‘Traveling’ as Metaphor for Emerging Cultural Identities: Wendy Rose’s “Excavation at Santa Barbara Mission”[1]

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In recent discourses in anthropology, cultural studies, postcolonial studies and other related fields, the concepts of place, space, migration, and of travel(ing) in general have become increasingly important. Traditional fieldwork in anthropology is just one case in point, albeit one in which the notions of “traveling” and place have become more and more controversially discussed.[2] Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, for example, criticize that “received ideas about space and place have shaped and continue to shape anthropological common sense” without being adequately examined.[3] They argue that the view of societies, nations, and cultures as separate, distinct, and rooted bodies rests upon the belief that space can be neatly separated into discontinuous parts. Instead, Gupta and Ferguson claim that spaces or locations are interconnected in various ways, with traveling being one of them. Works on the mapping and creation of space in and by a community seem to support this. Michel de Certeau, for example, asserts that community locations, or spaces, are never (geographically) given but created through various bodily and discursive practices of which traveling can be one form.[4] Likewise, works on (postcolonial) literature which focus on migration, diaspora and dis-location in their various forms

1 I would like to thank the participants of the conference “Migration and Multiculturalism” (6. Jahrestagung der NRW-Amerikanist(inn)en, Paderborn) for their valuable and insightful comments and suggestions. Special thanks go to Astrid Böger and Elisabeth Schäfer-Wünsche for their help with earlier versions of this essay.

2 For a critical discussion of fieldwork and its practices and assumptions (especially their role in defining the discipline) see for example James Clifford, “Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology,” Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997) 52-91.

3 Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, “Beyond ‘Culture’ Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference,” Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology, ed. Gupta and Ferguson. (Durham: Duke UP, 1997) 33-51, 33.

4 Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988).

have been concerned with space and place as problematic notions for a long time.

Taking up the issues of space, distance, and, more importantly, travel and traveling in this essay, I will examine concepts of culture and the ways in which cultural identity is negotiated in literature. I propose that travel in its widest sense (i.e., not only in a literal but also in a figurative way) is also very important for literature in that cultural identity and its negotiation are often captured in terms of movement and traveling. To illustrate my approach, I will briefly discuss two similar, if complementary approaches to culture, Homi Bhabha's concept of "culture's in-between" as the location of culture and James Clifford's notion of "traveling cultures" and their various inside-outside connections. Both Bhabha and Clifford oppose concepts of culture which date back to the 19th century, where - with the emergence of the nation state - culture was seen as a stable phenomenon and came to be tied to specific places, nations, countries, and peoples. They "de-spatialize" as well as "de-stabilize" culture - paradoxically (or maybe not), the use of metaphors of traveling, movement and space to describe culture is prominent in their approaches. Based on these two models, I will show that travel metaphors are helpful in grasping the creation and negotiation of cultural identity. To exemplify this, I will focus on the work of Wendy Rose and, more specifically, on her poem "Excavation at Santa Barbara Mission." In a close reading of this poem I will show the significance of an emerging culture concept which implies images of traveling and the crossing of borders in the creation of cultural meaning and identity.

Derived from a post-colonial perspective, Bhabha's concept of culture focuses on issues of migration, exile, and displaced people. According to Bhabha, people who leave their "home" take with them parts of their "home culture." When they settle somewhere else, this culture comes to be a "partial culture" - a culture which is still similar to its "parent culture" but also surprisingly different from it. It becomes a connecting area between the old parent culture and the new surroundings. Bhabha considers "[t]his new 'part' culture, this partial culture, [to be] the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures - at once the impossibility of culture's

containedness and the boundary between."[5] This liminal space, the in-between of various cultural realms becomes therefore a border, albeit one which is "impossible" in the sense that it separates and at the same time also connects. It is a flexible and permeable "tissue," and not a dividing or limiting boundary.

It is in this border area that cultures most intensely fuse and thus it is here that something new emerges. "[T]he boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presenting" (emphasis in the original).[6] The in-between, which is in itself not exactly "locatable," is the location of culture in the sense that it indicates culture's radically temporal and ever-changing nature. This liminal space between cultures is also a "passageway" through which people pass (travel), in which they linger, and which they inhabit. This image of the passageway embodies the "traffic," the possibility and reality of exchange between supposedly separated and distinct cultures. It shows that cultures are always already hybrid, (exchanging, manifold. Moreover, as Bhabha says, culture can be seen as "the crossroads for articulating different landscapes, histories, genres, styles of perception, and performance."[7] Bhabha's concept of culture's in-between - the "halfway house" as he tellingly names it - undermines thus the notion of a pure and original culture.[8]

Bhabha's argument referring to the meeting and exchange of two formerly separated cultural realms (the partial [home] culture of the migrant and the new culture) can be applied to culture in general: he argues that

5 Homi Bhabha, "Culture's in Between," Artforum 32.1 (1993): 167+, 167 (emphasis in the original).

6 Homi Bhabha, "Introduction: Locations of Culture," The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994) 1-18, 5. The italics mark a quote from Martin Heidegger which Bhabha uses as epigraph to his introductory essay (1) and which he elaborates later in the text.

7 Homi Bhabha, "Halfway House," Artforum 35.9 (May 1997): 11+, 125. Subsequently quoted as "Halfway House."

8 The resulting question of authenticity firmly grounded on the vision of a "pure" culture is also problematized by Bhabha. To him, authenticity, "indigenous or native 'belonging,'" is part of the national myth itself (Halfway House 125). The demand for authenticity also leads to what Bhabha elsewhere calls the concept of "fixity," a phenomenon directly related to the representation of "otherness" and its stereotypes. Cf. "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," The Location of Culture 66-84.

culture not simply "is" but "happens." The contestation of different cultures in their intersecting areas, their exchange and the resulting blurring of these boundaries indicate the general impossibility of culture's containedness. This changing mechanism of culture is the same everywhere - it becomes most visible in migratory cultures.[9] In this view, room is made for the articulation and presentation of different and differing landscapes, stories, and histories. Consequently, questions of cultural identity, of belonging, of being at home or having a home are left open-ended. This open-endedness, however, is not meant in the sense of having no answer but as the necessity of a constant negotiation, the "revisionary sense" of questioning and answering: "these questions of home, identity, belonging are always open to negotiation, to be posed again from elsewhere, to become iterative, interrogative processes rather than imperative, identitarian designations" (Halfway House 125, emphasis mine). These questions are always also asked from another point of view and the answers are never final or fixed. As a result, differences are "enacted" instead of smoothed over.

This "revisionary sense" of posing questions "from elsewhere" intersects with James Clifford's work on culture, which comes from an anthropological perspective. His emphasis lies not so much on hybridity and cultural place than on the people involved in cultural contact situations. Clifford problematizes two localizing strategies in the field of ethnography. The first one concerns the "native" informants with whom the anthropologist works, the second one the village or locus in which the fieldwork is conducted.

Clifford maintains that informants are problematic figures within anthropological practice because they are - even if unwittingly - often seen

9 The problem of geographical location vis-à-vis culture is critically discussed in the essay collection Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham: Duke UP, 1997). Especially in their own contribution (33-51), Gupta and Ferguson give an insightful critique of a tendency in anthropology (and I would suggest that this is also the case in other fields) to spatialize culture in terms of geographical locations. Migratory cultures are one of the examples they present to support their thesis that this is an inadequate rendering of culture. For a discussion of the notion of diaspora and its entanglement with concepts of nation-states, tribal communities, and localized cultures see also James Clifford's "Diasporas" Cultural Anthropology 9.3 (1994): 302-338.

as representative for "their" culture. In their roles as translators, storytellers, or informants, they are thought to be people who embody their culture in a "pure" sense, a sense that implies culture to be something limited. Briefly, they are seen as "homebodies," as people who do not have any outside connections into realms beyond "their" culture. In contrast to that, Clifford argues that informants are people who have come around: very often, they are more or less fluent in at least two languages (namely their own and that of the anthropologist) and they act as (note the expression!) mediators between two cultures:

> A great many of these interlocutors, complex individuals routinely made to speak for 'cultural' knowledge, turn out to have their own 'ethnographic proclivities and interesting histories of travel. Insider-outsiders, good translators and explicators, they've been around. [...] '[I]nformants' first appear as natives; they emerge as travelers. In fact, [...] they are specific mixtures of the two.[10]

This traditional approach to the informant is echoed in another aspect of fieldwork, the practice of participant-observation. Putting up the tent in a particular place in the village - more often than not in the supposed (geographical) "center" - implies, according to Clifford, another localizing strategy of anthropology, a "centering [of] the culture around a particular locus, the village" (Traveling Cultures 20, emphasis in the original). Hence, the village where fieldwork is conducted, and with it the place where the anthropologist's tent is put up, is frequently taken to be the core or at least taken to be at the core of the respective culture. The village (tent) comes to be the center and as that a synecdoche for the culture. This, however, does not only ignore the periphery but furthermore denies any outside connections, any cultural heterogeneity that may exist.

To avoid these problems, Clifford introduces the metaphor of traveling and juxtaposes it with "dwelling." He suggests to see culture as "much [as] a site of travel encounter as of residence; it is ... like a hotel lobby, urban café, ship, or bus" (Traveling Cultures 25). Taking culture to be like a "hotel" allows one to forego its image "as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies" (Traveling Cultures 25) and concentrate on its outside

10 James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997) 17-46, 19. Subsequently quoted as "Traveling Cultures."

connections, its exchange. Clifford's "hotel" becomes Bhabha's "halfway house," the in-between of cultural realms. This place is a space which is traveled by natives as well as "others" in a literal and a figurative sense; travelers, tourists, the media etc. travel in and through a culture.[11] This approach reverses the center-margin relation to a certain extent. And it is not only the open and changing nature of culture that is put into relief; inside-outside connections of its dwellers-travelers are likewise foregrounded. Again, closed cultural systems are refuted and exchanged for a model of an emerging culture.

Both, Clifford's as well as Bhabha's models show culture's heterogeneity; the impossibility of a fixed and stable culture is embodied in both concepts, which, however, emphasize different aspects. Homi Bhabha looks at the "space" of culture itself; his focus is the in-between and he presents culture as an interstitial phenomenon which does not feature pre-given cultural traits but is always already hybridized. This hybridity of cultural negotiation makes a fixed and final decision of identity and cultural meaning impossible and stresses the importance and necessity of multiple perspectives. James Clifford foregrounds the involved people in his model. He argues that the figure of the informant is mistakenly taken to be a "homebody" and shows that informants are figures of dwelling and traveling. The metaphor of traveling emphasizes the mobility of people and their multiple experiences which are far from being homogeneous and monocultural. Culture, in turn, is not seen as a "settled" and stable phenomenon but as process, as place of travel and movement, thus emphasizing its various inside outside-connections.

The implications and characteristics of these culture concepts and their enactment in terms of travel, motion and bridging of distances can be found

11 The figure of the traveler is not an unproblematic one. The "typical" traveler seems to be marked with regard to gender (mostly male), class (middle and upper class), and ethnicity ("white"). Therefore, it is important to maintain that not only literal travel is implied: 'travel ... can involve forces that pass powerfully through - television, radio, tourists, commodities, armies." (Traveling Cultures 28). Additionally, I would suggest that the traveler has to be distinguished from the tourist because the latter implies distance and superficiality, simply passing through instead of dwelling. The hotel for this figure, then, is more like a "home away from home," a safety space separating her/him from "the other," which is nevertheless "explored," gazed at from a distance.

in a lot of Native American and other so-called ethnicity literature. Culture is seen as something emerging - hence, the literary protagonists have to cope with various unstable, changing cultural backgrounds. Consequently, they do not remain in one place - neither bodily nor intellectually. In-between spaces, border passages, traveling figures and the like are prominent in the formation of cultural meaning and identity.

One example for the enactment of the metaphors of space and traveling is the poem "Excavation at Santa Barbara Mission" by Wendy Rose, a poet of mixed Hopi-Miwok-Anglo-American heritage.[12] I see it as part of Rose's larger work, in which she tries to come to terms with the different backgrounds that she incorporates in her identity. As a person of mixed ancestry, she has struggled with her different cultural backgrounds, trying to balance Anglo-American and Native American experiences. Being raised a Catholic and trained as an anthropologist add further dimensions to her identity, which do not always match: the feeling of being part of the very culture (and maybe also profession) which has exploited native peoples whose ancestry she shares makes a one-dimensional view of life impossible. Among other things, her poems address her struggle with these differing backgrounds.[13]

As many of Rose's poems, "Excavation at Santa Barbara Mission" is introduced by a two-line prologue, an "objective comment" which could be taken from a newspaper report on archaeological findings: "When archaeologists excavated Santa Barbara Mission in / California, they discovered human bones in the adobe walls" (1-2). It gives the reader what one could call "dry historical facts" - a reference is made to a past

12 Wendy Rose, Going to War with all my Relations. New and Selected Poems (Flagstaff: Northland, 1993) 6-8. Rpt. in Bone Dance. New and Selected Poems, 1965-1993 (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1994) 84-85. Quotations from the poem will be given with the line numbers in parenthesis.

13 A factual as well as fictional account of Rose's background is her autobiographical essay "Neon Scars" in I Tell You Now. Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers, ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1987) 251-61 (subsequently quoted as "Neon Scars"). The interviews "Wendy Rose" in Winged Words. American Indian Writers Speak, ed. Laura Coltelli (London: U of Nebraska P, 1990) 120-133, and "The Bones are Alive. An Interview with Wendy Rose," in Survival This Way. Interviews with American Indian Poets, ed. Joseph Bruchac (Tucson: Sun Tracks and U of Arizona P, 1987) 249-69, provide further information (subsequently quoted as "Rose Interview" and "Rose Bones").

which is not further identified but which is nevertheless used as background for the poem. The prologue thus gives the setting, echoing and refining the title. We are at Santa Barbara Mission, a building or group of buildings which was literally built with human beings.

When in line three the poetic self starts speaking, it is in stark contrast to the prologue: the tone is personal, "my trowel," and the setting is one of the present and the near fixture: "My pointed trowel / is the artist's brush / that will stroke and pry, / uncover and expose / the old mission wall" (3-7). However, the prologue, and with it the view into the past, is taken up insofar as the lyric persona is identified as archaeologist through the "pointed trowel," which is the tool with which to explore reality, the past as well as the present. An archaeologist's "job" is imagined here, an exciting exploration of the past. The metaphor of the archaeologist is central and brings forth several implications.[14] First of all, the process of discovery is compared to an artist's activity, to painting, i.e., literally drawing a picture of the world. Painting signifies "art" (in all its forms), and thus, art is compared to archaeology. Art, then, "strokes and pries, uncovers and ex- poses" (5-6) the world, it makes visible the multiple layers and helps to attain "knowledge" in its widest sense.[15] Art does not remain at the surface, it penetrates to deeper levels of the world, thus fragmenting "world" and piecing it together again, disrupting old connections of meaning and making new ones. As in archaeology, past, present, and fixture are tied together and are looked at through each other. This ties in with the second meaning of the "archaeologist." S/He can be seen as "traveler" who travels literally to far and distant worlds in terms of time as well as space and who then uncovers "knowledge" and insights about these worlds (in this sense an archaeologist can also be seen as artist and

14 In many of Rose's poems, the figure of the archaeologist/ anthropologist plays an important role, often in the ambiguous roles of exploring (digging - finding one's roots) and exploiting (destroying). See, e.g., her collection Lost Copper (Banning: Malla Museum, 1980).

15 The lyric selfs approach to the world, the archaeological digging, the dissection of the world into its multiple layers, and the search for disruptions and fractures of its surface, echoes Michel Foucault's methodological approach which he developed in The Archaeology of Knowledge (Pantheon, 1982). Later in the poem, when the archaeologist turns into a historian, discovering multiple versions of history, this parallel becomes even more striking. I am grateful to Christian Berkemeier for drawing my attention to this point.

vice versa). In the poem, the archaeologist self travels into the past and conjures up a harmonious memory of past worlds: T wanted to count myself / among the ancient dead / as a faithful neophyte / resting there and in love / with the padres / and the Spanish hymns" (10-15). She tries to take part in the past - again a time distance is crossed, this time by metaphorical travel. Moreover, the lyric speaker sees herself as "a faithful neophyte." In the Christian tradition, "neophyte" is a word which designates a newcomer into faith, someone who is newly baptized - one could say s/he is a new "arrival."[16] This meaning suggests that the lyric speaker identifies with the Christian/Catholic tradition ("count myself among," "in love with") and wants to take part in it. However, this image is left deliberately ambiguous, foreshadowing the further development in the poem. The word "neophyte" is also used in biology as term for a plant which has managed to grow and survive in a region to which it is foreign - in this sense, neophyte becomes a term for a displaced being. Thus, the image of the harmonious "arrival" and integration into the Christian community is juxtaposed with the metaphor of a displaced plant, of being a foreign element in a group. Arrival (being at home) and dislocation are juxtaposed.

This change from home to dislocation is also reflected in the following part of the poem, in both content and form: "A feature juts out. Marrow / like lace, piece of a skull, / upturned cup, fingerbones / scattered like com / and ribs interlaced / like cholla" (16-21). The speaker's excited, almost happy mood of the first part turns into anxiety. Short sentences and units mirror the quick and heavy breathing as well as the speaker's fear. This is enforced by run-on lines, which oppose the line breaks and create a new, quick and uneven, restless and even agitated rhythm. The lyric self s mood is mirrored by the change of the surroundings: the mission building starts to fall apart. Archaeological findings - "objects" - turn out to be parts of the human skeleton ("marrow," "skull," "fingerbones," "ribs") which reduces the "cold" distance between the archaeologist and her objects. The

16 A neophyte can also be a (newly baptized) convert to a religious body as well as a newly ordained priest (in the Roman Catholic Church) - on a more general level, a neophyte is simply a "novice", a beginner.

positive image of exploring the past turns into a destructive enterprise, the traveler and artist becomes an intruder

The falling apart of the mission building also reflects the mingling of the speaker's different "roles" or beings. The poetic self's body and the archaeological objects seem to intermingle - "So many bones / mixed with the blood / from my own knuckles / that dig and tug / in the yellow dust" (22-26); the subject (the archaeologist) and the objects to be examined (the dead Indians) are no longer clearly separated, and consequently, the distance between self and other is crossed and bridged - a distinct difference between subject and object, self and other can no longer be maintained. Furthermore, this fragmentation of the body signifies the fragmentation of identity on a more literal level. Thus, this image can also be read as a collision of different aspects of the lyric speaker's identity - the archaeologist and the Native American. If one reads the archaeologist in a very stereotypical way, the clash becomes more obvious: typically a member of the dominant society, the archaeologist intrudes into a dominated one to explore it.[17] Thus, as archaeologist the speaker in this poem can be seen as a member of the very people who built the mission, thereby taking part in the destruction of Native American culture. This belies the effort of archaeology to pursue the preservation and furthering of Native American (or other) cultures. Furthermore, the "falling apart" of the mission building can be read as the destruction of the mission as separate, discrete place/space - the mission as separate(d) sphere is destroyed and re-built, "pieced" together again and therefore in a way re- claimed.

This image of destruction is further pursued in the following lines "How fragile / they have become / to float and fall / with my touch, / brittle white tips / shivering into mist" (27-32). It seems that everything falls apart under the hands of the lyric speaker (indicated by words like "fragile," "float and fall," "brittle"). Things begin to fade and disappear ("mist," "dust"). However, they are not given as lifeless objects: they are

17 The whole problematic issue of archaeology comes to the fore in this image, especially with regard to Native American cultures. Conflicts with regard to sacred sights, burial grounds, art works, treasures which are examined and dis-located into museums and archives are hinted at. Herself a trained anthropologist, Rose has first-hand experience of these sensitive issues (Rose Interview 125).

living things "'shivering" and "crouching": "... the deeper I go / the more I find / crouching in white dust, / listening to the whistle / of longbones breaking / apart like memories" (33-39). As Rose says in one of her interviews: "I think maybe it's [the symbol of the bones] argument against death. Maybe what I'm saying is that the bones are alive. They're not dead remnants but rather they're alive" (Rose Bones 262). The supposedly dead remnants of Native American culture, the "artifacts" obtain a new quality: they become symbols for life, for a new beginning, an image that is taken up later in the poem. Still, on the verge of such destruction, panic and anxiety change into hopelessness, helplessness, and shame because it is the lyric speaker's own boot prints that destroy not only the past but in a way also the future. Dreams vanish and with them the dreamed-of future disappears: the lyric speaker's tracks suck up both: "My hands empty themselves / of old dreams, / drain the future / into the moisture / of my boot prints" (40-44). The destruction of the archaeological objects (the boot prints indicate a careless trampling on the fragile objects) is met by a personal failure of expectations and dreams.

The concluding lines bring it into relief: "Beneath the flags / of three invaders, / I the hungry scientist / sustaining myself / with bones of / men and women asleep in the wall / who survived in their own way / Spanish swords, Franciscans / and their rosary whips" (45-53). The various facets of the lyric persona and the connected interests and characteristics clash violently, which is signified by the rather patriotic image of the three invaders' flags. These flags can be read as standing for the Catholic missionaries, for the Spanish invaders in general, and for the profession of the archaeologist, who is in a way also an invader into Native culture and trampling upon it. "[F]irst comes the explorer, then comes the military, then comes the missionary, then comes the anthropologist, then comes the tourist." (Rose Bones 258)18The lyric speaker - "[b]eneath the flags / of three invaders" - is marching into the other culture like a soldier. The im-

18 Rose does not only express her criticism of anthropology (and related professions like archaeology) in this image, she also refers to actual historical events. Furthermore, Clifford's notion of "traveling," the "forces that pass powerfully through" (Traveling Cultures 28) is mirrored in manifold ways. Traveling and "being traveled" by others intersect and a clear distinction between them is blurred.

age of the soldier, however, is twisted: the scientist is the one who sustains herself and her scientific reputation by exploiting the dead. She carries on the invaders work by disturbing and ripping apart the bones of dead people. On the one hand, this image draws attention to the manifold destruction of native cultures by the Spanish invasion, the Catholic missionary work, as well as the "destruction" brought about by archaeology. On the other hand, the role that art and science (can) play in the destruction of native cultures is touched upon.[19] The scientist/artist/archaeologist is exploiting culture for her own sake, to further her own reputation within the scientific/artistic community and maybe also beyond.

However, as we can see in these concluding lines, the various identities of the speaker do not only clash, they also intermingle. They juxtapose each other - this means that each aspect of identity helps to see each other aspect from a new angle - the body is fragmented and then fuses with other elements. Rose observes in "Neon Scars": "The colonizer and the colonized meet in my blood. It is so much more complex than just white and just Indian." (258)[20] The literal fragmentation of the body mirrors the fragmentation of identity. It also hints at the impossibility of one single self - showing Bhabha's open-endedness of questions of identity and meaning. However, the fusion with the "other" elements (the other fragmented bodies and body parts) shows that the different identities come to "blend," they come together in the lyric speaker. Note that the elements which "mingle" here are not pure, "whole," but fragmented - this mirrors Bhabha's and Clifford's view that cultures are never homogeneous, that they are always already hybrid. The lyric speaker turns into a hybrid character whose various facets grapple with each other. Although this does not happen easily, borders between these various parts, the distances,

19 This takes up the notion of "cultural imperialism," a term which was coined by Geary Hobson and which Rose develops in her own discussion of '"wannabes" and "whiteshamanism." Cf. her essay "Just What's All This Fuss About Whiteshamanism Anyway?" Coyote Was Here: Essays on Contemporary Native American Literary and Political Mobilization, ed. Bo SchOler (Aarhus: SEKLOS, 1994) 13-24. Subsequently quoted as "Whiteshamanism."

20 This quote illustrates what is also apparent in the poem: the notion of a "mixed identity" is taken to the beyond - a hybridity is not simply a "mixture" (a synthesis): instead, something new begins its presencing here. Thus, Rose's understanding of her own hybrid identity enacts Bhabha's in-between, the border area which signifies an ending (a boundary) and a beginning (a bridge).

are crossed and thus, she becomes a traveling figure, going back and forth between different perspectives on life.

The contrasting of various experiences indicate that the lyric speaker does not inhabit a single, stable place. Rather, she is an inhabitant of the in-between, living in the passageway between different (cultural) experiences. As the poem shows, the speaker is able to distance herself from her various facets of identity. She is Catholic and an archaeologist, but she also feels to be part of the Native community. Her identities as archaeologist and as Native American intermingle, she becomes a "neophyte" in the figurative sense: she leaves her role as the Native American artifact of archaeology and places herself within this field as active agent. As Rose writes about herself: "I am that most schizophrenic of creatures, an American Indian who is both poet and anthropologist" (Whiteshamanism 13). However, these various "schizophrenic" perspectives sensitize the lyric self and enable her to see that Native American culture was not destroyed completely but survived in its own unexpected way. The bones are "asleep in the wall" (50), they are not dead, which indicates the possibility of a viable future. Another image reinforces this possibility: the Catholic communion wafers, symbol for community and the last supper, implying Christ's death and resurrection, allude to a new beginning - the viability of the culture is confirmed.[21]

The religious metaphor is further expanded. Expressions which refer to the Catholic religion ("Franciscans," "rosary," "wafers," "priests") are juxtaposed with words that can be associated with Native American religion (e.g. "com," "cholla"). Above all, the last four lines (58 to 61), the repetition of the phrase "They built the mission with dead Indians" which sounds like a (religious) chant, reinforces this impression.[22] In this way,

21 I do not suggest that it is the Catholic faith which helps or has helped Native American cultures to survive - I want to point out the fact that this metaphor shows (maybe also despite Catholicism or any other missionary efforts) the possibility of a new beginning or rather continuation of native traditions.

22 Note that four can be interpreted as sacred number and that it is significant in many native traditions and religions: among other things, it signifies the four directions north, east, south, and west. The poem's conclusion with a reference to the four directions shows once again that the lyric self emphasizes a view which is multi-dimensional, taking into account not just one direction (the ending points to the "elsewhere") but attempting to obtain a "full," comprehensive picture on life.

another contested space is opened: the supposedly dead Native culture has evaded its complete destruction and conversion; instead it is interfused with Catholic belief, creating a new and flourishing culture. Again, a transcultural view is proposed and the lyric speaker "travels" in a metaphorical way between the different cultural realms and religions, bridging seemingly discontinuous spaces.

Furthermore, the repetition of the statement takes up the beginning of the poem, forming a frame around it. These lines are reminiscent of a chant, of a ritual - the repetition makes sure that the historic "fact" from the beginning is not forgotten. The repetition helps the poetic self to believe her own eyes, to face the terrible truth (she repeats the unbelievable in order to believe and understand) - thus, she comes to know another version of history, and, almost unwillingly, the archaeologist turns into a historian. The "dry" observation is contrasted with "emotional" experience: both comment on each other, thereby building a circle from beginning to the end of the poem.

As shown above, the various aspects of the speaker's identity struggle with each other. Archaeology, Catholic belief and Native American background clash because they seem to be incompatible. Nevertheless, the lyric speaker maintains a "balance" between the various facets in a way which makes an exchange, a communication between them possible. Thus, her world view becomes multi-dimensional - she looks at the world from several perspectives which oppose but do not exclude each other. The lyric speaker lives, therefore, in a field of tension; a fixed view on the world is always suspended. She lives in the in-between of culture, a contact zone, where the different cultural backgrounds enter into a dialogue and make exchange possible. This in-between "space," however, is not separated from "elsewhere" - through fragmentation and fusion the lyric self creates bridges that lead her beyond her own horizon. She becomes a traveling figure, moving back and forth between different experiences. Her self is a hybrid one and she uses her different backgrounds in a transcultural way: she refuses to be categorized and re-defines what it means to live on the border. She claims a whole self because of the various identities she knows, not in spite of them.

Identity is envisioned in terms of motion, of traveling, as experiences of contradicting views - separation and essentialization become impossible. In this respect literature can go beyond the theoretical conceptions I discussed above because culture and identity as emergent and changing phenomena are "enacted." They are "visualized" in the sense of being made visible as well as in the sense of projecting a vision. There is no "fixity," no "original culture" - not even in the most homogeneous surroundings. What can be shown for people from obviously different cultural backgrounds more easily can be applied to everybody: cultural identity is always in progress, something emerging and contested. Graham Swift used the phrase "storytelling animal" in reference to human beings.[23] I think that this image is very appropriate because it suggests that we continually narrate our own identity, adapting, assimilating, using transcultural techniques. What scholars like Gupta, Ferguson, Clifford and others show, namely the necessity to rethink the relation between cultures and places, the reconceptualization of notions of border and home, is also achieved in literature, of which Rose's work is just one outstanding example.[24] Culture is de-spatialized - in a somewhat paradoxical manner, the figure of the traveler helps to disrupt the fixed relation between culture and place. Once again, the myths of homogeneous cultures and stable traditions which are still so frequently promoted by nation states are revealed as constructions and imaginations.

23 Graham Swift, Waterland (London: Heinemann, 1983) 51.

24 Wendy Rose's poetry is by no means the only example for this kind of negotiation of cultural identity. Joy Harjo, for instance, devotes a number of her earlier poems to the traveling figure of Noni Daylight. Likewise, Sherman Alexie's work, e.g. Reservation Blues, features in-between figures, travelers who cross boundaries between cultural realms.

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