the protagonist's errant ways, Godwin sees Falkland's attempts to control his former secretary's movements as the height of authoritarianism and a poignant symbol of the incursions of state power on individual freedom. Just as importantly, the two novels differ in terms of how movement control impacts on the plot. Goethe's control regime is superimposed on the novel only at the end and serves to reinterpret past events from the point of view of the Society's educational master plan. In contrast, the fictional space of Godwin's novel is defined from the outset by movement restrictions, and the development of the plot is driven throughout by the conflict between Falkland's control and Caleb's attempts to circumvent it. However, at a more general level, the two novels constitute parallel efforts to heed and narratively exploit the growing contemporary importance of movement control as an instrument of power. In both cases – although with opposite conclusions – this is achieved by emplotting the conflict between the security of the state and the freedom of the individual.

Subverting Control

The third and final literary passport regime emerges during the Post-Napoleonic Restoration and echoes the police state-like movement control measures that were introduced at this time across the European continent in a bid to forestall further revolutionary upheavals.²⁸ In terms of literary history, this high-point of political control coincides with a turn towards descriptive realism, and these two factors conspire to create a new type of passport motif characterized above all by its precise reference to passport practices in its immediate historical surroundings – where Schnabel’s passport system was purely counterfactual and those of Goethe and Godwin were mythological amplifications, the literary passports of the early nineteenth century reflect the actualities of contemporary movement control. Thus, the passport begins to crop up in a variety of novelistic contexts, both as a realistic accessory and as part of plots involving movement control as a major parameter. To offer just a few notable examples, we can think here of the passport complications that trigger the protagonist’s rampage in Heinrich von Kleist’s novella *Michael Koblhaas* (1810); Jean Valjean’s stigmatizing yellow passport in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* (1862); or the role played by French movement control in Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859).

When looking only at the sheer amount of passport references, however, the most prominent example by far is Stendhal’s *La Chartreuse de Parma* (1839). Set in the early years of the Restoration and conceived as a critique of reactionary politics, this novel focuses particularly on the movement control regime of the Habsburg Empire, which also extended to its possessions and client states in Northern Italy where most of the action takes place. The Austrian passport system was the

cornerstone of Metternich's police state, and Stendhal clearly regards it as the epitome of political repression. As witnessed by the lengthy scene taking place at the Casal-Maggiore border crossing between the Duchy of Parma and the (Austrian-ruled) Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia,²⁹ the representation of this movement control regime is remarkably detailed and encompasses accurate renderings, not just of the protagonist's passport itself, but also of the passport system's legal basis, its material trappings, and the subject positions it creates for police officers and travelers alike. The minute descriptive attention devoted to the Austrian passport system is, as Philippe Berthier has noted,³⁰ an aberration within Stendhal's otherwise strongly plot-driven novel and as such an indication of the narrative centrality that he accords to movement control. At one point, the narrator even feels obliged to explain his passport obsession, which he does by pointing towards the importance of movement control in the novel's North Italian setting during the early years of the Restoration: "No doubt these accounts of all the measures that the absence of a passport entails will seem tedious to the reader; this type of concern no longer exists in France, but in Italy, and particularly in the vicinity of the Po, everyone talks about passports."³¹

If this reader address is to be trusted, the preponderance of passports in *La Chartreuse de Parme* is simply a matter of verisimilitude – that is, an instance of that deep historical embeddedness that Erich Auerbach has identified as the defining feature of Stendhal's realism.³² My argument takes a different course. While regarding the historical background as foundational, I want to emphasize the way in which the passport motif in this novel is activated as part of a literary strategy in-

forming the narrative design across three interconnected levels: space, plot, and theme.

First, the multiple references to contemporary passport practices are crucial in establishing the novel's space. On the one hand, Northern Italy of the early nineteenth century was political divided, comprising Habsburg territories as well as an agglomeration of princedoms and stateless with varying degrees of independence from Vienna. On the other hand, this territorial compartmentalization, which was redoubled by internal borders, was policed by an extensive and relatively effective passport regime of Austrian provenance. These intangible historical realities are conveyed concretely in the novel via the passport motif as well as a wealth of associated material signifiers such as the brass emblems on the passport officers' uniforms, the great passport registers bound in green leather, or the notorious "yellow, black-striped gates" of the imperial border crossings.³³ In this space defined by borders and movement control, the basic rule applies that any travelling outside the immediate administrative region requires permission in the form of a passport.

Secondly, this spatial design is a significant determinant of the novel's plot. Fabrice del Dongo, the young nobleman protagonist, is a nonconformist character deeply misaligned with the inanity of court life and the reactionary politics of the Restoration. Since his rejection of society is systematically represented in the form of physical flight, the storyline is structured to a considerable degree around repeated altercations with the passport system as the embodiment of social and political control. An early example is the episode at the beginning of the novel where the sixteen-year old Fabrice travels to France and the Netherlands to join Napole-

on at the Battle of Waterloo. With regards to this protracted episode, the scholarly literature has focused almost exclusively on the famous battle scenes, and the fact that the overall narrative development is structured around the protagonist's passport troubles is generally overlooked. The journey being illegal, Fabrice is forced to use misappropriated passports: one belongs to a middle-aged barometer salesman described as "carrying his merchandise",³⁴ another is obtained from a dead French hussar. Both comically at odds with the young Italian's comportment and appearance, these documents fail to impress anyone, and in the course of his travels, Fabrice is consequently arrested by the French authorities on three separate occasions before finally slipping back into Austrian territory disguised as a hunter. In terms of narrative structure, this lengthy episode is determined from beginning to end by the protagonist's attempts to subvert the Austrian and French passport systems. The form is that of a picaresque adventure obstructed and ultimately made impossible by the rigors of movement control.

Crucially, however, the passport motif not only provides the structure of individual episodes, but is systematically associated with key junctures in the novel's overall plot. The continuation of the Waterloo episode is a case in point. When returning his native Lombardy, Fabrice is put under scrutiny by the Austrian police who suspect him of treasonous activities. Yet, having no solid proof, they pursue him instead on account of his well-established misuse of another person's passport. In this way, the conflict with the Habsburg passport system becomes the direct cause of Fabrice's flight from Lombardy-Venetia and hence also of the novel's main Parmese storyline. Moreover, en route to Milan Fabrice meets his future love

interest, Clélia Conti, when both of them are arrested, along with their respective families, for violations against the passport code: the del Dongos have failed to take out passports for the short (domestic) trip from their hometown Grianta, and general Conti, Clélia's father, had evaded a passport control at Como the day before and is therefore being hunted by the police "like a thief".³⁵ Finally, it is worth mentioning in this context that the novel's central episode revolving around Fabrice's nine months' imprisonment in Farnese Tower is likewise connected to the passport system inasmuch as it forms the narrative endpoint to a succession of events beginning with the protagonist's flight from Parma following his killing of the actor Giletti.

As practiced by Schnabel and theorized by Schlegel, movement control was an anti-nomadic and hence also anti-narrative institution that promised to replace novelistic lawlessness with social order. In *La Chartreuse de Parme*, this logic is turned upside down. Here, a particularly stringent form of movement control serves as a key parameter of the novel's fictional space, and this control regime gives rise to a narrative defined both in detail and at the level of the overall storyline by the protagonist's repeated difficulties with the passport authorities. Narratively speaking, the contemporary movement control regime functions as Fabrice's perennial antagonist and in this sense as a major driver of narrative.

Finally, by influencing the design of the space and the plot, the passport motif is also involved in articulating the novel's main themes. Expanding on the work of Jean Starobinski, Stendhal's preoccupation with (false) passports could be understood as a metaphorical way of addressing issues of personal identity – in other

words, as equivalent to the pseudonyms, masks, and disguises that abound in his works.³⁶ My point is the exact opposite, namely that the passport motif should be taken literally and seen as a means of giving narrative voice to a set of political viewpoints. One such view, which is telling of Stendhal's private disposition, raises the somewhat backward-looking concern that the modern passport system, by being applied universally and without regard for social rank, violates a traditional, class-based sense of personal dignity and privilege; this is particularly evident from the way in which the novel repeatedly stages situations where the highborn Fabrice, much to his chagrin, is forced to renounce his name and status and subject himself to the scrutiny of socially inferior passport officers. More importantly, the passport motif functions as the embodiment of Restoration-age political repression and in this sense further develops Godwin's position in the 1790s debates concerning state security versus individual freedom. Ultimately, Stendhal's narrative employment of the passport is informed by the idea that movement control equals tyranny and by a sense of solidarity with those who subvert or circumvent it. Seen in this light, the passport motif is an expression of the novel's liberalist politics.

Movement Control and the Novel

The first part of the history of modern movement control draws to a close in the years following the failed bourgeois revolutions of 1848/1849. With the triumph of political and economic liberalism, passport requirements are increasingly seen as an unnecessary nuisance and are either abolished or fall into disuse in all major

countries of Western and Central Europe.³⁷ Although travelling with a passport was still sometimes advisable, this meant that internal and international mobility would be almost completely free for the next half-century, up until the reintroduction of movement control at the outbreak of the First World War. Fittingly, the new – although, as it turned out, temporary – freedom of movement was celebrated in a novel that brought back the narrative paradigm of the road in a geographically expanded and technologically updated form: Jules Verne's *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873). If Phileas Fogg, its globe-trotting protagonist, brings a passport on his travels, it is expressly not because this is a legal requirement in any of the countries he visits, but because he needs the consular visa stamps as proof of having completed the full itinerary. In fact, this novel relishes in the protagonist's freedom of movement, which it links to political as well as technological progress, and repeatedly pours scorn on the passport as an obsolete formality that only ever served to "bother honest people and facilitate the flight of crooks".³⁸

The late nineteenth-century moratorium on movement control seems to interrupt the exchange between the novel and the passport system, which is only resumed after 1914, now with a new, topical focus on migrants, refugees, and displaced persons.³⁹ In terms of the literary history of movement control, the hundred years from the introduction of modern movement control from the mid-1700s to the gradual abolition of passports beginning in the mid-1800s therefore constitutes a distinctive period with its own logics and historical problematics. In response to the increasing scope and efficiency of the passport system across the European continent, this period sees the emergence of a novelistic subgenre

whose chief characteristic is the fact that spaces, plots, and themes are articulated with reference to contemporary movement control as a fundamental parameter. In this sense, the passport system is not simply an external “context” of this type of novel, but has been internalized and rendered productive as a structuring device, thereby establishing an interface between a specific historical control regime and a specific mode of novelistic writing.

The novel’s engagement with the passport in this period revolves around one overarching issue: the viability of the traditionally mobility-driven genre of the novel in a world of systematic movement control. As I have argued, this issue is addressed in three successive inflections – three stages of a transformative process whereby mobility is gradually eclipsed as the main instigator of narrative. The process begins, with Schnabel and Fielding as key instances, in the mid-eighteenth century with sustained novelistic attempts to overcome or contain the alleged immorality of free mobility via a strengthening of civil order. It reaches a half-way point in the wake of the French Revolution, in Goethe and Godwin, where movement control becomes a means of narratively exploring the conflict between individual freedom and state security. Finally, it ends in the first half of the nineteenth century, in Stendhal and elsewhere, with fictional spaces permeated with movement control measures and narratives hinging on their subversion by the protagonists. The ideological and formal distances traversed are remarkable. In terms of political outlook, the dominant attitude swings from statist conservatism at the beginning of the period to liberalism at its end. In terms of the mode of representation, the initial counterfactual style is eventually replaced by descriptive real-

ism as passport requirements and border control become standard international practice. Finally, and most importantly from the point of view of literary history, the narrative paradigm of the open road is superseded by a paradigm that recognizes and exploits for narrative purposes the fact that mobility is now subject to intense control.

Although substantial enough, the number of novels engaging with passport control in a direct and sustained manner remains relatively small compared to the vast archive of the genre as a whole. However, the wider claim that can be drawn from the discussion in this essay is that the transformation of the novel around 1800, which precisely involved a transition from mobile to more sedentary or domestic plots,⁴⁰ should be seen on the background of the passport system as a key instrument of modern governance. As Friedrich Schlegel was the first to realize, the rise of movement control would inevitably make the narrative paradigm of free mobility less appealing to authors and weaken its connection to historical reality, thereby arguably precipitating its decline. Yet, the passport system was not just a destructive force in the context of the novel, but also facilitated the emergence of new plot models and moreover offered a compelling narrative means of articulating the characteristic nineteenth-century conflict between individual and society. In this sense, the modern institution of movement control is intimately connected to literary history and needs to be taken into account as a key historical parameter when analyzing the evolution of the modern novel.

References

¹ The few existing studies touching upon the link between literature and the passport system are of less use in the present context. Thus, Lesley Higgins & Marie-Christine Leps's "Passport please'. Legal, Literary, and Critical Fictions of Identity", in *Un-Disciplining Literature. Literature, Law, and Culture*, ed. Kostas Myrsiades & Linda Myrsiades (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 117-68, discusses the passport in metaphorical rather than historical terms, while Paul Fussell's chapter on "The Passport Nuisance" in *Abroad. British Literary Traveling between the Wars* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 26-34, simply documents the prominence of the passport motif in Interwar fiction. Although restricted to a single novel, Charlton Payne's study of Remarque offers a more substantial contribution in terms of disentangling the theoretical and narrative implications of the novel/passport nexus. See also Gulddal.

² See Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of the "chronotope of the road", "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel. Notes toward a Historical Poetics", in *The Dialogical Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-258. See also Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "The Roads of the Novel", in *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton UP, 2006), vol. 2, 611-46.

³ J. Paul Hunter, *Occasional Form* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 144.

⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985), 49-53, 172-97.

⁵ The passport has recently received some historical attention, see most notably John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Martin Lloyd, *The Passport* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003).

⁶ Friedrich Schlegel, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* (1812), in *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988), vol. 4, 154.

⁷ Cf. Scott MacKenzie, "'Stock the Parish with Beauties'. Henry Fielding's Parochial Vision", *PMLA* 125:3 (2010), 606. MacKenzie quotes George II's vagrancy law from 1741: "All common players of interludes; ... all minstrels; jugglers; persons pretending to be gypsies, or wandering in the habit or form of Egyptians ... or using any subtil craft to deceive and impose on any of His Majesty's subjects, or playing or betting at any unlawful games; ... all persons wandering abroad,

and lodging in alehouses, barns, outhouses, or in the open air, not giving a good account of themselves: all persons wandering abroad ... pretending to be soldiers, mariners, seafaring men, or pretending to go to work in harvest; and all other persons wandering abroad and begging shall be deemed rogues and vagabonds." For a continental example, see Hannelore Burger, "Paßwesen und Staatsbürgerschaft", *Grenze und Staat*, ed. Waltraud Heindl and Edith Saurer (Wien, Köln & Weimar: Böhlau, 2000), 84-87.

⁸ For the classic statement of this genre attribution, see Fritz Brüggemann, *Utopie und Robinsonade* (Weimar: Dunker, 1914).

⁹ J.G. Schnabel, *Wunderliche Fata einiger See-Fahrer (= Insel Felsenburg)* (1731-43) (Frankfurt/Main: Minerva, 1973), vol. I, 418.

¹⁰ For an analysis of this logic in the context of utopian literature proper, cf. Louis Marin, *Utopias. Spatial Play* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984), xxiv.

¹¹ Joseph Vogl, *Kalkül und Leidenschaft* (Munich: Sequenzia, 2002), 186-208.

¹² Arno Schmidt, "Wunderliche Fata einiger Seefahrer. Reclam's Neuausgabe der *Insel Felsenburg*" (1987), in *Das Essayistische Werk zur deutschen Literatur* (Zürich: Haffman, 1988), vol. 1, 81.

¹³ Henry Fielding, "A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor" (1753), in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 240-2.

¹⁴ John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 165.

¹⁵ Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizens and Aliens* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2000), 101-2.

¹⁶ Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*, 38.

¹⁷ Qt. in *ibid.*, 32.

¹⁸ Qt. in *ibid.* 35.

¹⁹ Cf. above, page x.

²⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lebrjahre* (1795-96) (Munich: DTV, 1997), 543.

²¹ See e.g. Jürgen Link, “Der Vorhang. Das Symptom einer generativ-poetischen Aporie in der goethezeitlichen Schreiburszene”, in *Mir ekelt vor diesen Tintenklecksenden Säkulum*, ed. Martin Stingelin (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2004), 125.

²² Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, 528-34. The root of “Irrtum” refers to aimless wandering, while “Leitung” etymologically means moving something in a specific way. The link between error and wandering also occurs in English (err/error) and Latin (errare).

²³ William Godwin, *Caleb Williams* (1794) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 323.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. For the political background, see Pamela Clemit’s introduction to *Caleb Williams*, by William Godwin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xi-xvi.

²⁵ Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 316; 150.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 325.

²⁸ Burger, “Paßwesen und Staatsbürgerschaft”, 3-172, and Andrea Geselle, “Bewegung und ihre Kontrolle in Lombardo-Venetien”, in *Grenze und Staat*, ed. Waltraud Heindl & Edith Saurer (Wien, Köln & Weimar: Böhlau, 2000), 347-513, are particularly important in this context due to their detailed discussion of nineteenth-century passport legislation in Austria and Northern Italy.

²⁹ Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839) (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 189-205.

³⁰ Philippe Berthier, *La Chartreuse de Parme de Stendhal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 160.

³¹ Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, 206. The English translation is taken (with the addition of “all” in the first sentence) from Stendhal, *The Charterhouse of Parma*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 205.

³² Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Bern: Francke, 1946), 425.

³³ Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, 194-7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁶ Jean Starobinski, "Stendhal pseudonyme", in *L'Œil vivant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 193-244. See also Nagao Nishikawa, "L'illégitimité romanesque dans 'La Chartreuse de Parme': pseudonymes, déguisements, (faux) passeports, cryptographie", *Stendhal Club* 32 (1990), 268-276.

³⁷ Lloyd, *The Passport*, 115-8.

³⁸ Jules Verne, *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873) (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000), 45.

³⁹ For a discussion of the passport in the context of the Interwar novel, cf. Jesper Gulddal, "Passport Plots. B. Traven's *Das Totenschiff* and the Chronotope of Movement Control", *German Life and Letters*, 66:3 (2013), 291-306.

⁴⁰ Bakhtin "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel. Notes toward a Historical Poetics", 246-8.

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