

Regendered Narratives of Mobility:

‘A Vroom With a View’

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“**I**n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Consciousness. Feminist consciousness – understanding that women can and should be whole human beings, not measured in relationship to male supremacy – is, was, and will always be the soul of feminism. In the seventies, Jane O’Reilly called this experience the “click,” as in women “clicking–things–into–place–angry.” In the nineties, on celluloid, Thelma’s moment of consciousness came when she said to Louise, “Ah feel a-wake,” and for the next hour these two women had the power of clarity and righteousness – the kind of righteousness that makes you blow up a leering truck driver’s eighteen-wheeler or lock a macho policeman in the trunk of his squad car” (Baumgardner & Richards 2000)

In what follows I take a closer look at the road-trip handbook *The Bad Girl’s Guide to the Open Road* (Tuttle 1999).¹ This recent narrative of mobility, I argue, carries on the “clicking” legacy of road sto-

ries such as *Thelma & Louise* and Erika Lopez’s *Flaming Iguanas* (Enevold forthcoming) which, as I have claimed, paved the way for women’s self-representation on the road in two phases of “regendering.” The “appropriative regendering turn” is constituted by the act of women taking the place of men in the driver’s seat, in the process “re-scripting” the traditional masculinist road text authored and inhabited by men, by joggling the binary cultural opposition of “mobile men” and “sessile women.” The “metafictional turn” takes rescripting further; road fathers/patriarchal forerunners like Kerouac and Cassady are rejected in favor of road mothers like Thelma and Louise. Men are not fought for access to the road, because this battle is already considered won. Women focus on their own development and do so in relation to other women rather than to or against men. By way of meta-fictional commentary and postmodernist self-conscious rhetoric, these narratives “de-script” previous masculinist road texts.

By “women’s self-representation” I mean the process by which female subjects “produce themselves as women within particular discursive contexts” (Robinson 1991, 11). This process, as Sally Robinson points out, is not always linear or stable, but rather “proceeds by a double movement: simultaneously *against* normative constructions of Woman that are continually produced by hegemonic discourses and social practices, and *toward* new forms of representation that disrupt those normative constructions” (ibid, 11). The narrative of mobility under scrutiny here is characterized by what I have proposed as a *new aesthetic of the road*.² It contributes new forms of representation that disrupt normative constructions of Woman and of the road as a masculine territory. It constitutes a productive fictional disruption that consequently brings us new feminist representations of women that I have termed “new female mobile subjects”.

By opening the present article with the epigraph from the book on Third Wave feminism, *ManifestA* (Baumgardner & Richards 2000) I emphasize the significance the road movie *Thelma & Louise* has proved to have for feminist expressions. The movie has become a compelling symbol for feminism and a powerful model for women’s self-representation – an icon of resistance against sexism. The movie elicited a lot of excited responses – what journalist Jon Katz has referred to as a “*Thelma and Louise* discourse”. Barbara Miller argues that this Thelma and Louise discourse “played and continues to play an important role in the *political mobilization* of women” (ibid, 205, my emphasis). I agree and add that it is highly relevant that *Thelma & Louise* was a movie about women entering the highway, rather than a film about women marching into Wall Street. Although either scenario could serve to illustrate women’s appropriation of male-dominated territory, a narrative of mobility gives signals of double mobilization. The consequence of putting two women at the wheel, as I see it, was the beginning of a radical regendering of the traditionally masculinist (road)travel paradigm. The disturbance of the gendered polarization of mobility was an essential factor in making the movie so influential, stirring, and controversial, and so important to feminism. Such a disturbance jerks a very fundamental leg of sexism, of patriarchal stability and permanence. Patriarchal stability rests on (among other things) a long history of gendered notions of mobility and automobility that are founded on the binary opposition of masculine activity/feminine passivity. Although it no longer is as controversial as it used to be that a woman drives, or does mechanical work, this binarism still dominates areas of activity involving the car and physical mobility.³

One of Second Wave feminism’s most important demands was that all women should have the right to control their own

bodies. The call for women's physical mobilization is an extension of this demand, a demand that I see Third Wave feminism take for granted. The physical mobilization of the female body – including the possibility to walk away, have sex, perform sports, exercise or travel – in addition to the acquisition of mechanical skills to go with her automobilization, are critical to the feminist projects of liberating women (socially, financially, sexually, etc.).

In this article I show how regendering of the road narrative is figured in *The Bad Girl's Guide*. This hand-book has not only embraced the feat of Thelma and Louise and their “daughters” but also moved forward, incorporating the kind of feminist consciousness that can be placed under the heading of Third Wave feminism.

THIRD WAVE FEMINISM

Third-Wave feminists, according to Baumgardner and Richards, are young women born in the mid-1960s or later, “reared in the wake of the women's liberation movement of the seventies” (ibid, 15). Many of these young women say “I am not a feminist,” although they are leading highly “feminist” and “revolutionary lives” (ibid, 48). They have inherited and take for granted the rights that First and Second Wave feminists fought for, such as the vote, reproductive freedom, and job equality:

Feminism arrived in a different way in the lives of the women of this generation; we never knew a time before “girls can do anything boys can!” The fruits of this kind of confidence are enjoyed by almost every American girl or woman alive, a radical change from the suffragettes and blue-stockings of the late nineteenth century, and from our serious sisters of the sixties and seventies. [...] For anyone born after the early 1960s, the presence of feminism in our lives is taken for granted. (ibid, 17-18)

This nevertheless poses a problem, argue

Baumgardner and Richards; regarding feminism as an all too personal agenda, women risk losing an important empowering force in their lives, and the women's movements lose power and members.

For our generation, feminism is like fluoride. We scarcely notice that we have it. [...] The only problem is that, while on a personal level feminism is everywhere, like fluoride, on a political level the movement is more like nitrogen: ubiquitous and inert. (ibid, 18)

The disconnection between the personal and the political is regretful. Contemporary society is still not gender equal, and it is not possible to remedy this situation merely by working on an individual level. There is a need for collective organization against the injustices based on gender discrimination that occur on a daily basis. Baumgardner and Richards illustrate this by offering a number of examples of discrimination taken from “Ask Amy,” Richards's on-line advice column. Every day the column receives letters about unjust treatment on the grounds of gender: a girl cannot join her wrestling team; a female cashier at Petsmart does not get promoted because management does not think women should be assistant managers, a binational lesbian couple cannot marry (ibid, 18). These women know they are being treated unfairly, say Baumgardner and Richards, but they are unaware of the movement that “has changed and will continue to change marital law, wrestling, or the Petsmart status quo” (ibid, 18). It is important, they write, to make clear that Third Wave feminism builds on the work of the Second Wave. The self-assertive behavior of young women today actually contributes to a “historic narrative” of women's struggle. Baumgardner and Richards wished to improve the awareness of the young generation of women that they “were born into a feminist history” (ibid, 17) and thus wrote a “Third Wave feminist manifesta” (ibid, 18). With *ManifestA*, they want to alert

people to “the power of everyday feminism right in front of our noses” (ibid, 48).

In this article I want to alert the reader to the kinds of feminism inherent in regendered narratives of mobility. The book analyzed seems deeply entangled in Third-Wave feminist movements. It shares the typical Third-Wave feminist attitude of taking one’s rights, one’s mobility, for granted. Another sign is its exclusion of the use of the F-word, as in *Feminism*. It displays feminism “right in front of our noses,” a feminism that may go unnoticed or unvalued unless decoded in terms of its particular characteristics as a movement which acts as if feminism is like Fluoride – invisibly everywhere – yet deeply indebted to the Second Wave.

“A VROOM WITH A VIEW”: *THE BAD GIRL’S GUIDE TO THE OPEN ROAD*

The Bad Girl’s Guide to the Open Road is an invitation to women to hit the road. It advertises itself as a handbook that has “everything a woman needs to know about low-budget, high-adventure, safe road tripping,” and is the ultimate tool “for any woman searching for the key to fulfillment and lasting happiness – the road trip” (Tuttle 1999, 9).

From page one the guide assumes a comical, ironic, but practical attitude to women’s automobilization. It lavishes upon its audience feminist gusto and breathtaking rhetorical turns, keeping the reader amused through all of its 191 pages, some of which are illustrated and most of which are adorned with a golden text band at the bottom of the page giving advice to the reader (presumably female, potentially bad-girl) addressed as “you,” as to when it is time to hit the road. This may be, for example “when you’re afraid to leave the house without makeup (ibid, 11-12), “when you floss three times a day” (ibid, 109-110), or “when you think a French tickler is an exotic flower” (ibid, 128).

Clearly, hitting the road has something to do with liberating the body from excessive control and with furthering feminist consciousness-raising: know the limits of feminine vanity, realize when to stop heeding society’s demands on your hygiene, and, for crying out loud, keep track of developments on the erotic commodity market! As the introductory lines proclaim, a man/husband is no longer the ultimate goal and meaning of a woman’s life; the “key to fulfillment and lasting happiness” is the road-trip. If you do not have your liberation under control – it is definitely time to mobilize!

In the very first paragraph of the book can be located both the book’s road mothers and the typical type of humorous twist Tuttle uses throughout to convey a forceful I-can-do-anything-I want- “bad girl” attitude. But, what is a “bad” girl? The book gives a lot of options. To be bad can be “whatever that means to you – cop a bad attitude, use bad judgment, have a bad hair day, all week long” (ibid, 9). Of course, Tuttle later adds: “there are degrees of badness and endless ways of being bad. It all depends on you and your idea of good behavior” (ibid, 50).

A bad girl gives lip, argues, or is “bitchy” – a term that contemporary women nevertheless have reclaimed as an empowering epithet, for example, by reading into it the by now popular acronym *Babe In Total Control of Herself*. Today, bad girls are being resurrected. Today, a bad girl, in a positive, liberated sense, and particularly in the context of women’s narratives of mobility, can be interpreted as a woman/girl who is sexually liberated, who enjoys carnal pleasures on her own terms, without accepting condescending labels of herself as loose, promiscuous, or, as most women are referred to in *the* masculinist narrative of mobility, *On the Road*, (Kerouac 1957/1991) a whore. After *Thelma & Louise*, the term “bad” has acquired new meaning. Tongue in cheek, I would definitely say that now a

bad girl could be counted as a *good* feminist. She has claimed the right to her own body, rejecting normative constructions of herself as feeble, passive Other. If being bad means claiming independence and agency, feminism is definitely a “bad” discourse.⁴ And the perfect location to practice one’s badness seems to be the heretofore-masculine space of the road.

In the very beginning of the handbook there is an allusion to *Thelma & Louise*: “Despite what you’ve seen in the movies, you don’t have to kill a man to go on a road trip”. Having thus established the association to her feminist foremothers, Tuttle reconfirms the kind of feminism-with-vengeance sensibility guiding her rhetoric with the phrase: “Just wanting to kill someone is enough” (ibid, 9).

The *Thelma & Louise*-allusion is made explicit on page 36, where Tuttle suggests a range of possible “road-personas” to assume. Apart from the “Bonnie without Clyde”-look the reader is recommended the “Thelma & Louise”-look, “rugged yet feminine” (ibid, 36). This look-formula ties neatly into the re-scripting argument mentioned above which, as I devised it, entailed not only a reversal of feminine and masculine attributes, but an incorporation of both, thus refusing rigid gender polarization. The *Thelma & Louise*-attitude, according to Tuttle, is “treat me nice or I’ll blow you away” (ibid, 36). Other suggested personas that, similarly to the “Bonnie without Clyde”-one, must be seen as described road fathers are “Mad Maxine” and “Sleazy Rider,” whose attitude is described as “not looking for Mr. Right – I’m looking for Mr. Right Now” (ibid, 37). There is no doubt about the bad girl position on sexuality in this road-personas gallery; it is assertive all the way: women have sex and it is in order. This is a clear instance of re-scripted binaries; not only men are allowed to be sexually active, scattering their seed, women too disperse and collect, not sperms and eggs, but personal pleasure.

According to stereotypically gendered views on automobility, the car poses a lot of problem for women:

If you’re like most women, you’ve been conditioned to think of a car as a mobile chat-room, or a big purse on wheels, or even a high-speed motorized shopping cart. There’s a hole for gas, a hole for the key, a steering wheel, and a stereo. That’s all you need to know. (ibid, 48)

Tuttle’s handbook takes on this prejudice and advocates women to become mechanically confident and take control of the technical functions of the car. *The Bad Girl’s Guide* directs the reader how to reclaim the automobile. Tuttle suggests that you “poke around under the hood and kick a few tires every now and then,” because in this way “you can often prevent impending disaster” (ibid, 40).

Mechanical skills are part and parcel of a bad girl’s equipment for the road. Consequently, the reader is given, a crash course in “Basic Auto Maintenance” (ibid, 40), that is, a run-down of the function of the radiator, the fan belt, the battery, the hoses, why and when to check these and the oil, when to change fluids and filters, which, *nota bene*, should be done “more often than you change your hair color” (ibid, 43). In addition to checking fluids and filling up the car with gas, you should “make an extra set of car keys” – you could always keep it on your belly-ring if nowhere else (ibid, 45), check your tire-pressure, and “remove your wedding ring: Why risk losing it – or all those free-drink opportunities – along the way?” (ibid, 46).⁵ If by any chance something does happen along the way, the book contains a section on “common breakdowns and how to deal” (*sic* 80), which contains step-by-step guidance on how to change a flat tire, handle overheating, “Wiper Blade Wimp Out,” or “Muffler Malaise” (ibid, 84).

Being on the road involves meeting new

people and unexpected situations. Consequently the book includes a section called “safety school” (ibid, 93). After *Thelma & Louise* there should be no doubt that a woman on the road may have to, and is allowed to, use violence, and therefore she should “take a mental inventory” of what she has handy that “could work as a weapon in a pinch” (ibid, 94). “Non-gun Weapons You Already Own” include: a sharp metal nail file, a high-heeled shoe (“A stiletto-heel puncture through his foot will stop him in his tracks”); pen or pencil (“He’ll hear you say no when you jam the point into his ear canal”); gas (“A well-timed release of toxic fumes is sure to clear a room”), and, finally, your knee ibid, (94-95). The manner of defense has nothing to do with good-girl behavior: just fart or knee him in the groin; efficiency is all that matters, and violence, if necessary, is perfectly legitimate.

In the safety school we are again reminded of the *Thelma & Louise*-connection: “It’s always risky picking up a stranger on the side of the road – and sometimes it’s worth it”. Just remember to “keep the duct tape handy in case you need to hogtie him and throw him in the trunk” (ibid, 97). Tuttle manages, of course, to keep a hilarious perspective also on the potentially hazardous activity of picking up a hitchhiker. She suggests that the reader always ask herself three questions: “1. Do I value my life? 2. Does he look like a serial killer? 3. Even if he does, would I value my life more with him in it?” (ibid, 97). If a woman on the road is not certain about the last question she could, she says, “make a quick Brad Pitt stop [. . .] Hit the brakes, make a U-turn, and get a closer look. You can check him out without making any commitment.” If guilt or doubts emerge from the woman on the road’s conscience, Tuttle prompts her to: “just think of all the times a carload of cat-calling guys slowed to check you out and then peeled off. It’s pay-back time” (ibid, 97). As can be under-

stood, an old sexist account is here settled. Tuttle reminds the reader of the regular state of affairs of sexism that here is described, that is, instead of being feared and fought against, it is shamelessly reversed with an emphasis on female sexuality and pleasure. This is, however, done with a humor that speaks of a de-scripting voiding of the aggression and destructive violence potentially involved in such an encounter with representatives of the traditionally oppressive sex. This deflating of masculinism is repeated in the “BIG TIPS” and the glossary included on every second or third page of text. These tips include, for example, a warning never to pick up a hitchhiker near a prison or state correctional facility” regardless of how “horny you’re feeling or how sexy he looks”(ibid, 97).⁶ A glossary can, for instance, further explain what a “Brad Pitt stop” really stands for: a noun which signifies “*an emergency pit stop to sneak a closer look at a piece of sweet meat,*” which in turn is listed as a noun meaning a “*tasty male morsel*” (ibid, 97, bold and italics in original).

The Bad Girl’s Guide is very heterosexually oriented and much of its humorous energy goes into managing potentially antagonistic encounters with men in a way that seems to aim at rendering these encounters harmless and leaving the women feeling empowered. The jocously violent rhetoric of hogtying and duct-taping strangers and the admonitions to shameless flirtation and sex continue at every turn of the page. The book reveals a light-hearted defiance of patriarchal institutions in combination with a Third-Wave feminist reappropriation of the traditionally girlish color pink, which starts on the plastic crimson-colored book cover and ends with the inclusion of a bumper sticker of the same color that the reader can peel off and paste on her windscreen to proudly announce that she is a “road sister.” A road sister, the glossary explains, is “1. a woman who road trips with style, especially one who has road tripped with you,

a fellow bad girl [...]. 2. someone with no shame, no fear, and no scruples about bending the law when necessary” (ibid, 20). This law, in my view, not only includes breaking speed limits, but can also be read as contradicting the norms prescribing stereotypical feminine behavior, specifically norms that are not yet fully de-scripted, or are up for de-scripting, for example, those that say that auto-work and being an authority on cars in general are masculine occupations. The car reclaimed by women, Tuttle asserts, becomes something much more than a “mobile chatroom” or a “purse on wheels,” it becomes, namely, “your freedom fighter, your power booster, your ticket to ride. It’s a stimulant, an anti-depressant, and a *vroom* with a view” (ibid, 48).

SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION NARRATIVES OF MOBILITY

The emphasis on the mobile woman in the book scrutinized here seems to be the relational constructing of her own identity, by and between women. Unlike, for example, the women of Toni Morrison’s *Paradise* who constantly had to battle male power (Enevold 2002), the women on the road in these narratives pursue their identity projects undisturbed by patriarchal forces and may concentrate on the development of their “buddy”-association or sisterhood. In the *Bad Girl’s Guide* girls on the road are frequently referred to as road sisters. In both Tuttle’s guide and, other women – on-the-road books, for example, Lopez’s *All-Girl Road Novel*, (Lopez 1997) the epithet “girl” figures repeatedly. We have moved from mothers (see Enevold 2002), to daughters, to sisters, and now to girls. The difference between women and girls is most often one of age. The distinction between woman and girl is however not always very clear. For women talking about and among themselves, like Tuttle in her road guide, and Baumgardner and Richards

in *ManifestA*, the difference between girls and women can be slight, great, or plainly ignored. Teasing out the definitions of feminism and women’s liberation and their varying values, Baumgardner and Richards also engage with the term girl:

Girl, bitch, slut, and cunt – all of which are titles of records and books by feminists of our generation – are no longer scary words we have to keep in the closet, in fear that they will become weapons against us. Calling an adult woman “girl” was once insulting, like calling an adult black man “boy.” But now that we can choose and use the word ourselves and not have it forced upon us, “girl” is increasingly rehabilitated as a term of relaxed familiarity, comfy confidence, the female analogue to “guy” – and not a way of belittling adult women. More and more women own bitch (and what it means to be released from the “please like me” gene), cunt (both the complex and odiferous body part and the wise, bad-ass woman), and slut (the girl whose sexuality is owned by no one but herself). (Baumgardner & Richards 2000, 52, italics in original)

“Woman” and “girl” are consequently used interchangeably, with the addition of new political content to these representations of female human beings. Girl is used to address grown women without the purpose of “belittling” them. Similar to slut and cunt, as Baumgardner and Richards point out, girl has been reappropriated and recoded to signify a woman, an empowered sister, in control of her own sexuality. Sister, as we know, can also denote membership of a feminist fellowship, and recalls the association of women and girls, bad or good, to the women’s movement. The subject positions of mother, daughter, sister, and woman and girl cover a range of ages. Feminist generations may thus serve better identifying as labels with which to identify women’s narratives of mobility. The re-scripting narrative of the road mothers *Thelma & Louise* can be regarded as a Sec-

ond Generation narrative of mobility. *Flaming Iguanas*, *Wild Ways*, *Bad Girl's Guide*, and *Drive* are texts that can be counted as belonging to a Third Generation, with the difference that *The Bad Girl's Guide* seems one step farther removed from the second generation, being slightly younger and slightly more convinced of its right to the road, even closer to Third Wave feminism.

In *Bad Girl's Guide*, women reclaim the road and take possession of the “vroom with a view.” How? Let me here summarize the strategies proposed in Tuttle’s guide, a number of aspects of reclaiming that I perhaps rather would place under the heading of a regendering which makes use of re-scripting and de-scripting strategies. This regendering entails that:

- the role models appealed to are female, more specifically the road mothers Thelma and Louise;
- the masculinist road narrative is ousted, there are no male road models and no respect for the traditional road tradition/text which is de-scripted;
- the attributes good and bad are reversed and inter-changed, binaries are re-scripted and masculine feminine characteristics possible to assume across gender boundaries;
- women’s sexuality is celebrated and in the control of woman herself, she is a subject who can look for sex rather than being the sexual object sought after;
- women have appropriated mechanical skills, another aspect of re-scripting typical automobility-related attributes;
- issues of violence and safety are dealt with both in a re-scripting and a de-scripting way, women can be violent, and male violence can be deflated and neutralized.

The Guide implements the knowledge transferred by the Second Generation narrative of mobility, and demonstrates that the practical skills needed on the road have been incorporated into the knowledge base

of female road adventurers, as has the Third Generation bad-girl irreverence for stereotypically gendered rules of propriety, one of the consequences being its liberated and at times slightly equivocal vocabulary.

Tuttle does not use the word feminism, but the guide obviously deals with many of its facets challenging misogynist culture, harassment and abuse, consciousness-raising, the play with self-representation and the reclaiming of sexuality. Feminism here is, to use Baumgardner and Richard’s expression, “like Fluoride,” that is, everywhere.

The pose and position of the female subject in Tuttle’s road guide is radically different from the traditional figuration of women in road and travel narratives. Women have, in basically all forms of travel, traditionally and historically, been on the margins of the story. The Kerouacian road-trip was, I have claimed, about male identity building. To generalize, men on the road have gazed upon and consumed women as objects and women have assisted in the positioning of the male subject as the traveler, the universal human being creating his life. What Tuttle does, (and other authors, for example Lopez and Goode), is change the gaze, both in terms of who is looking and what or who that person is looking at. Regendering has taken place. The gaze has been reversed. And, it seems, it has been more than reversed. As Jennifer Goode expresses it in the introduction to her story collection *Drive* (Goode 2002), road travel has become each individual’s – regardless of gender – tool of vision and exploration. It may sound universal and grand but, I believe, this is an aspect of Third Wave feminists’ view of the world – a view that can be multicultural, highly individualistic, collective, and universalistic at one and the same time. There is a high degree of assumed freedom implicit in such a worldview, one in which gender inequality and sexism fade into the background. This puts it at great risk of being accused of relativism and los-

ing sight of the feminist goal of ending sexism and promoting women's liberation and empowerment.

Tuttle's guide is one of the woman-on-the-road books that fills an actual void in the literature of the road. It mediates a striving for freedom as far as subjectivity in narratives of mobility goes that is more than justified, considering the legacy of the past which awards mobility to the already free – predominantly white, middle class, Euro-American males. Such books claim the freedom of the road – the rights to choose one's subject positions and to move freely – specifically for women. Tuttle's book is an example of how far the regendering of the traditional masculinist narrative of mobility has come. The woman on the road is no longer, in Baumgardner and Richard's words, "measured in relation to male supremacy" (Baumgardner & Richards 2000, 11).

Judging by the content and stated intention of the book analyzed here, the "room and road for the female mobile subject" (Enevold 2000) must be said to have come into existence. To paraphrase Marilyn French's famous 1977 novel, there is indeed a "woman's road" which can be her own as Virginia Woolf would have it ("A Room of One's Own" 1929). Such a space provides necessary room for independence and freedom and provides access to the world. Tuttle's "vroom," (a paraphrase on E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* 1908/1977) fulfills a long-standing obstructed yearning for women's access to the world – a world that allows for female mobility. A woman's vroom could be seen as the long-awaited practical result of the feminist work of First, Second, and Third Wave feminisms against Victorian morals and patriarchal laws that work to keep women off the road. The *Bad Girl's Guide* ultimately de-scribes masculinist road texts by urging women to take possession of the car and to view it as a liberating and liberated space. Such a space provides necessary

room for independence and freedom and provides access to the world.⁷

NOTER

1. A longer version of this article, included in Enevold's 2003 dissertation "Women on the Road: Regendering Narratives of Mobility," also treats the short story collection *Drive: Women's True Stories of the Road*, (Goode 2002).
2. See (Enevold 2003.)
3. For studies of gender and automobility see (Polk 1998) and (Scharff 1991).
4. Not to forget the use of the word "bad" in contemporary youth-speak as meaning something extremely good, cool, and attractive, or "awesome" (to use another word which has become part of the vernacular vocabulary expressing appreciation).
5. This advice should be seen in contrast to that of many women traveling alone guides (e.g., *Journey-women*) that recommend a woman to wear a wedding ring, even if she's single, at all times!
6. The sign "Correctional facility. Do not pick up hitchhikers" is a regular feature along American highways.
7. *The Women's Room* directs the readers' attention to the fact that there are places that women quite simply are not allowed to go. Forster's novel is an early illustration of the spatial and conventional constraints placed on women. Woolf's essay emphasizes the need for a woman to have an income and a space of her own and brings up the issue of women's limited access to public places and functions.

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SUMMARY

This article takes a look at the road-trip handbook The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road by Cameron Tuttle (1999). This recent narrative of mobility, it argues, carries on the feminist legacy of road stories such as Thelma & Louise (Scott 1991) and Flaming Iguanas (Lopez 1998) continuing their paving of the way for women's self-representation on the road and the regendering of the traditional masculinist narrative of mobility. The Bad Girl's Guide, it argues, is characterized by a new regendered aesthetic of the road that contributes representations that disrupt normative constructions of Woman and of the road as a masculine territory. The Guide claims the freedom of the road – the rights to choose one's subject positions and to move freely – specifically for women. Taking this freedom for granted, it demonstrates an anxiety-absolved attitude of a new generation of feminists who have taken possession of the road and the car as empowering symbols that include movement.

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