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UTOPIAN PASSPORT CONTROL
NARRATIVE, MOBILITY AND MOVEMENT CONTROL
IN J.G. SCHNABEL'S *INSEL FELSENBURG*

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Enjoying considerably popularity in its own day and again throughout the nineteenth century, Johann Gottfried Schnabel's sprawling and eccentric novel *Wunderliche FATA einiger See-Fahrer* (1731-43), better known as *Insel Felsenburg*, has long garnered interest only among specialist literary historians. Yet, a critical resurgence seems to be under way. While the total body of scholarship remains limited, some of the luminaries of German *Litteraturwissenschaft* have in recent years produced ground-breaking studies of Schnabel's utopian fiction, showing how this work resonates with key contemporary preoccupations of literary and cultural theory: Josef Vogl (2002) from the point of view of governmentality and economic rationality, Robert Stockhammer (2006) with an emphasis on literary cartography, and, most recently, Rüdiger Campe (2013) on information processing in the form of charts and statistics. As a result, *Insel Felsenburg* is experiencing an unexpected revival and has relocated from the periphery to the centre of current critical debate.

The present study relates tangentially to these recent contributions. In a broad sense, it shares the interest in the Foucaultian triad of space, knowledge and power, particularly the emphasis on the technologies through which this triad has been addressed at various historical junctures. However, it approaches this field from a point of view that, in spite of its evident importance, has so far escaped notice by literary historians, namely that of the modern institution of movement control and the nexus

of secure borders and passport requirements as its primary manifestation. As I argue, the narrative logic of Schnabel's novel can only be fully appreciated when taking into account its complex negotiations of mobility and movement control. Marking the confluence of two novelistic traditions, the utopian novel and the adventure novel, this novel depends equally on the settledness and the nomadism of its central characters, the former being the precondition for social order, the latter for encountering novelistic adventures. The formal specificity of the novel results from an attempt to resolve this conflict by channelling mobility into politically and morally acceptable paths – that is, by inventing a literary movement control regime.

This argument is set within a larger historical framework that draws together two major developments of modernity: On the one hand, the rise of a modern type of statehood capable of effectively projecting administrative power with a view to optimising the utilisation of human and material resources. On the other hand, the rise of the modern novel as a genre that embodies the modern form of subjectivity and gives voice to the bourgeoisie as the economically and culturally dominant class. The standard account of the history of the novel regards these developments as interconnected in the sense that socio-political change is seen to produce the conditions of possibility of the modern novel. While this causality is well-established, it can and should be complicated by taking into account movement control as a point where the two conflict rather than correlate. As John Torpey argues, the modern state is based on a monopolisation of the legitimate forms of mobility and the passport system is therefore a key instrument of modern governance (Torpey 2000, pp. 4-10). However, the novel remained wedded until the end of the eighteenth century to the opposite principle of unrestricted mobility; manifestations of what Bakhtin calls the

“chronotope of the *road*”, novelistic narratives of this period tended to be based on the movements of their protagonists along highways rife with adventure (Bakhtin 1981, pp. 243-245; Hunter 1975, p. 144). As Friedrich Schlegel was the first to intuit,¹ the emergence of effective passport systems would therefore inevitably challenge and potentially undermine the novel, robbing it of mobility as its main source of narrative dynamism, yet also forcing it to invent new plot models that align better with the modern reality of movement control.

As I argue in this essay, the conflict between the movement control of the modern state and the mobility-reliance of the modern novel forms a crucial framework for Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg*. Not only is this novel a natural point of departure for an exploration of the impact of movement control on novelistic narrative; it also illustrates the narratively productive tension between these two poles. Like utopian societies in general, Schnabel's Felsenburg depends for its survival and internal perfection on a strict separation from the surrounding world, in this case from Europe, which is represented as having descended into a state of chaos and vice. However, as an unintended effect of this separation, which is effected by the island community's founder, Albertus Julius, narrative itself becomes impossible and is gradually replaced by charts, maps, catalogues and statistics – taxonomical enumerations of people and things rather than true narrative syntagms. In order to sustain the storyline, Schnabel is forced to supplement his principle of seclusion with a principle of openness towards the world, enabling the inflow of people who can provide the novel with new narrative interest. Read in this way, the novel is structurally determined by the attempt to compromise between the need for political order, which, in accordance with the utopian tradition, is associated with strict movement control, and the need for

narrative, which is conversely linked to free mobility. While accounting for the structural peculiarities of Schnabel's novel, this literary movement control regime has a much wider historical significance as a starting point for the retooling of the novel from a narrative paradigm of mobility to new paradigms predicated instead on a broadly conceived principle of settledness.

Drawing on these preliminary remarks, the following sections present a three-stage analysis of the interfacing of movement control and narrative form in Schnabel's *Felsenburg*. As a first step, I analyse the initial closing of the island as a constitutional act that founds the model society both politically and morally. Secondly, I show how this closure produces a polarised worldview that, among other effects, leads to a perception of narrative as an immoral discourse, perfectly at home in pre-utopian Europe, but a dangerous contaminant on Felsenburg. Finally, I discuss how Schnabel gradually adjusts this initial structural concept by introducing a flexible movement control regime, thereby achieving a compromising between the conflicting principles of the utopia and the novel.

Utopian Borders

The narrative centre of *Insel Felsenburg* is the story of Albertus Julius, a young Saxon who in 1646 suffers shipwreck en route from London to the East Indies and is marooned alongside three other survivors on Felsenburg, a small and uninhabited island in the South Atlantic. With no prospect of being rescued, Albertus sets to work establishing a model society of virtuous and god-fearing citizens, which gradually grows larger as a result both of childbirths and the later influx of additional European settlers. The narrative begins in 1725, three-quarters of a century after the original

stranding, when Eberhard Julius, a distant relative to the by now ancient “Altvater”, arrives on Felsenburg. With Eberhard in the role of chronicler, Albertus relates the history of his utopian society, detailing how the dissolute Captain Lemelie initially challenged the supremacy of virtue before finally being eliminated, and how the island was then populated and transformed into “ein irrdisches Paradies” (I, 88).

This essay’s discussion of movement control and narrative structure leaves aside the novel’s complex baroque composition and the fanciful plot developments of its third and fourth volumes, taking its cue instead from what can be seen as the utopian society’s dual foundation myths. Related by Albertus, who is also their protagonist, these narratives adhere closely to the tradition of utopian literature by linking sovereignty and social order to the establishment of secure borders and the strict control of movements within and across these borders.

This nexus already plays a prominent role in the work that founded the utopian genre, Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516). Here, the territorial closure of Utopia against the outside world is a key structuring device that can be traced across a number of levels: the remoteness of the island, its fortress-like topography, the walls and thorny moats surrounding its cities, and even, as Louis Marin has pointed out, the urban geography with its reliance on segregated quarters (1973, pp. 158-160). Moreover, this border is supplemented by a movement control regime which not only outlaws private foreign travel, but also requires that anyone wanting to visit another city applies in advance for a passport-like document that prescribes the day of return (More 1994, p. 75). This multi-tiered system of borders and control measures serves as a precondition for social perfection. Accordingly, the island state’s founding myth relates how King Utopus as his first political initiative ordered that the land bridge

originally connecting the island to the mainland be dug up so that his subjects could live in peace from their barbarian neighbours (p. 56). The severance of outside relations and the establishment of a secure border are seen here as a constitutional act that that set in motion a process of civilisation.

The first of Felsenburg's foundational myths closely echoes this emphasis on delimitation in More's *Utopia*. Here as well, the political closure against the outside world is prefigured in the island's topography. When Albertus is shipwrecked off the island, he initially finds foothold on a sand bank, which, along with an underwater reef, makes up a first line of defence against potential intruders. Using a small boat spared by the wreckage, he and the other survivors make their way to the island itself, only to find it protected by a steep and unbroken cliff which at no point allows a ship to anchor. Only with "Leib- und Lebens-Gefahr" (Schnabel 1731-43, I, 162; further references to the novel are given with indication of volume and page number only) is Albertus able to scale the cliff, and from the top he is able to overlook "das ganzte Lust-Revier dieser Felsen-Insul [...], welches rings herum von der Natur mit dergleichen starcken Pfeilern und Mauren umgeben, und so zu sagen, verborgen gehalten wird" (I, 156-7). This first description brings together two decisive features of the island's topography, namely that it protects against hostile incursions while at the same time concealing the paradisaical interior. Jan Knopf is no doubt correct in regarding these features as a topographical representation of the early bourgeoisie's self-image which juxtaposed an inconspicuous exterior with a materially, morally, and emotionally rich interior (1978, pp. 85-87). Yet, like More before him, Schnabel assigns a further political dimension to the topography, associating it with territorial delimitation as the precondition for a well-ordered society. So as to emphasise that

the closure of Felsenburg is not just a matter of geographical coincidence, Schnabel, as discussed more fully below, has the first generation of settlers perfect it by building guardhouses and smoothing the face of the cliff. In this way, the topographical prefigurations are fully achieved in politics as the natural barriers are transformed into true territorial borders.

The second foundational myth details a different form of closure with no immediate equivalent in the utopian tradition. Securing the external borders evidently only makes sense if a degree of internal homogeneity has been established – that is, if the distinctions that the border is meant to enforce are already in effect. This is not the case in Felsenburg's earliest history. There is a contaminant among the four shipwrecks, the French Captain Lemelie, whose presence on the island violates its moral purity and thereby rules out the possibility of social perfection. As can already be gleaned from his religious beliefs and social position, Lemelie is an outsider in relation to the other survivors – Albertus, his master Van Leuven, and the master's wife, Concordia. Being a catholic is a negative quality in a novel whose religious outlook is distinctly Lutheran. Being an aristocrat, on the other hand, is not in itself a problem – the virtuous Van Leuven also belongs to the nobility – but it is unfortunate to insist, as Lemelie does, on distinctions of rank in a situation calling for solidarity and democratic decision making (Voskamp 1968, p. 149). These attributes render Lemelie suspect from the outset, yet the conflict between the survivors only comes to a head because of his irredeemable wickedness. The Frenchman repeatedly violates the virtuous code of conduct of the other characters, showing himself to be lazy rather than industrious, boastful rather than modest, and selfish rather than community-minded. These transgressions, however, pale in comparison with his subsequent behaviour.

As a twisted counterpoint to the utopian plans of Albertus's party, Lemelie proposes that the three surviving men share the only women on the island, Concordia; since rescue is unlikely, he reasons, they should procreate copiously and thereby create a flourishing colony predicated on incest and promiscuity. Needless to say, this proposal is rejected indignantly.

Albertus, as the narrator of this part of the novel, never hides the fact that Lemelie will be eliminated; on the contrary, he openly announces it more than 50 pages before it happens. As this frankness makes apparent, suspense in this novel rarely concerns *what* will happen, but only *how* the outcome will be achieved. Yet, with respect to the problem of closure, the means are crucial as the virtuous islanders cannot simply murder Lemelie without tarnishing their virtue. The killing of Lemelie is therefore narratively designed to minimise subjective agency on the part of his antagonists. One night Lemelie tries to rape Concordia, but is stopped by Albertus. A fight breaks out between the two men, and Albertus flees with the raging Frenchman in close pursuit. In the darkness Lemelie runs himself through with a bayonet-fitted musket that the soon-to-be patriarch in self-defence holds out in front of himself. In this way, Lemelie becomes "sein selbst eigener Mörder" (I. 211) while Albertus preserves his saintly innocence.

The closure of Felsenburg is thus achieved in two parallel steps: on the one hand, a transformation of the island's topographical barriers into a secure political border and the associated introduction of a movement control regime overseeing and restricting all traffic to and from the island; and on the other hand, what might be called an *ethical cleansing* of the island, which is achieved with the death of Lemelie. Together, these two operations divide the novel's world into an inner and an outer

space defined primarily in territorial and political terms and overlapping with the novel's key normative distinction between good and evil. As in More's *Utopia*, this spatial segregation is foundational in terms of the establishment of an ideal society, the continued existence of which is seen to depend on its separation from a corrupt outside world. The positive strategies of governance that characterise Albertus's later rule of the island are at best of secondary importance and make sense only within the context of a homogeneous society protected by borders and movement control.

Narrative and Inventory

The delimitation of Felsenburg has consequences far beyond the question of the island community's political foundation. The insistence on closed borders produces a series of binary oppositions that transform the fictional universe into an either/or world without intermediate positions or nuances and ensure that each individual element is assigned unequivocally to either pole. This binarism manifests above all in a Manichean worldview that portrays the world as divided along correlating political and moral lines. Accordingly, *Insel Felsenburg* is set in two ontologically different and territorially segregated localities that translate the novel's moral antitheses into a spatial register: the evil Europe and the good Felsenburg.

Europe is represented as a sinful continent where lies, sexual license, and violence are rampant, and where evildoers of all descriptions are able to pursue their wicked schemes with impunity. Schnabel crafts his stories from this space by constantly reworking a master narrative in which virtuous and god-fearing protagonists are harassed by a rich assortment of "Bösewichte" and "Schand-Buben". The autobiographies of the individual islanders, all of which begin in Europe and end on Felsen-

burg, consist in their European parts of catalogues of criminal behaviour and seemingly endless variations on the theme of continental evil. The European space is governed by a logic prescribing that any careless display of money leads to a robbery, that carefree students inevitably end up in duels, that virtuous women are invariably beleaguered by lecherous men, and that the virtuous are tormented and often killed by their wicked enemies. The crimes invariably take on extreme and absolute forms, as for example when a seemingly innocent boat outing – in Judith van Mander’s story – leads to attempted kidnapping, rape, and forced marriage, or when a seemingly jovial innkeeper – in David Rawkin’s narrative – turns out to be a robber and mass murderer. Europe is descended into a Hobbesian state of nature where everyone fights everyone else, and where humanity itself, as Arno Schmidt observes, has disintegrated into “einen Haufen vagabundierender Einzelwesen” (1971, p. 44). The continent is seen as beyond reform, and exile is therefore the only rescue for the virtuous minority.

On Felsenburg the refugees find a sanctuary diametrically opposed to the broken society they left behind. The mortal sins have been exorcised and replaced by cardinal virtues. Unlike More’s Utopia, where constant surveillance is a key means of upholding moral discipline, the political order that Albertus Julius establishes eliminates the very basis of sinful or criminal behaviour. Crimes of acquisition are meaningless under the condition of perfect economic equality, sexual transgressions are prevented by means of prescient family policies, and typical European ailments such as beggary, vagrancy, and idleness are countered by a stern work ethic and a sensible distribution of burdens. Albertus’s island is untouched by European evil, and its citizens therefore live a life of plenty under the guidance of wholesome Protestant values.

Like evil in the European space, virtue on Felsenburg tends towards pure and absolute forms. As a result of the strict regulation of mobility between them, the novel's two spaces are homogenised around the poles of evil and virtue: evildoers are banned from Felsenburg, while virtuous individuals flee from Europe. The establishing of a border leads to a mutual exchange of foreign elements so that the spatial and moral segregation is not compromised. Virgilia van Cattmers expresses the European exclusion of virtue, declaring that "die böse Welt fast gar keine Frommen mehr, sie mögen auch jung oder alt seyn, unter sich leiden will" (I, 382), while David Rawkin describes Felsenburg as a place "allwo die Tugenden in ihrer angebohrnen Schönheit anzutreffen, hergegen die Laster des Landes fast gänzlich verbannet und verwiesen sind." (I, 366)

The novel's geographical Manichaeism is reflected in a similar Manichaeism of character representation which conceives of individuals on the basis of a sharp distinction between virtue and evil and sublimates personal conflicts into cosmic struggles between good and evil. Far from being cast as individuals in the modern sense of the word, that is, as eminently distinctive beings defined by the uniqueness of personal experience, characters are seen as an agglomeration of general attributes and moral values (Mog 1976, p. 70). Their individuality is not given "horizontally" with reference to the differences between them, but "vertically" with reference to their position within a hierarchy of normative predicates. In this sense, characters do not portray individuals, but measure degrees of moral perfection. The showdown between Albertus and Lemelie is important because it establishes the upper and lower extremes of this hierarchy and thereby creates the yardstick by which the novel's other characters are measured. Accordingly, both are represented in religious terms: Alber-

tus is explicitly “ein andrer Adam” (I, 257) placed on the island to foster a new humanity, and his high age and venerable appearance further accentuates his saintly if not God-like nature. Lemelie, on the other hand, is “der eingefleischte Teufel” (I, 210), and the sheer transgressiveness of his crimes, which include patricide and incest, brings to the fore his close association with the societal collapse of Europe.

However, the binarisms generated by Felsenburg’s borders not only affect places and people, but extends to the narrative structure of the novel itself. The novel’s various parts are organised differently depending on whether they are set on Felsenburg or in Europe, and whether the main source of narrative agency lies with the virtuous or the wicked. Whereas evil Europe and its evil masses form a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of intrigues and complications, Schnabel has grave difficulties crafting novelistic stories about the good citizens of Felsenburg. The plot falls apart from transitioning to the island space: persons, places, and actions no longer combine into narrative syntagms, but are arranged paradigmatically in the form of lists and inventories.

A partial explanation for this textual dualism lies in a conflation of narrative and ethical categories typical of early modernity. Not coincidentally the concepts of intrigue and plot waiver between a moral meaning (ploy, scheme) and a narratological meaning (fable, storyline). Modern readers can easily differentiate between these meanings and have little difficulty imagining a novel whose storyline is *not* dependent on intrigues in the moral sense of the word. In the early eighteenth century, however, this difference was less obvious as novels tended to rely narratively on actions that contravened accepted moral standards and the established social order. It is this fact of literary history that informs Schlegel’s contention that a perfectly organised police

and passport system would spell the end of the novel as a genre. If the novelistic narrative is based on actions that undermine civil order (what Schlegel calls “das Polizeiwidrige” (1988, p. 154)), it will inevitably lose its real-world anchoring when this civil order is effectively supported by police and movement control institutions.

The same logic is at work in Schnabel’s novel, albeit as a literary strategy rather than a theoretical argument. The failure to distinguish between plot as storytelling and plot as scheming entails that a change in the moral environment inevitably trigger a change of narrative mode. While chaos and crime make the European space seem rife with narrative, the perfect social order on Felsenburg abolishes the immoral behaviours that for Schnabel form the only conceivable basis for a novel. Felsenburg not only eliminates all potential conflicts, thereby greatly reducing the scope for narrative; narrative itself is seen as a dangerous contaminant to be banned from the island. This logic renders the whole idea of a utopian novel paradoxical: the politics of utopia negates the novelistic narrative and *vice versa*.

As the territorial border also marks the border between two textual universes, the phasing out of the plot is concurrent with the crossing of the border. Eberhard Julius’s arrival on the island is a particularly striking case in point insofar as it brings to a conclusion his personal story, which, like all other autobiographical narratives in the novel, is shaped by the corruption of Europe, while at the same time signalling the beginning of an altogether different mode of writing. The arrival is celebrated by a display of fireworks, the description of which offers a telling first glimpse of the textual practice associated with Felsenburg:

Es war am 12. Novemb. 1725. allbereit nach Untergang der Sonnen, da wir in gehöriger Weite vor dem Felsen die Ancker sincken liessen, weil sich der Capitain vor den ihm gantz wohlbekandten Sand-Bäncken hütete. So bald dieses geschehen, ließ er kurtz auf einander 3. Canon-Schüsse thun, und bald hernach 3. Raqueten steigen. Nach Verlauff einer Viertheils Stunde musten abermahls 3. Canonen abgefeuert, und bey jedem 2. Raqueten gezündet werden, da denn alsofort von dem Felsen mit dreyen Canonen-Schüssen geantwortet wurde, wobey zugleich 3. Raqueten gegen unser Schiff zugeflogen kamen, welches [...] eine ungemeine Verwunderung verursachte. Der Capitain aber ließ noch 6. Schüsse thun, und biß gegen Mitter-Nacht alle Viertel Stunden eine Raquete steigen, auch Lust-Kugeln und Wasser-Kegel in die See spielen, da denn unser Raqueten allezeit andere von dem Felsen entgegen kamen, um Mitter-Nacht aber von beyden Seiten mit 3. Canonen-Schüssen beschlossen wurde. (I, 91)

The context of this peculiarly detailed description of the fireworks is the fact that Albertus Julius and Captain Wolfgang prior to the latter's departure for Europe agreed on a signal to be exchanged upon his return. However, more is at stake in terms of literary technique. The pedantry of this description forces us to consider if it is Schnabel's naivety that shines through here – if he is simply surrendering to his boyish “Lust an der Artollerie” (IV, 40)? While this may well be the case, a more satisfying explanation lies in that fact that lists of this type are simply the way in which the Felsenburg parts of the novel are organised. Because of its ties to European immorality, the traditional novelistic plot has no place on the island. Accordingly, the narrative syntagms are broken up and replaced by an inventorialising style that represents the island via lists and charts rather than in the form a plot.

Although the narrative flow is never brought to a complete standstill, numerous examples of similar anti-narrative devices can be found distributed across all textual levels. Apart from the many lists of people, professions, animals and crops, the in-

ventory serves as the key structuring device for the larger part of the novel's first volume. Shortly after Eberhard's arrival, the "Altvater" states his intention to undertake an inspection tour aiming to establish the current state of the island community; and since such a progress through the island's various "Räume" also offers an opportunity to show the newcomers around while at the same time introducing them to the island's history, Albertus decides to set off without delay. With an expression that encapsulates the narrative breakdown in the Felsenburg parts of the novel, this tour is referred to as a "General-Visitation" (I, 108) – that is, an undertaking governed by a desire for enumerative exhaustiveness rather than narrative dynamism. In structural terms, the short sojourns in each of the island's nine settlements serve as chapter dividers: while the travellers spend the evenings listening to the patriarch relating a part of his life story, the days are taken up by the inspection work itself, the results of which are presented in the form of short descriptive accounts of the topography of each village, its strengths in agriculture and manufacturing, and the natural resources available in the vicinity. Importantly, the genuinely narrative segments are all set either in Europe or on Felsenburg prior to its segregation from the outside world; in its perfected state the island can seemingly only be represented in the form of inventories.

The paradox of Albertus's "General-Visitation" is that its outcome is given in advance, and that it could not possibly form the basis for a program of political optimisation; as the island is already to epitome of social order, the travelling inspectors will inevitably find everything to be in a perfect condition. Both narratively and politically, the inspection tour is therefore pointless, and its findings reinforce the impression that its chief effect is to eliminate the novelistic plot. The island's various *Räume* are

so completely well-ordered, and its citizens so morally upstanding, that there is nothing left to narrate. Moreover, as the utopian logic demands that life on the island is perfect in every way, the individual settlements must necessarily be identical in all important respects – individuality would be a deviation from conceptual perfection. Even if the island's economy does involve a certain division of labour, the striking feature of the reports from each settlement is their complete uniformity which can be traced down to the choice of words. The villagers in Alberts-Raum, for example, can boast of “well-made barns, stables and gardens” (I, 109); Davids-Raum is praised for its “beautiful gardens, barns and stables” (I, 134); in Stephans-Raum the visitors not only find “good barns and stables”, but also the “most beautiful gardens” (I, 159); and the description of Christians-Raum emphasise the village's “barns, stables and uncommonly beautiful gardens” (I, 337). Five of the nine settlements are said to display “perfect housekeeping”, four times the narrator notes the “well-kept fields”, and all descriptions highlight the villagers' industry and skill.

The inspection journey and the inventorialising gaze in general have recently elicited commentary by Josef Vogl and Rüdiger Campe, both of whom connect the novel's enumerative tendencies to bureaucratic and epistemic practices in its historical surrounds. According to Vogl, the inventory is anchored in a model of political and economic rationality that receives its most important expression in the eighteenth-century academic discipline of *Kameralwissenschaft*. Campe, on the other hand, whose focus is the “poetics” of knowledge, argues that the preponderance of charts, lists, and catalogues is connected to the rise of statistics and to the *Staatsbeschreibung* as a mode of bureaucratic self-reflexion. While differing in many aspects, the two studies both draw on Foucault's notion of governmentality and interpret Schnabel's invento-

ries as a mode of information processing closely aligned with the bureaucratic optimisation of human and natural resources.

These interpretations have much to recommend them. Schnabel's enumerations are in fact to a large extent concerned with the dual empirical fields of contemporary bureaucratic information gathering: the territory and its population (Foucault 2001, p. 979). While Albertus's inspections focus on economic matters and therefore pay particular attention to the fields, stables, mines, and manufactories of each settlement, later efforts are aimed at taking a census of the human resources: its growth, its gender and age spread, and its geographical distribution. The chronicles that Albertus increasingly consults when the foundation narrative has come to an end – another anti-narrative strategy insofar as the pure chronology of the records takes the place of a true narrative logic – consistently fluctuate between two topics, namely the annual harvest yield and the number of child births:

Im Jahr 1650. den 16. Mart. beschenckte uns der Himmel wiederum mit einer jungen Tochter, welche in der heil. Tauffe den Nahmen Maria bekam, und im folgenden 1651ten Jahre wurden wir abermahls am 14. Dec. mit einem jungen Sohne erfreuet, welcher den Nahmen Johannes empfing. Dieses Jahr war wegen ungemeiner Hitze sehr unfruchtbar an Getreyde und andern Früchten, gab aber einen vortrefflichen Wein-Seegen, und weil von vorigen Jahren noch starcker Getreyde-Vorrath vorhanden, wusten wir dennoch von keinen Mangel zu sagen. (I, 282)

Later, the focus on the population comes to the fore and receives its most extreme manifestations in a series of verbatim excerpts from the island's "Kirchen-Register" (II, 174; 508) and particularly in the ten "Genealogische TABELLEN über das ALBERT-JULISCHE Geschlechte" (I, 478-89) that appear as appendices to Volume I.

These charts offer a complete graphic representation of the family bonds between all islanders, dead as well as living, with all but the main characters reduced to white or black dots. Importantly, this extensive family tree comprising a total of 429 souls does nothing to facilitate the reader's orientation in the novel – on the contrary, it is a “pure” inventory that collates abstract demographic information while further transposing the representation of the island from a narrative to an enumerative register.

Yet, these examples notwithstanding, the Foucaultian power-knowledge nexus is insufficient to explain the novel's propensity for inventories. First, these inventories are strongly associated with the island in its state of perfection; they fail to appear in the foundation phase of the island's history, when their capacity for political optimisation was most urgently needed, and conversely appear in profusion later on, when they have little to contribute. Secondly, apart from the economy and population, the inventorialising gaze is also directed at a range of objects with no bureaucratic relevance – the Felsenburg parts of the novel not only comprise harvest reports and genealogical tables, but also a survey of the seating plan at Wolfgang's wedding, including a practical “Grund-Riß” showing the location of each table (II, 2-3); a list of the distribution of prizes at a shooting contest (II, 69-70); an account of the disposition of pipes in the island's new church organ (III, 58-9); and several repeat performances of the description of maritime saluting that was occasioned by Eberhard's arrival.

The enumerative style is therefore not primarily indicative of an amalgamation of bureaucratic data collection and the poetics of the novel (Campe 2013, p. 235), but rather, as argued in this essay, a sign of narrative bewilderment caused by Schnabel's attempt to disentangle the novel from a narrative paradigm of free mobility. The es-

establishment of closed borders in the early history of the island, while politically beneficial, effectively eliminates the basis for novelistic plots. This overreliance on mobility restrictions transforms Felsenburg into a static space that offers no development, conflict, or linear time – only, as Louis Marin notes of the utopian genre in general, an eternal, ritualistic repetition of the same (1984, p. xxiv). This stasis can only be represented in non-narrative, non-dynamic forms: lists, maps, charts, tables, and inventories.

The Passport Regime

Felsenburg's closure against the outside world results in three sets of binary oppositions: between geographical localities (Europe vs Felsenburg), moral qualities (evil vs virtue), and modes of textual organisation (narrative vs inventory). Spun out between these oppositions, the novel unfolds as a permanently repeated movement from one pole to the other – from Europe to Felsenburg, from evil to virtue, and from narrative to inventory.

This unidirectionality creates a serious conundrum for Schnabel. If the ideal society is to survive, it is necessary to have borders in place that protect the islanders against an outside world dominated by evil. A state of total seclusion, like the impenetrability articulated in the island's topography, would be politically preferable, yet this is not feasible – for two reasons. Thematically, a certain level of outside contact is necessary to ensure that the economy and population develop optimally: full use of the available natural resources requires specialised craftsmen while the community's healthy reproduction involves finding overseas spouses for the islanders' children. At the formal level, Schnabel needs the outside world to preserve the novel's narrative

momentum. If the story is to retain an interest exceeding that of registers and inventories and thereby provide the “*Gemüths-Ergötzung*” (I, ii) that readers are promised in the first volume preface, it is necessary to import at regular intervals a shipload of immigrants whose autobiographies can satisfy the readers’ narrative desire. As a result, the island community, as Josef Vogl has shown, opens up more and more as the novel progresses (2002, p. 201), albeit in a very tentative and considered way.

The solution is a state of semi-permeability that strikes a balance between the rigidity of closure and the perils of openness. This state is upheld by a passport regime tasked with controlling the traffic across the border in such a way that dangerous contacts are prevented while contacts deemed to be useful are facilitated. Like the original state of closure, this passport regime manifests both topographically and politically. On the former count, the ongoing development of the island provides two striking illustrations of the passport logic of tactical openings and closings of the border. As noted, the cliffs surrounding the island form a natural barrier against intruders, and later in the novel this barrier is even perfected: guardhouses are built in the four cardinal directions of the compass, and a program of chiselling and rock blasting renders the cliff wall so smooth that “auch nicht einmahl eine Katze hinaufklettern, und die Höhe erreichen können” (I, 418). However, the islanders eventually discover that there is an alternative way into the interior. One of the island’s lesser rivers runs into the ocean via a canal that leads straight through the cliff; if the flow of the river is blocked, the canal empties of water and a natural staircase emerges, offering easy access to the beach (I, 193-4). By constructing a lock Albertus and his sons provide the community with a means of opening and closing the otherwise impenetrable border that the rock wall represents. Several years later, Albertus orders

that four tunnels be dug in the four corners of the world, leading through the rock to the beach below. The tunnels are camouflaged so that they cannot be seen from the seaside, and both entrances and exits are protected by “tieffen Abschnitten und andern Verhindernissen, solcher Gestalt, daß niemanden, ohne die herab gelassenen kleinen Zug-Brücken [...] weder herüber- noch hinüber zu kommen vermögend ist.” (I, 418-9) If the steep cliff wall is a topographical representation of the self-imposed isolation in Felsenburg’s earliest history, the lock and the drawbridges represent instead the passport regime that later replaces closure as the principal strategy for managing the island’s foreign relations. The function of both is to transform the impassable rock wall into an osmotic membrane enabling a flexible regulation of cross-border traffic.

However, these arrangements only solve part of the issue. Being able to open and close the border at will is a first step, but the real problem is to know who should be allowed to leave and, more importantly, enter the island state. It is therefore necessary to supplement the now semi-permeable border with an extended system of passport control capable of identifying the incoming European asylum seekers, determine their moral worth, and clarify the legitimacy of their request for residency.

The need for a passport system of this kind is particularly pressing as the islanders’ virtue goes hand in hand with a certain gullibility: suspiciousness being seen as incompatible with the protestant-Christian ideals to which they aspire, they always expect the best from their neighbours. However, as the early history of the colony shows, this naivety is easily exploitable. Captain Lemelie in particular is a master of dissimulation and repeatedly fools his virtuous companions by hiding his true character behind a mask of virtue. An oft-repeated pattern has Lemelie openly reveal his

viciousness in speech or action and then suddenly change his tack so completely that the other survivors think that a permanent change for the better has occurred – in spite of the fact, noted by Fotis Jannidis, that a total character transformation of this type never occurs in the novel (1996, p. 91). A characteristic instance takes place when Van Leuven one morning catches Lemelie aiming at him with a rifle. Initially agitated, he is placated by the rogue's fervent professions of amity: "Mein edler Freund, ich spüre daß ihr vielleicht einen bösen Verdacht habt, als ob ich nach eurem Leben stünde; Allein entweder lasset selbigen fahren, oder erschiesset mich auf der Stelle, den was ist mir mein verdrießliches Leben ohne eure Freundschaft auf dieser einsamen Insul sonsten nütze" (I, 216). A paragon of Christian morality like Van Leuven knows only one answer to such a plea, namely assurances of "true and loyal friendship" and "many good admonitions" to stay on the path of virtue. Soon after, Lemelie lures his new friend onto the cliffs and pushes him over the edge.

Gullibility is the islanders' Achilles heel. Whenever new immigrants arrive, they are faced with the question of their moral mettle, and if no reliable means exists of determining this, it is safer to reject all: "Lasset sie fahren, meine Kinder, weil wir nicht wissen, ob es gute oder böse Menschen sind" (I, 286), Condordia advises her sons when, at a time before the influx of Europeans has begun, they spot three ships on the horizon. In order to prevent immigration from undermining the moral homogeneity that has existed on the island before the death of Lemelie, the asylum seekers have to produce the equivalent of a passport that identifies them morally.² This passport functionality is entrusted to the autobiographical narratives that make up the bulk of the first two volumes of the novel. By virtue of its potential for identity representation, the autobiography is eminently suited as an instrument of moral scrutiny.

That the immigrant autobiographies are more than mere evening entertainment is apparent from the way in which they are introduced by the frame narrative. It is conspicuous how the new arrivals – but not the original settlers and their descendants – are systematically asked to give testimony about their past lives in the form of an autobiographical narrative. Accordingly, the first volume contains the stories of the first generation of immigrants, the second volume those of the settlers who arrived alongside Eberhard Julius, and the third volume, where the “symphony of biographies” gradually fades out (Stockhammer 2006, p. 133),³ the stories of three latecomers. Moreover, it is always the “Altvater” himself who encourages the immigrants to narrate their lives, and although his requests are always delivered with exquisite politeness, the inquisitorial undertone is unmistakable. Both features become apparent when Albertus at the beginning of volume II announces “sein gantz besonderes Verlangen [...], nach und nach bey bequemer Gelegenheit eines jeden, letztlich mit angekommenen, Europäers wahrhaffte Lebens-Geschicht anzuhören.” (II, 6) Although delivered “mit guter Art”, this phrase, which is repeated with variations several times in the course of the novel, is not simply a testimony to the patriarch’s curiosity or social nature. On the contrary, it shows that the autobiographical narratives form part of a rite of passage, the successful completion of which is the precondition for being accepted into the community (Schmidt 1971, p. 39).

If autobiographical narratives are capable of fulfilling this passport-like function, it is due to several factors. First, the autobiographies take the form of ritualistic stories of transition between the novel’s European and Felsenburgian spaces.⁴ Each repeats the novel’s overall movement, reporting without exception of virtuous Europeans who are ruthlessly persecuted before finally finding an asylum on Felsenburg. The

narratives are not stories of individual education and maturation as the characters are fully formed at the outset and remain unchanged by the events that happen to them; it is not their function to detail the formation of character, but rather to describe the path that lead the individuals across the threshold between the novel's two universes. In this way the micro structure mirrors the macro structure so that the precarious transition from Europe to Felsenburg, from evil to goodness, and from narrative to inventory becomes a key constituent of the novel's form. As a result of this design, the novelistic plots that fill the autobiographies are subsumed under a teleological structure that nullifies their dangerous association with immorality by signalling in advance the place of their overcoming: the well-ordered Felsenburg.

Further, the autobiographical narratives are seen as a means of moral identification and thereby compensate for the islanders' naivety. In their autobiographies the immigrants testify to their record of moral conduct: they carefully describe themselves, account for their place of birth, lineage, and whereabouts from birth to the time of narration. Moreover, the narratives offer evidence of correct behaviour in even the most difficult situations. Repeatedly, the protagonists are subjected to tests, and the passing of these tests is seen as proof of their moral worth. In this way, the immigrants justify themselves to the existing population and thereby qualify for residency.

Thirdly, the legitimising function of the autobiography is supported by the fact that dissimulation is seen as inconceivable in this genre, just as it would be unthinkable to lie in the confession booth. The autobiographical narrative is a medium of truth where the morality of the individual manifests in its true and undistorted form. Not even a notorious liar such as Lemelie is immune to the autobiographical truth

serum. When, mortally wounded, he relates his life story to Albertus and Concordia, it is expressly *not* a deathbed confession, since he has no regrets for his evil deeds and, as a self-declared Satanist, does not fear for his soul. Lemelie's sudden honesty is due rather to the autobiographical form itself, which is seen in this novel as a mode of expression that attracts the truth and cannot be undermined by lies. The autobiography is cast as a privileged source of truth about the person, and as such it can be used to protect the island against the deceitfulness of the outside world.

Utopia and the Novel

As a utopian novel predicated on both the separation and association of its two spaces, *Insel Felsenburg* is centrally concerned with the control of mobility across borders. In terms of design, it can be regarded as a novel that conducts experiments with movement control, observing the political and narrative effects and making adjustments so as to counter unintended outcomes and emerging problems. The result is a dynamic structure that evolves in three partially overlapping stages. The first stage is the political founding of Felsenburg which takes places as a dual act of delimitation aiming to secure the external border while at the same time homogenising the community internally. In the second stage, this emphasis on closure has produced a society so orderly and morally just that it cannot provide material for a novelistic plot, and narrative is therefore displaced by the inventory as a the main principle of textual organisation. This situation being untenable, the original experiment with closed borders is replaced, as the third stage, by a flexible passport system that allows a certain amount of immigration, thereby ensuring Felsenburg's demographic and narrative viability.

From the point of view of literary history, Schnabel's movement control regime must be seen as a bid to address a moral and poetological dilemma of the eighteenth-century novel. Situated in a transitional period between what Anthony Giddens regards as traditional and modern forms of statehood (1985, pp. 7-34), the novel could no longer wholeheartedly embrace its roots in the relatively underpoliced societies of early modernity without exposing itself to claims of subversiveness and immorality; on the other hand, it could not simply sever all ties with the past, since its capacity for narrative emplotment was still heavily reliant on the adventures that could be encountered while travelling the lawless highways. Schnabel's endeavours to merge the utopia and the novel greatly amplify this problem, yet the eventual introduction of a flexible movement control regime enables a compromise. While narrative has no place on the island in its perfected state, it is able to survive as a transitional medium that not only tracks each newcomer's itinerary from Europe to Felsenburg, but also identifies them morally and thereby facilitates their social inclusion. This solution allows Schnabel to integrate narrative as a mastered element within the utopian discourse that would otherwise eliminate it, thereby achieving the – in eighteenth-century terms, paradoxical – feat of writing a utopian novel.

Accordingly, *Insel Felsenburg* represents an early instance of interaction between the novel as the dominant genre of modern literature and movement control as one of the defining institutions of modernity – an interaction that arguably shaped the form of the modern novel to a much greater extent than is commonly assumed (Gulddal 2015, p. 131-44). Even if Schnabel's experiments with movement control are counterfactual in the sense of not being anchored in actual historical passport practices, they not only participate in an emerging discourse on movement control as a key

strategy of governance, but also lead to the realisation that movement control poses an existential threat to a type of narrative predicated on untethered mobility. In making this realisation Schnabel tasks the novel with reducing its traditional dependency on free mobility and developing other, more sedentary modes of narrative better aligned with the administrative rigours of the modern state. In this sense, *Insel Felsenburg* heralds the rise of a new type of novel predicated, not on the free mobility of traditional societies, but on the pervasiveness of movement control that is characteristic of modernity.

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¹ Schlegel addresses this issue in *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literature* (1812), contextually in a chapter devoted to the Spanish novel of the *Siglo de Oro*, yet with clear reference also to surviving picaresque elements in eighteenth-century novels: “Der Begriff des Romantischen in diesen Romanen, selbst in vielen der bessern und berühmtesten, fällt meistens ganz zusammen mit dem Polizeiwidrigen. Ich erinnere mich hiebei der Äußerung eines berühmten Denkers, welcher der Meinung war, daß bei einer durchaus vollkommenen Polizei, (wenn der Handelsstaat völlig geschlossen, und selbst der Paß der Reisenden mit einer ausführlichen Biographie und einem treuen Porträtgemälde versehen sein wird) ein Roman schlechtweg unmöglich sein würde, weil alsdann gar nichts im wirklichen Leben vorkommen könnte, was dazu irgend Veranlassung, oder einen wahrscheinlichen Stoff darbieten würde.” (1988, p. 154) The anonymous reference is to J.G. Fichte.

² At the end of volume II, the neighbouring island of Klein-Felsenburg is turned into an internment camp for Europeans whose moral qualities have not yet been established. Those placed here are not allowed to visit the main island, but can be granted residency if they have specialist skills and are seen to be morally worthy (II, 558-63). For a discussion highlighting the centrality of this seemingly peripheral place, cf. Stockhammer 2006, pp. 130-135.

³ For a discussion of Schnabel's novel as a "Biographiensymphonie", cf. Schmidt 1987, p. 81.

⁴ Cf. Frick 188, pp. 189-90: "Roman des Übergangs ist Schnabels Werk nicht nur seiner literarhistorischen Stellung nach – Übergang ist auch eines seiner beherrschenden Themen."

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