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Mobility in a Globalized World: A Study of Migration and Deterritorialization in Cristina Henriquez's *The Book of Unknown Americans*

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Abstract

Human mobility (or 'velocity') is one of the most common concepts employed in the era of globalization. Such mobility gives rise to what the scholar John Noyes called 'modern nomads': tourists, athletes, dancers, students, migrants, and others. This article discusses one of the most obvious forms of human mobility in the postmodern, globalized age: migration. The United States of America (the U.S.A.) is the land of immigrants that assimilates people and helps them to integrate despite ethnicity, race, culture, and gender. Cristina Henriquez's novel *The Book of Unknown Americans* (2014) depicts attempted assimilation, focusing on migrants who cross the borders and reterritorialize in the U.S.A., to achieve their dreams. However, the U.S.A. mostly fails for dreamers. The protagonists find that they have lost their identities, dreams, and their abilities to cope in any territories. They are forever deterritorialized, with a permanent sense of exile.

Keywords: Deterritorialization, Globalization, Migration, Mobility, Nomad.

Introduction

The era of globalization is marked by constant and endless global movement. This mobility is (according to Gilles Deleuze and Flix Guattari (2010), Gayatri Spivak (1990 -37), and Zygmunt Bauman (1998), amongst other scholars) to guarantee the continuation of life, and the progress of humanity. On the nomad/immigrant level, mobility enriches immigrants' experiences. It allows them to achieve new and better lives and to grow mentally and psychologically. At the territorial level, it brings innovations and desirable differences to the territory (or 'space') accepting the immigrants. Territories without immigration are considered "sedentary," which signifies enclosure and death. Deleuze and Guattari emphasized that: "sedentary space is striated by walls, enclosures . . . while nomad space is smooth, marked only by 'traits' that are affected and displaced with the trajectory" (2010, 44). Sedentary spaces are destined to die, while all the new traits promise life for nomad spaces. Such a notion is supported by writers, philosophers, and socialists, such as Caren Kaplan (2000), Tim Cresswell (2002), Zygmunt

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Bauman (2012), Grass Gunter (2008), John Urry (2000) to name just a few, who believe that continuous movement is the only way forward. Mobility is essential to any kind of development.

However, mobility entails dislocation and deterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari explain the nature of this deterritorialized move/; ment: "The movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival" (2010, 5). This constant movement of human beings has thus become a worldwide phenomenon sequencing deterritorialization, often with no reterritorialization. Deterritorialization is not only shifting/moving from an actual geographical territory to another, but also entails loss of cultural, social aspects pertaining to this territory, its people, their tradition, and way of life. The movement/relocation to the unfamiliar territory is the process of reterritorialization. People in their nomadic movement are dislocated from one territory and reterritorialize in another, and melt within its fabric; however, this is not always the reality. People become dislocated not just from their old territory, but in all territories. They are unable to reterritorialize wherever they reside. Deleuze clarifies that this nomadic movement dislocates and disconnects people: "The nomadic trajectory . . . distributes people . . . in an open space that is indefinite and noncommunicating" (2010, 44). This rapid movement or "velocity" (2010, 9), as it is elsewhere labeled by Deleuze and Guattari, leads to what they call "nomadism"—that is, that such "nomads have no points, paths, or land, even though they do by all appearance" (2010, 45). According to Deleuze, nomads are the only people that can bring any kind of development or real transformation— "Only nomads have absolute movement; in other words, speed; vertical or swirling movement is an essential feature of their war machine" (2010, 45). It can even be argued that nomads are the source of life's continuation. However, to be a nomad and to be able to constantly deterritorialize requires "agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges . . . the world arranges for those who think they are standing straight and at ease, among stable things" (1977, 341).

Nevertheless, this constant movement, actual or virtual, in a manner mandated by the era of globalization, distances people from their cultural localities. This makes it difficult for them to maintain their cultural identity and can even cause them to suffer from absolute deterritorialization. The present article explains how this is skillfully depicted in Cristina Henriquez's novel *The Book of Unknown Americans* (2014), where the analysis of the novel and its characters depart from this conceptual/thematical discussion.

Anthony Giddens clarifies that in the time of global modernity, even being at home gives the feeling of living in various places; nomadism becomes a state of mind, and the people of the world become modern nomads. In "Nomadism, Nomadology, and Post Colonialism" John Noyes states that: "we all want to become nomads, we travel like nomads . . . and surf the Internet like nomads. Our technologies of communication release us from locality, and, when we use them, we defy the physical worlds that tie us to territory" (2004, 159).

Being free and unbounded to any territory in this way should evolve humans' capabilities, helping them reach their potential, enrich the world, and survive; however, this is not the reality. Thus, the aim of this article is to illustrate this, using the exported concepts and ideas about globalization and mobility in

the postmodern age, although it is considered the way forward, it ironically increases deterritorialization as well as a loss of self, identity, and hope. This article demonstrates this by examining the characteristics of this age that "undermine and subvert the conventions and the presuppositions it appears to challenge" (Hutcheon 1989, 2). Furthermore, it sheds light on frequently used concepts of globalization and deterritorialization through the analysis of protagonists in *The Book of Unknown Americans.* The novel portrays Hispanic immigrants who mobilize to the cosmopolitan U.S.A. They presume that, it is a perfect place for the fusion of all ethnicities, being a land originally founded and made to flourish by immigrants. Ironically, however, the novel's protagonists live like nomads, "[d]eterritorialized par excellence" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2010, 45), with no reterritorialization.

The novel's author, Cristina Henriquez, is an American writer and daughter of a Latin immigrant. Her father was a Panamanian studying in the U.S.A., and her mother was American. Being the daughter of an immigrant, Henriquez experienced a sense of dislocation from place and self, along with an inner and outer exile. This sense of displacement accompanied her most of her life (PBS Books, 2015) and can be traced through all her writings. Her novel *The Book of Unknown Americans* (2014) is considered a notable book by the New York Times (Canongate, n.d.). In this novel, several immigrants of different nationalities are depicted as the protagonists embark on their nomadic journeys to the land of opportunities. However, many of these protagonists do not reach their aim, and instead decide to continue their deterritorialization, eradicated and displaced mentally and emotionally in the U.S.A. as the misery in their lives intensifies.

The novel presents the immensity of such a journey for its protagonists. They believe there is a place for them in the globalized world but instead find only frustration, identity loss, and dashed dreams. They discover that this world offers them an open sky and freedom of movement yet excludes them from its "gated communities"[1] and leaves them deterritorialized, an obvious contrast to what globalization promises.

Globalization and Deterritorialization

Theoretical framework

The analysis of the novel departs from Kaplan's concept of mobility as well as Deleuze's 'nomadic' theory. Kaplan states in *Questions of Travel* that there are several types of mobility that entail displacement of identity and dislocation; however: "All displacements are not the same" (2000, 33). She further explains that displacement is: "Linked to deterritorializtion . . . the production of 'nomad' or 'nomadic' theory signifies the importance of modes of displacement in Deleuze and Guattari's work" (274). Migration is a type of mobility that deterritorializes protagonists and influences their cultural identity.

Although migration is prevalent in the era of globalization, it entails dislocation, exclusion, disconnection from cultural locality, and racism, as Deleuze and Guattari crystalize: "Race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination" (1977, 401). As

migrants in some way or the other collide with their new surroundings, they are specified as different—the odd ones, "the other" (Said 1979, 24).

Though globalization entails cultural mobilization, integration, and the erasure of cultural differences, it also increases "self-conscious about identity, culture, and heritage" (Appadurai 2010, 15). This is the agony that the protagonists in this novel experience—they are always strangers in a "globalized, deterritorialized world" (Appadurai 2010, 52) where "[d]eterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces" (37). This deterritorialization disconnects them not only from their locality, but also from their cultural identities.

Paul Gilroy's (1993) *Black Atlantic* proposes the concept of a transnational, "global world," with an ongoing process of travel and exchange of people across the Atlantic. Such a ship that would carry people from all sides of the globe, to be anchored on the shores of the "new world" purported to be a "melting pot"[2] for all its residents—no matter how different they are—would seem the perfect place for people of all races to mingle. What Paul Gilroy pictures is what globalization should have accomplished for humanity. However, this approach fails as Bauman clarifies that: "A city is a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet . . . in their capacity as strangers, and likely to emerge as strangers from the chance encounter which ends abruptly as it started" (2012, 282). In other words, the fusion and inclusion that was supposed to occur in the land of immigrants and opportunities, in the era of globalization, was a mirage, an illusion dispelled by Henriquez's novel.

Further, Gilroy explains that people foresee themselves through the eyes and culture of the "other," which accordingly affects the formation of their identity and the way they perceive themselves. The ship that crosses the Atlantic to the new world is a microcosm of the world that those multi-cultured, diverse backgrounds and ethnicities aboard the ship are destined to reach. According to Gilroy, the ship is "a living micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion . . . focus[s] attention . . . on the circulation of ideas and activities, as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts" (1993, 4).

The present age of open borders, where the world is a "small village," is ready to accept differences and the "other," and even help the "other" to integrate regardless of ethnicity, race, culture, and gender. Indeed, according to Stuart Hall, the global postmodern world "now gets hold of everybody, of everything where there is no difference which it cannot contain, no otherness it cannot speak" (King 1997, 33). To Hall it is a: "Global mass culture . . . which crosses and re-crosses linguistic frontiers much more rapidly and more easily, and which speaks across languages in a much more immediate way" (King 1997, 27); where everyone is: "At home in the world" (Hannerz 2006, 24) and lives "within the context of the world as a single place" (Robertson 1987, 29).

Though globalization should decrease the estrangement and displacement of this novel's protagonists, it instead sends them on a nomadic search for their identities and dreams that ends with the discovery that globalization destabilizes their identities and deepens their dislocation, and estrangement. In his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall argues that, despite globalization, there is a

"narrative of displacement" (1990, 235) that contends that "strangers from every other part of the globe collided . . . [a] space where the creolization and assimilation and syncretism were negotiated" (234).

Tim Cresswell, however, argues that mobility, displacement, and being a constant nomad are ways to move forward and conquer space by pushing people out of their comfort zone: "The way forward is signposted by theories of practice which serve to destabilize notions of place and space" (2002, 20). The U.S.A. has often been portrayed as a land of immigrants, a new world, and a "melting pot," where all nationalities and ethnicities are meant to mingle and create a homogeneous society that would be prosperous because of its colorful diversity. It encourages immigrants and promises them life and hope, but then they discover they are not welcome, as shown in the novel. They thus suffer a state of "unhomeliness[3]," as Homi Bhabha (1994) theorizes, and become deterritorialized in a globalized world—despite their migration to a "hybrid"[4] culture, the U.S.A. The reality that many of the novel's characters have "hybrid" identities, as well as their creator, does not pave the way for them to fuse in the new territory. The new "melting pot," that would enrich "space" with the new traits the migrants enjoy, fails them. They find themselves in: "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction" (Bhabha 1994, 1).

The Novel

Outline

The novel narrates the story of the Rivera family: They live happily in Mexico until their daughter, Maribel, experiences an unfortunate accident and they decide to travel to the U.S.A. to enlist her in a special school. They mobilize there and live in various apartments building in Delaware where Mayor Toro, a high school student and his family live. Maribel and Mayor fall in love, and their relationship, unintentionally, causes the death of Maribel's father. Woven into the fabric of the story, are references to those people who mobilize to the U.S.A. from all over Latin America to attain their personal goals and dreams, and find a better life for themselves and their children, but ultimately fail as they are unaccepted by society and ignored. They are looked at as strangers that no one wants. Thus, they reside in enclosed areas that include all of them and exclude white people—who, in turn, dwell in different areas where they feel a sense of community. In context of such a narrative of exclusion, Barack Obama's presidential run seems like a flash of light in the darkness for the voiceless ethnic minorities. Mayor explains the hope and enthusiasm that this presidential run triggers:

> Everybody we knew had been pulling for Barack Obama . . . it seemed like everyone in our building was excited . . . Obama, a black man who looked like no other U.S. president and who had a family that came from different places, could possibly lead our country. (Henriquez 2014, 124-125)

Obama's presidential run is part of the American dream, which contends that everyone can reach their potential in the land of opportunity despite their ethnicities, religions, and skin colors. Supporting Obama is a way for this novel's characters to have some sense of belonging, a reterritorialization of sorts,

and maintain hope that their lives in the U.S.A. can change for the better. Having a non-white mixture of ethnicities and backgrounds as president–elect further raises their hopes of success— the life of Obama is a vivid example of hybridity with his diverse ethnic, religious, racial, cultural background, and influences. The characters relate to Obama, a black man whose family came from different countries and now runs for presidency which Mayor says means "that we, who also resembled no other U.S.A. president and who also had family from faraway places could one day rise up and do the same thing" (125).

Yet the characters in *The Book of Unknown Americans* are not able reterritorialize in the land of immigrants. They suffer from deterritorialization that transforms them into nomads. They experience constant changes and modifications of their identities and dreams. These changes are inevitable because of their interactions with new surroundings that have a "wide variety of disciplines" (Miller 1998, 171). Furthermore, they all suffer the feeling of being shunned, of being "the other." The protagonists in Henriquez's novel have moved to the U.S.A. for various reasons, but chief among them is what they perceive as a better chance of survival. However, they find themselves sectioned off within a "gated community" in the cosmopolitan U.S.A. In the novel, those who are not white skinned are banned from many spaces. They become:

> [T]he unknown Americans, the ones that no one even wants to know, because they've been told they're supposed to be scared of us and because maybe if they did take the time to get to know us, they might realize that we're not that bad, maybe even that we're a lot like them. And who would they hate then? (Henriquez 2014, 337)

Ironically, by finding someone to hate and differentiate themselves from, the white majority feels secure. Miller explained the dilemma in the era of globalization: "[o]n the practical level, multiculturalism faces questions of feasibility: How do we decide what to include? How do we justify the necessary exclusions when inclusion is our only goal?" (1998, 156). All the protagonists in the novel face this problem of exclusion in the age of globalization; hatred deprives them of a sense of inclusion. At one point in the novel, one of the protagonists cries out in misery: "I wish just one of those people, just one, would actually talk to me" (Henriquez 2014, 376). Marbil's mother, Alma, feels like an "oddity" (306) that goes through life unnoticed. They are not only ignored in a society that promises inclusion, but also discriminated against in a society flourished by its cultural diversity— the U.S.A. This makes them live in agony, shunned by society. They strive to be recognized for what they are, American citizens, but in vain.

The discrimination that non-whites face is illustrated by Mayor's father. When he buys a car, he drives at 30 km/hr., as he believes that: "if you're black or if you're brown, they [the police] automatically think you've done something wrong" (Henriquez 2014, 267). He knows that he will be detained if he is driving fast, as he is a person of color. He is not treated fairly. He is aware that he is discriminated against in the cosmopolitan U.S.A. Further, he is cognizant of the hardships and types of danger that various ethnic groups are exposed to—for example, he believes that certain ethnicities are getting assaulted outside Western Union when a huge layoff has taken place during Obama's reign. He says now white people target "people who look like us. It used to be the Orientals" (331). Of course, it is

not just white people in the U.S.A. that generalize and segregate non-whites; segregation is also apparent among communities of color, rich whites, and the impoverished. Multiculturalism promises the coexistence of multiple cultures; however, it fails to give any of the protagonists in the novel the feeling of belonging, inclusion. Discrimination is very much alive in the era of globalization. Anyone can be excluded and stigmatized as "the other." Thus, the protagonists are excluded from mainstream life, suffer from a sense of displacement, and are ultimately deterritorialized.

Deterritorialized Immigrants in *The Book of Unknown Americans*

The novel focuses on Hispanic immigrants who come to the U.S.A. to achieve their dreams. Even though they fail to achieve these dreams, these immigrants decide to remain deterritorialized, with identities that "are 'negotiated,' constructed, and imagined" (Miller 1998, 171). They are forced to negotiate their identities according to the desires of their communities, and are always torn between their past and their present—mostly nostalgic for their past but refusing to return to their home countries. This sense of rootlessness is expressed by Salman Rushdie in *Migration and Literature,* in which he states: "The migrant sense of being rootless, of being between worlds, between lost past and a non-integrated present, is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post) modern condition" (Grass et al. 2008, 129). This rootlessness affects protagonists' identities, the way they perceive life, and their dreams.

Henriquez presents various characters attempting to follow their dreams in "the richest country in the world" (2014, 76), while providing few other details about them. These characters are not fully developed, which is usually considered a problem in fiction, however such a technique allows the reader to experience how they go through American life swiftly and unnoticed. What they have in common is their quest for survival and a better life. The author depicts these characters without commentary, allowing readers to generate their own ideas. These characters have relocated to the U.S.A. to achieve their dreams and survive, but the country fails them and irrevocably alters them to a different version of their older self.

Benny Quinto, for example, comes from Nicaragua and has been in the U.S.A. for eight years. In his home country, he studied for the priesthood and thought that all his prayers had been answered when he got an opportunity to travel to the U.S.A. at the age of 20. Although his situation in Nicaragua was not bad, he paid smugglers who promised to help him in return for money, which he could not afford. To pay them, he stole the first half of this fee, from the church's funds that were meant for the poor. When he arrived in the U.S.A., and to secure the rest of the smugglers' fee, he assisted them in their illegal activities, which went against all his religious education and values. He was thus transformed from an ethical, religious young man to a thief and smuggler, and his deterritorialization was not just physical but spiritual and moral. He traveled for personal gain, but lost himself, his ethics, identity, values, and dream of priesthood.

Gustavo Milhojas, another character in the novel, was born in Guatemala in 1960. His "mother is of Guatemalan descent" while his "father's bloodlines run through Mexico" (Henriquez 2014, 143). He left Guatemala for Mexico when he was 20. Although Mexico was his father's country, he experienced

significant prejudice there, finding that Mexicans "believe Guatemalans are stupid," and when he told them that he "was half Mexican only made things worse" (144). He faces discrimination in Mexico, and later in the U.S.A. No one accepts him, even when he shares the same skin color as his tormentors; his deterritorialization is inescapable, no matter where he is. At the start of the novel, he has moved to the U.S.A. to earn more money for his children after his wife's death. However, he intends to return to Mexico when his children graduate, even though many Mexicans want nothing to do with the Guatemalans. His painful experiences in Mexico and the U.S.A. leads him to believe that he belongs nowhere in the global world of open borders "There's nowhere to go from there" (Henriquez 2014, 297); for him, "there is no reterritorialization afterward" *(*Deleuze and Guattari 2010, 45*)*. He lives in anguish. He has become a nomad in body and mind. His dream of home is lost.

Adolf "Fito" Angelino came from Paraguay to the U.S.A. in 1972 to chase his dream. He wants to be a boxer and hears that there is a good trainer in Washington, D.C. This trainer tells Fito that he is not willing to take on any new boxers but hints at the possibility of meeting him if he is ever in D.C. This is enough for Fito to take a chance and move to the U.S.A. and fulfill his dream. Yet when he reaches D.C., the coach has already moved to Vermont. Fito quickly runs out of money and ends up working in the parking lot of a building whose property owner is moving back home; to Mexico. This owner offers Fito his job as building manager, but he refuses; he did not come to the U.S.A. to be a building manager. They eventually agree to box one another, and if Fito loses, he will take the job. Fito loses this match, and he becomes the building manager, losing his dream in the process.

What causes Fito's misery despite his prolonged stay in the U.S.A. is that he is not given the chance to belong in or mingle with the wider society. He is always looked at as an immigrant, a stranger who is asked to go home: "if people want to tell me to go home, I just turn to them politely and say, "I am already there" (Henriquez 2014, 237). He is deterritorialized and belongs nowhere; he is the unaccepted, "the other" who is in U.S.A. only to work and serve the masters. Arjun Appadurai has summed up this problem: "Deterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces of modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies" (2010, 37). This can cause migrants to be despised, outcast, humiliated, and considered fit only for lower-paying jobs.

Likewise, Boricua Loud is proud of being born and raised in Puerto Rico until she is 17 years old. She wants to be a Broadway dancer and dreams of being the next "Rita Moreno," which leads her to move to New York. She sleeps at the airport terminal for the first three nights and then says she "started feeling like [she] wanted to return home" (Henriquez 2014, 282). However, she believes that she has "to prove that [she] could make it" (283), both to her mother and herself. She is in the land of dreams and opportunities; she can accomplish her dream.

In the U.S.A., Boricua gets a job as waitress, puts all the money she earns into dancing classes. She eats leftovers off the dinner plates at the restaurant where she works to save money. She also goes to any auditions she hears of and tries for years to find herself a role in a play or anything else, to no avail. Finally, she auditions for a Spanish play, asking the casting director if she is right to the role as she is not Spanish. The man is amazed that she is "Puertorriquen" and asks, "What's the difference?" (284). For

him and others, all Hispanics are brown-skinned Latinos. Thus, even the cosmopolitan U.S.A. has united people of diverse skin colors in a single country only to continue discriminating against them.

Boricua, after years of excessive training, dancing, and spending most of what she earns on dancing lessons, concludes that she can never become a dancer, nor will the U.S.A. allow her to; in agony, she states: "The world already had its Rita Moreno, I guess, and there was only room for one Boricua at a time . . . Americans can handle one person from anywhere . . . but as soon as there are too many of us, they throw up their hands . . . we are not interested in you people (286). The so-called land of opportunity has failed her. The cosmopolitan country looks at her and others as a different "you people;" they are not part of the society. She opens a theatre of her own, which does not generate much money but allows her to perform. Finally, at age 53, she marries "an attorney, so young and handsome" (288), and that is the end of her dream of being a Broadway dancer.

Macho Alvarez, a Mexican, is another disillusioned protagonist. He works at a newspaper in his home country. He tries to fight against widespread illicit drug distribution and to make people aware of what is happening. Thinking he can make more of a difference in this fight from the most powerful county in the world, he moves to the U.S.A. There he continues his work in newspapers and observes that the U.S.A. is part of Mexico's problem—that it is "feeding the beast" (379).

In his new country, Macho falls prey to the myths of freedom and opportunity spread by the media, and considers the U.S.A., the land of freedom. However, American citizens still suffer from segregation: black, colored, and even poor white Americans. His discussion of the difficulties he faces once again shows the irony of phrases like "the world is one global village"[5]. It is true that borders are erased, people can move freely, and technologies connect the people of the world regardless of their residence. However, technologies also spread falsehoods; as Macho laments, "people are listening to the media, and the media, let me tell you, have some fucked-up ideas about us. About all the brown-skinned people" (Henriquez 2014, 375). What he wants is simple: a recognition that he is never granted. He is dislocated physically and spiritually and feels despised in the cosmopolitan U.S.A., where he is isolated and suffers from negative stereotypes of being the "other". As he says:

> I want to be given the benefit of the doubt. When I walk down the street, I don't want people to look at me and see a criminal or someone that can be spit on or beat up . . . And yes, you can talk to us in English. I know English better than you, I bet. But none of them even want to try. (376-377)

Macho, and all the protagonists above, are outcasts in the land of immigrants. No one accepts them or even tries to let them integrate. It is as Cresswell put it, that they all suffer from an "upheaval, uprooting, dislocation, and feeling of homelessness associated with deterritorialization" (2011, 177). They suffer humiliation, trying to mingle to safeguard their identities and to survive by taking any jobs, even those that are greatly inferior to their original aspirations.

The narration also mentions other characters in passing that move through the U.S.A. unnoticed. If they choose to stay in one place for an extended period, they tend to reside far from metropolitan centers. Henriquez's novel focuses on Latino immigrants seeking a new world, their perception of which has been

shaped through various print or digital media. The U.S.A. is their "imagined community,"[6] yet this community proves to be an illusion. This cosmopolitan country in the globalized world segregates its inhabitants and classifies them according to the color of their skin, and their wealth whether they are immigrants or white Americans, which increases the feeling of "unhomeliness."

Those described above are some exemplary characters portrayed in *The Book of Unknown Americans*. They chase what they believe to be better opportunities in the global world. Yet, they never achieve their dreams, nor are they able to cope and mingle with the society that discriminates against them. Jan Aart Scholte believes that globalization has a "tendency towards deterritorialization, so that social space can no longer be wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders" (2000,17). The representation of so many characters sweeping through life unnoticed by the larger society reinforces the notion that deterritorialization accompanies mobility in the modern era. However, to be deterritorialized in the land founded and flourished by immigrants crystallizes the dilemma of the modern age, as the U.S.A. is supposed to be a "safe harbor" and "melting pot." If the U.S.A. cannot integrate these immigrants within its fabric, it is doubtful that any country can do so, despite the promises of globalization.

The protagonists of this novel pass through life silently, despite the size of their communities. They are considered neither Americans nor Latinos but lost in between. Their identities are molded through their interactions with others; as William Connolly explains, everyone in the present age is "defined through the collective constituents with which [they] identify or [are] identified by others" (1991, xiv). These characters are granted a minimum, of what the U.S.A. could, miserly, bestow on them, and to survive in the capitalistic country, they lose their identity. Finally, the journey itself has also molded them: "The journey creates us. We became the frontier we cross" (Grass et al. 2008, 177). They have become nomads, and their minds move back and forth between their previous lives and what they have now. They can never call any place home, even if they want to; "home had been stolen" (Henriquez 2014, 41). They have evolved to survive in places that resent them. Their identities are "'negotiated' rather than natural; contingent, constructed, and imagined" (Miller 1998, 171), based on what the community would like them to be: low-paid, different, ignored, and humiliated. It is as if "[d]eterritorialization names the process whereby the very basis of one's identity, the proverbial ground beneath our feet, is eroded, and washed away like a back of a river swollen by floodwater—immersion" (Buchanan and Labert 2005, 23). This is true for the protagonists described above; however, the most tragic of the novel's stories is that of the Riveras entwines with Toro family.

The Rivera and Toro Families

The two main families in the novel that are described most thoroughly are the Riveras and Toros. They live in an apartment building in an area full of Hispanic immigrants who are now American citizens. However, this building's residents have no points of contact or interactions with the surrounding mainstream American culture. They are enclosed within themselves, not just within the building. The thread of events is tailored around the teenagers in these two families, Maribel and Mayor.

Rafael Toro and his wife, Celia, believe that they have secured a better opportunity for their children by immigrating to the U.S.A.: "Maybe they wouldn't have done so well in Panama. Maybe they couldn't have had the same opportunities. So that makes coming here worth it" (Henriquez 2014, 41). Toro believes that his children are far better off than they would have been in their home country, yet he keeps repeating, "If someone asks me where my home is, I say los Estados Unidos. I say proudly" (41). He never sees U.S.A. as his home country. Mayor's parents are torn between their old life and what they have in the U.S.A.; "They were torn between wanting to go back and wanting to exist in the new life they have created. At one point, they had planned to return" (129). This is similar to what Salman Rushdie stated in *Migration and Literature*: "[t]here was always a tug-of war in me between 'there' and 'here,' the pull of roots and the road. In that struggle of insiders and outsiders" (Grass et al. 2008, 129). This inner conflict is always in the minds of immigrants, preventing them from achieving any sort of reterritorialization. Though Toro and his family have been in the U.S.A. for years and are now American citizens, Toro never feels integrated into the American fabric. Though a citizen, he considers his home is "Estados Unidos". He thought he could have a new home in the U.S.A., yet the country is not a home, home is still in Panama.

Rafael and Celia have two sons. Mayor is his second, and a major catalyst for the events of the novel. They moved to the U.S.A. because of the riots and bloodsheds that had erupted in Panama. Stores were closed, and they were unable to get anything to eat for three weeks; they "were eating toothpaste by the end of it" (Henriquez 2014, 40). However, even though they have been in the U.S.A. for years, they are shunned either by force or choice within the Latino community unable to mingle, because of the feeling that they are not welcome. They always feel out of place, because the U.S.A. has never welcomed them or allowed them to make interpersonal connections. The characters try to indulge themselves in activities that can give them a sense of identity, instead of the lasting severance from the social and cultural practices they left back home. However, all their attempts fail, and they are deprived of territorial cohesion. They are thus characterized by "fragmentation, loss of identity, and alienation" (Connolly 1991, 88).

Mayor is aware of the segregation present in the global community; for him, it is an everyday occurrence: "I was Latino and male and not a cripple; therefore, I should play soccer. Soccer was for Latinos, basketball for blacks, and the whites could keep their tennis and golf" (Henriquez 2014, 31). In the cosmopolitan U.S.A., even hobbies are classified according to ethnicity, color, and income level, even among white communities. The first and most obvious form of classification is skin color. It is the most obvious difference that not only separates non-whites from whites, but also determines their hobbies, their ways of life, and how they put bread on the table in the globalized world. Mayor falls in love with Maribel, who is harassed by Garret Miller, a white boy. In a heated exchange, Garret humiliates Mayor and orders him to "go home":

> "Back to Mexico?
>
> I'm not from Mexico."
>
> "My dad says all you people are from Mexico." (Henriquez 2014, 114)

Mayor believes that he is from U.S.A., as it is the only country he knows, but no one else accepts this. He is always looked at as a stranger; an immigrant.

Arturo Rivera, head of the other major family in the novel, is Mexican. Neither he nor his wife is particularly attached to American ideas. He sacrifices his work in his home country for the sake of his daughter, Maribel, who has an unfortunate accident and needs a specialized type of school that only exists in the U.S.A. Arturo, considers this relocation temporary. He secures a work visa, travels legally to the U.S.A. with his family, and enrolls his daughter in the required school. He works long hours at night in the dirt, collecting mushrooms for low wages. When he tells his wife, Alma, she cannot believe that he has to work in such circumstances. She expresses her incredulity: "What kind of place required a man to work all day without being allowed to eat or drink? There had to be rules, didn't there? This was America after all" (Henriquez 2014, 46). She previously imagined a different America, and believed in the 'American dream', however, the U.S.A. has failed her, as it has so many others. The land of opportunity that promises richness and a better life for anyone willing to work hard fails for dreamers. Benny Quinto, for example, loses his dream of being a priest in the land of opportunity and turns into a smuggler. He loses his dream and his identity. Fito loses his dream of becoming a boxer; his reason for mobilizing U.S.A. Boricua is not given the opportunity to be the next "Rita Moreno," despite how hard she tries. Gustavo Milhojas loses his sense of home, a basic need. Alma has lost more than she imagined possible- her husband.

Alma is the most frequently followed character by the novel's narration. One of every three chapters is named after her. We are told she misses her old life: "Before the accident, we had been the happiest people I know . . . We believed we were special. We believed we were indestructible" (Henriquez 2014, 248). Although she convinces her husband to move their family to the U.S.A., shortly after they arrive, she longs for anyone to speak to her, especially in Spanish, "but day after day people walked without acknowledging me in the least" (80). She feels lonely, shunned by a society that does not recognize her: "I often felt in this country—simultaneously conspicuous and invisible, like an oddity whom everyone noticed but chose to ignore" (306). She is miserable and nostalgic for her life in her home country.

Alma also has a profound sense of guilt. After her daughter's accident, she holds herself responsible. While visiting Arturo's worksite, it is Alma who leaves the ladder unattended while her daughter, Maribel, is on top. Maribel falls and hurts her head, causing mental damage; as Alma says, "it wasn't an earthquake or a gust of wind that knocked her to the ground. It was me" (172). She always remembers this accident that caused her daughter's suffering. Perhaps for this reason, she keeps pushing for them to move to the U.S.A., promising her husband that she will take care of everything there. However, in her new country she instead takes part in a series of events that ends in his death. She hides the fact that her daughter is being harassed by a white boy, Garrett Miller, to spare Arturo stress, and attempts to manage things herself. However, she causes his death.

Maribel is all that Arturo and Alma have and having her took a lot of effort—many years of marriage, doctor consultations, and failed attempts, and suddenly Alma gets pregnant without medical intervention– she is their miracle. After the accident, they imagine that their only hope is to move to the

U.S.A. and enroll her in a special school called Evers. Alma hopes that her daughter's case is temporary due to the accident, and that proper tutoring will correct the problem. She tries to adapt to her new surroundings by taking English courses and mimicking the words she hears on TV though she does not understand them. Alma thus attempts to ride whatever waves life sends her way; even when her husband eventually dies a sudden death, she collects herself and moves on, despite her loss.

There are periods of arrested development in her life, as if life stands still: after her husband's death, for example, and especially after her daughter's accident. She is at first unable to forgive herself for what happened to Maribel. She keeps on, unconsciously, ignoring the fact that Maribel now suffers from a mental disability. Even when she decides to go to the police to ask for help, and tells them about Garrett Miller who harasses her daughter, asking them to stop him, she does not tell them that Maribel has a mental disability. The police, considering Maribel's age, think her relationship with Garrett Miller is consensual and that Alma simply does not approve, so they do not interfere and dismiss Alma's concerns.

Then, one rainy day, Maribel does not return from school, so Alma has to tell Arturo about the boy who has been harassing her. She thinks that he has her daughter, while in fact her daughter is with Mayor. Alma gives him Miller's address, so Arturo confronts the boy and asks about his daughter. Miller's father comes out of the house then, without a word, fatally shoots Arturo.

After Arturo's death, Alma's life again slows to a standstill. Yet, when she must move on and return to Mexico with her husband's body, Alma is thus forced to take control of her life and her daughter's. After this, she is not the same; she has a new beginning, finally, understanding that her daughter is now a different person and can never be the same as before the accident-this is triggered by Arturo's death. She is ready to accept this and build a new life in light of this revelation. Furthermore, she is able to forgive herself. She becomes a new version or "product" of her older self, a newly modified form, a person reborn:

> Producing, a product: Producing/product identity. It is this identity that constitutes a third term in the linear series: an enormous undifferentiated object. Everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place and then the whole process will begin all over again. From a certain point of view, it would be much better if nothing worked, if nothing functioned. Never being born, escaping the wheel of continual birth and rebirth. (Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 7).

However, the cycle of death and rebirth cannot be broken, and life continues despite death. At the end of the novel, Alma is not only able to live with Arturo's death, but also accepts that Maribel is a new person now: "she was again . . . not exactly the girl she used to be before the accident . . . but my Maribel, brave and impetuous and kind" (Henriquez 2014, 446). Though Maribel will never be the same again, Alma understands that her beautiful resilient essence remains. She can thus look beneath her daughter's appearance to see her real self. Alma's identity has evolved, without her awareness; as Deleuze and Guattari state: "Identity remains that unconscious representations and does not compromise perception" (1977, 126). For this reason, she is able to travel with Arturo's body on the road back to Mexico, a trip she never imagined she could do alone. She has taken control of her life and her daughter's without any

prior planning. This rebirth was natural because of the events she experienced. Thus, Alma is one of the few characters that undergoes a real change. Over the course of the novel, she evolves from a wife dependent on her husband to a strong mother, breadwinner, and caretaker who takes control over her own life and her daughter's after Arturo's death.

It is true that Maribel changes after the accident. The beautiful fourteen–year-old girl that used to have a say in everything, who kept on moving around, and doing the most unexpected acts/plays as her mother used to say, has changed. After the accident, she acts as though she cannot understand anything about herself or the rest of the world. She becomes someone else and goes to Evers, a school for those with mental disabilities. However, she remains a defiant girl who fights to overcome her shortcomings. Maribel and Alma are able to move on from Arturo's unexpected death despite their vulnerabilities.

As shown by this discussion, the Rivera family did not accomplish anything by moving to U.S.A. On the contrary, they relinquished their previous happiness and seemingly unassailable life back home, as well as Arturo's business. Moreover, Alma was never happy in the U.S.A. and was ignored by everyone yet, her experience though difficult, helped her to grow. She became a strong resilient woman and forgave herself for the daughter's accident, which she was unable to do previously in Mexico, yet at a very dear price- Arturo's life.

Conclusion

The Book of Unknown Americans portrays the physical, cultural, and emotional dislocations caused by immigration in the era of globalization. All the protagonists experience incurable psychological loss, displacement, and shattered dreams. Part of this agony is that they are unaccepted by the American society. Indeed, the novel's main characters immigrate to the U.S.A., even though they are not guaranteed to accomplish what they hope for. Once they arrive, these characters strive to be recognized as part of the fabric of American society. Nevertheless, they are always asked to go back to their homelands, though they know no other home except the U.S.A. Furthermore, although they all have dreams, they hoped to achieve by migrating to the U.S.A., these remain unattained. The protagonists are always waging war within themselves: they are nostalgic for their former homes but cannot go back. This leads to emotional estrangement, cultural and psychological deterritorialization. These issues have a permanent impact, depriving the protagonists of their ability to reterritorialize anywhere. In the end, they lose more than they previously imagined possible.

The U.S.A., a land of immigrants and a continual beacon for immigrants worldwide, turns the protagonists in the novel into nomads, estranged from themselves and their dreams. They feel distanced from others and think that they do not fit within American society. Nevertheless, they persevere, colliding with the rest of the community and remain strangers (or 'the other') to their fellow residents. Indeed, the characters of the novel meet, live, and work with members of the white majority of the U.S.A, yet never feel like they truly belong. They are, and will always be considered unacceptable by the majority of their fellow Americans.

Mobility in a Globalized World: A Study of Migration and Deterritorialization in Cristina Henriquez's *The Book of Unknown Americans*

Although globalization advocates prosperity, progress, and the intermingling of different cultures, it does not provide any of *The Book of Unknown Americans'* characters with a sense of home. It also makes everyone more conscious about several issues that contradict the concept of globalization such as: identity, race, culture, and religion. This implies that immigrants in the globalized world become permanent nomads without recourse to any reterritorialization. As modern nomads, their movement leads to an expulsion from their territorial and cultural locality and ends with a deep sense of alienation. In the novel Mayor Toro is always asked to go home, though he knows no other home, except U.S.A. Further, his father believes that home is stolen from them. Although this novel concentrates on Hispanic migrants who have traveled to the purported land of dreams and opportunities, they can be said to encapsulate migrants of different races, ethnicities, and religions who take the same path in an age that embraces movement. They all must subsequently suffer the same deterritorialization and displacement, despite promises of globalization and inclusion.

الحراك في زمن العولمة: دراسة الهجرة والاغتراب في رواية كرستينا هنريكي *(كتاب الأمريكيين المجهولين)*

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الملخص

الحراك الإنساني هو أحد أهم المفاهيم الشائعة فى زمن العولمة ، وقد ساعد هذا الحراك فى ظهور ما أشار إليه الباحث جون نويس "بالمرتحل الحديث" : سائحين، ورياضيين، وراقصين، ودارسين ومهاجرين وغيرهم. وهذا البحث هو تحليل للحراك الإنساني في زمن العولمة، وبخاصة الهجرة والترحال، وكيف أن هذا الحراك يعمق الاغتراب المكاني ويزعزع الإحساس بالهوية على الرغم من أن هذا الحراك الإنساني هو أحد وسائل التغيير والتغلب على الجمود والسبيل الأمثل للتطور. ومن خلال شخصيات (كتاب الأمركيين المجهولين) لكرستينا هنريكي يحلل البحث حراك الشخصيات وهجرتهم إلى الولايات المتحدة الأمريكيّة، ومحاولتهم الانخراط في بيئة ذات لغة وثقافة مختلفة مما يعمق إحساسهم بالمكان في زمن العولمة، الذي كان من المفترض أن يساعد في اندماج مختلف الثقافات والأعراق والأجناس ولكنه على النقيض من هذا فرض على الشخصيات الاغتراب الدائم وهدم أحلامهم وجعلهم كالرحّل في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكيّة أيقونة المهاجرين .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاغتراب ، العولمة، الهجرة ، الحراك، المرتحل.

Endnotes

[1] Zygmunt Bauman argues in *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (1998) that cities are built originally to protect those who live inside their walls against danger from the outside—that is, for the purpose of safety. Yet, in the modern age, and because of an increasing sense of fear, there is a growing need for security systems, surveillance of public places, and secured areas. Such a "secure" or "gated community" not only cages its inhabitants but also forbids the entrance of immigrants, travelers, and tourists, except through secure border control. Bauman's concept of the "gated community" stands in contrast with the title of his book, characterizing the postmodern age (47-48).

[2] This phrase was coined in 1908 by Israel Zangwill to describe the unity of different nationalities, ethnicities, and diverse cultures. It was later used in the United States in the 1780s to describe the fusion of heterogeneous and cultures.

[3] Such "unhomeliness" does not signify homelessness but rather an uncanny feeling vacillating between self and "other" (Bhabha/Routledge.1994).

[4] The term "hybrid"/ "hybridity" is originally used for another stance—within colonial framework and literature. Homi Bhabha uses it to describe the fusion of two cultures—mainly the colonized and colonizer and their interaction within the colonization—forming a new mixed identity. Bhabha presents his theory of hybridization in *The Location of Culture*. In his book Bhabha states that: "Our existence today is marked by tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the 'present' for which there seems to be no proper name other than the current controversial shiftiness of the prefix 'post': postmodernism, postcolonialism…"(1). In the postcolonial, postmodern global era, hybridity tends to refer to the blending of diverse transcultural characteristics in all sectors of life: social, economic, culture and music to create something new that embraces change and diversity. The U.S.A. is a prominent example of hybridity. It is founded by immigrants from various lands all over the world. They bring with them their culture, tradition and old ways of life and mix them in the "melting pot" forming a unique culture. (Bhabha/Routledge.1994).

[5] The term "global village," is linked to the twentieth century, and the Canadian communications theorist and literary professor Marshall McLuhan. He coined the phrase in his book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, using it to express that technology is making the planet feel smaller. Thus, according to him, the idea of space is no longer relevant (Toronto.1962).

[6] In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson argues that people in a large community, though they reside very far apart from one another and probably never meet, believe that they have lots in common and belong to an "imagined community" that has been presented to them.

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