

Travel Narratives and Life-Writing

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Abbes Maazaoui, Editor

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The Lincoln Humanities Journal

(LHJ)

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Travel Narratives and Real-Life Fiction: Introduction¹

ABBES MAAZAoui
Editor

The practice of travel writing is almost as old as human history. Humans have always been interested in telling their stories and discovering other “pages”² of the world.³ From Pausanias to Ibn Battuta, to Marco Polo, to Columbus, this fascination with travel and auto/biography has endured. In sixteenth century Europe, thanks to the combined effect of three great inventions—“the printing press, gunpowder, and the compass”—news about the larger world circulated fast and furious: “The expanded range of movement facilitated by the compass and the dissemination through print of information about new places and peoples were, in a sense, mutually reinforcing” (Voigt and Brancaforte 365). Travel writing captured the heightened attention of readers, writers/navigators and printers so much so the humanists considered it essential in the formation of youth and tried to codify it.⁴ Subsequently, this perennial interest in travel will explode further, first in the 19th century with the intensification of

¹ I would like to thank Lincoln University of Pennsylvania for funding and supporting this project. I would also like to thank the reviewers and contributors for their work on this collection.

² To paraphrase Saint Augustine, “The world is a book, and those who do not travel write only a page.”

³ This theme was supposed to be a “happy” topic. The coronavirus pandemic (COVIT-19) threw a wrench into our expectations. Communities, states and countries around the world have been forced to close their borders and reject or quarantine any traveler cut in the wrong place at the wrong time.

⁴ See Sylvain Venayre, *Ecrire le voyage: De Montaigne à Le Clézio* (Cover page).

colonial, military and economic schemes, and then in the 20th century with the advent of mass tourism and widespread access to technology (drones, cameras, air travel, web streaming, etc.).

“Anyone, at anytime, anywhere, in any language, can ‘write’ literature.” Philippe Hamon’s words apply quite easily to travel narrative and sound even truer today than it did two or three decades ago. This expanded definition of literature allows us to capture briefly some of the fundamental characteristics of travel literature. First, by using literary devices to please their readers (description, imagination to fill in the gaps, anecdotes, etc.), journey accounts have often raised issues of credibility: “Travelers have often had bad press and have been called liars over the centuries” (Jean-Claude Berchet 5).⁵ Another hallmark of travel writing is its diversity: “anyone” not only can write, but also write in any manner. In an article titled “Odyssées,” Jean-Luc Moreau playfully highlights a number of these attributes:

Because there are all kinds of trips, there are all kinds of travel stories . . . Add to this that the trip is true or imaginary, takes place in the past or in the future, not only on foot, on horseback, . . . but also in a balloon, in a trimaran . . . Of course, a traveler will most often tell his trip in the first person, [or] third person . . . If your heart tells you, nothing prevents you from telling yours in the second person [like] Michel Butor . . . You can narrate this trip in prose, in verse, even in prose and in verse . . . You can tell it . . . in the form of dialogue or in comic strip, in the simple past, in the past perfect or . . . the infinitive . . . You can report the facts in chronological order, but you can also choose another layout, go back from the present to the past or group your discoveries by themes . . . You [can] just throw on the papers simple notes in a telegraphic style or on the contrary, you work your style, you spread your wings . . . You can zigzag through your memory,

⁵ See examples p. 5. See also Carey: “The capacity of travel writers to distort the truth—amplifying their observations, claiming credit for what they never witnessed or inventing fabulous narratives wholesale from the imagination rather than experience—has always been recognized” (3). Herodotus for instance was accused of making up stories for entertainment, and was named “The Father of Lies” by his critics (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus>).

navigate from memory to memory, juxtapose anecdotes and descriptions, and even do without any narration. (38-39; my translation)

Today, we can add to this variety the proliferation of other media beyond print such as performance, audio-visual media such as film, and digital media in the form of blogs and YouTube videos.

As a form of life-writing that encompasses all aspects of travel, fictional and factual, travel writing is at the intersection of multiple genres: writing, auto/biography, literature, life-writing, “biographical narrative” (John Keener 1).⁶ A working definition is that travel writing is a retrospective narrative by real people about their life away from home, and can be in any form (memoirs, diaries, oral testimony, eye-witness accounts, scientific discovery, etc.).

The present essay collection focuses on life-writings in the narrower sense of print. But within this, as we shall see, the volume covers several national literatures (Algerian, American, British, French, Italian, and Spanish) and a variety of life-writing genres including studies of autobiographical and semi/fictional texts about travel.

Real-Life Fiction: Modern Iterations

In the first part of this collection, Ann M. Genzale, Catarina Nunes De Almeida, Neelam Pirbhai-Jetha, Fella Benabed, and Agnieszka Kaczmarek investigate contemporary narratives from the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A common concern of their contributions is travel narrative’s implications in cultural identity, national history and politics.

In her article titled, “The Words Are Maps,” Ann M. Genzale analyzes how the contemporary memoirs featuring long-distance hiking are emerging as a popular “sub-genre of travel writing that encompasses different narrative styles.” To make her case, she discusses the narrative strategies of three recent hiking memoirs: Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild*, which tells the story of her decision to hike alone the 2,650 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail

⁶ For a thorough discussion of the “recent explosion of experimentation in life-writing” and “the proliferation of genre designations” such as “meta-autobiography,” autotopography,” “creative non-fiction,” “false novel,” “autofiction,” “biofiction,” “auto/biografiction,” “autobiographical non-fiction novel,” “auto/biographic metafiction,” or “heterobiography,” see Julia Novak (2-3).

(PCT), which extends between the Mexican and Canadian borders; Carrot Quinn's self-published *Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart*, which she adapted from blog entries written from the trail; and Rahawa Haile's essay, "Going It Alone," in which she describes her through-hike of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.), a 2,200-mile national scenic trail that extends between Georgia and Maine. Genzale discusses the three women's contributions to the sub-genre of the hiking memoir and to travel writing in general. In a field usually marked as masculine, these writers invoke and subvert masculinist narratives of travel, gendered stereotypes, queer labels, and racial geographies.

Another male-dominated field where women are under-represented is analyzed by Catarina Nunes De Almeida. The author focuses on the memoirs of two Iberian women writers: *Una viajera por Asia central* [A Woman Traveler through Central Asia, 2016] by the Spanish writer Patricia Almarcegui and *Caderno Afegão* [Afghan Notebook, 2009] by the Portuguese reporter Alexandra Lucas Coelho. Despite the divergent purposes of their travel to some of the most conservative countries in Central Asia (the former as a tourist but struggling to adopt a post-colonial posture; the latter as a journalist particularly in the war-torn country of Afghanistan and focusing primarily on current events), both women end up mired in dealing with women issues in highly patriarchal societies, including matters pertaining to their own gender. Nunes De Almeida surmises that patriarchy and feminism are inescapable in any culture, whether for the women travelers or the "travelees" (Pratt).

In her "Trips to the Algerian Sahara," Warda Derdour discusses the travel stories, both fictional and real, of the Algerian writer Chawki Amari. *Nationale 1* chronicles the author's journey by car in the Algerian desert along National Road 1, which extends to about 1500 miles. As a scientist with training in geology, Amari uses his expertise in analyzing the desert fauna, flora, landscape and geology, and the history of its less-traveled towns and localities, dispersed in the vastness of the Sahara. His later writings, *Le faiseur de trous* [The Holes Digger] and "3° E", feature events and crossings in the Sahara desert, where characters are constantly on the move. Derdour argues that Amari's interest in the desert as a privileged background is rooted in his belief that the Sahara is the land of hidden mysteries and origins, and the cradle of his ancestors and their civilizations.

Here, travel narratives are used as a mode of self-knowledge and self-discovery.

In “Liquid Modernity and Fluid Identity in Caryl Phillips’s Counter Travelogue *The Atlantic Sound*,” Fella Benabed shows how the story subverts “the imperialist imperatives of the traditional travel narrative” by placing the marginalized other in the position of the traveler and thus inverting the subject-object power relations. Enlightened by his African ancestry, his Caribbean history, his British education and his United States residence, he feels at home whether he is in Guadeloupe, Liverpool, Elmina or Charleston. As Paul Gilroy would put it, it is the “routes” he takes, rather than the “roots” he has, that shape his fluid identity (19). Beyond attempting to relive his parents’ journey from the Caribbean island of St Kitts to Great Britain, and the voyage of Columbus and the slave ships, Phillips confronts the concepts of home and belonging and the repressed legacy of slavery and its effects on blacks and whites alike.

Agnieszka Kaczmarek analyzes the capacity of travel writers to distort the truth, and the various rhetorical strategies they use to make their narrative appear authentic and factual. The debate surrounding the publication of Maurice Herzog’s *Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8000-Metre Peak* (1951), one of “the most successful expedition books of all times,” illustrates for Kaczmarek the writer’s efforts to mitigate the fictional dimension of the travel narrative genre (using geographical features and maps, expressing the unfamiliar with familiar terms, employing paratextual elements such as personal notes and black-and-white photographs). “As a male imperial adventure narrative aspiring to be true,” Herzog’s *Annapurna* also falls into the category of a classic mountaineering text, with its use of military and nationalistic vocabulary, its codes of male power, and its disdain for indigenous peoples.

Voyage Narratives: The Colonial Gaze

In the second part of the collection, Abderrahman Beggar, Bernadette McNary-Zak, Neelam Pirbhai-Jetha, Sonia Dosoruth, and Samira Etouil examine travel narratives from a longer diachronic perspective during the colonial periods extending from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Abderrahman Beggar argues that travel literature of the Conquistadors provides the ideological substrate of current

cultural beliefs and practices such as systemic racism, imperialistic attitudes, slavery, islamophobia⁷, antisemitism, and knowledge as a means of conquest. Using Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* (1554) as a case in point, he shows how the author is associated with a campaign sponsored by the state, the church and venture capital. Even though he is witness to one of the worst genocides in human history, he makes use of fictional conventions in order to be more convincing and comes across as a defender of indigenous and Native Americans. Not unlike the religious lethal stigmatization of the Maures, the otherness of Indian Americans offers the Conquistadors a convenient truth. Furthermore, later French and English translations of *Naufragios* reveal, and build on, these shared cognitive and behavioral patterns that constitute the collective unconscious of today's western societies.

In her article "Aboard the *Castilia*," Bernadette McNary-Zak examines *Memoirs* by two Italian nuns. With a mission to strengthen the Franciscan presence in the New World and a duty to provide a record of their activities, the two sisters travelled from the Monastery of San Lorenzo in Rome, Italy to the seaport in Marseille, France where they boarded a steamer, the *Castilian*, which would take them to the United States of America (1875). The voyage, which lasted one month, was depicted in their *Memoirs* as a smooth sailing and an eventful ritual of passage from the old world to the New World. The smooth transition is affirmed by ongoing formation, prayer, and the practice of humility in presence of the "immensity of God."

The next two articles concern the island of Mauritius, successively a former French and British colony in the Indian Ocean. As Godfrey Baldacchino and Stephen Royle write in their article "Postcolonialism and Islands": "No other type of territory has been so affected by the colonial endeavor as islands. Islands, especially the smaller entities, were the first territories to be colonized in the European Age of Discovery, suffered the colonial burden most intimately and thoroughly, and have been the last to seek and obtain independence" (140). The first essay, by Sonia Dsoruth, shows how Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in his *Voyage à l'Isle de France* (1773) attempts to reconcile multiple imperatives

⁷ As Beggar indicates, Muslims were banned from entering the New World by a royal decree. Many centuries later, we witness a similar "Muslim ban" instituted by an American president. This and other bans (Chinese, etc.) show the continuation of the same pattern.

during his trip to Mauritius: his direct observations as a traveler, his preconceived ideas about the indigenous people, his thirst and excitement for the exotic, and his scientific project of documenting the island's fauna, flora and people for the benefit of the king. As a curious traveler with a mission, he meticulously describes and notes in his journal his daily observations. Without directly denouncing institutional slavery, he finds himself bearing witness to its devastating and dehumanizing effects. Dosoruth argues that this voyage functions as a rite of passage marking Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's entrance into a society that is suffering unspeakable acts of barbarism, and helping him to write later his much celebrated *Paul et Virginie* (1788). The second essay about non-fictional travel writings on the island of Mauritius is by Neelam Pirbhai-Jetha. From a colonial perspective, the island is depicted as a space of strange otherness. By the nature of its physical location (remoteness) and small size, the island is an object of desire and is conceptualized as a space of utopian longing and possession. To conquer the island and exert their colonial power, travelers such as Nicolas Pike, Mark Twain, Lady Bartram, Charles Darwin, and James Holman focus their energy on knowing/dissecting its fauna, flora and its people. Seduced by its remoteness, they aspire through their writings to tame the island's wilderness and partake, willingly or not, in its imperial conquest.

Back to Africa, Samira Etouil analyzes *In Morocco [Voyage au Maroc]* by Edith Wharton and the rhetorical strategies used by the writer to de-materialize the subject and conveniently mold it to tailor the message to colonial expectations and stereotypes. The reality (people, history, cities, and customs) is evacuated and mythologized/replaced by a content resourced from an ideological and cultural background. The story is interspersed with testimonies—conveniently provided by other travelers and the locals—that perpetuate and consolidate certain clichés such as hostility, savagery, seclusion and fanaticism. The chronicle (published in 1920) seems to strive to achieve one implicit purpose: to justify the colonial concept of protectorate and to picture France as the mythical savior of Morocco and similar (North) African countries.

Travel Literature and the Impossible Escape

In Part III of the book, Sara Schotland and Olfa Gandouz Ayebe investigate literary fictions inspired by historical events while Mina Apic places the discussion in philosophical terms giving it a more theoretical perspective.

In “Whichever Way the Road’,” Sara Schotland examines the topic of travel and agency in August Wilson’s *Pittsburgh Plays*, which relates the aftereffects of the Great Migration early in the 20th Century. Facing poverty, discrimination, and emotional dislocation, African Americans’ escape from the Jim Crow south did not achieve the promises of the American Dream and was instead like falling from Scylla into Charybdis: Pittsburgh was not the refuge from oppression that they had hoped for. Schotland argues that, for Wilson, the journey that African Americans undertake to remove the shackles of slavery and fight against oppression is not simply an external one; the physical travel must lead to a spiritual journey that inevitably has to draw from African heritage and religion.

Olfa Gandouz Ayebe discusses the travel experience of Italian immigrants in Arthur Miller’s *A View from the Bridge*. She analyzes how Arthur Miller’s blurring of boundaries between the fictional and the real adds certain authenticity to travel writings. The hardships that Marco (a reminder of the archetypical traveler Marco Polo) and his brother face after reaching the American soil and their failed attempts at crossing the Brooklyn Bridge highlight their internal and external otherness. Torn between feelings of shame and pride toward their Italian origins, they are equally impressed and disillusioned by the American dream. Here, travel illuminates the social ills and qualities of the old as well as the new homeland.

It is a similar observation about the revealing nature of travel that Mina Apic’s article underscores. Apic analyzes the geographic underpinnings of dichotomies such as country / city and ‘natural man’ / ‘civilized’ European in 18th century France, and depicts the assumptions, ethics and values pinned to each side of these dichotomies. Depending on the interest of the writers, whether they are soldiers, merchants, sailors, missionaries, or philosophers, natural men are depicted as a symbol of “degree zero de culture”, ignorant, savage, cannibal, incapable of learning and surpassing their instincts, or (also) smart, resourceful and pure of all contemporarily evils. This

article shows how the concept of natural man is used as a rhetorical device to address political and moral issues in France, even though these dichotomies, such as nature vs. civilization, have started to be questioned by Rousseau, Diderot, and Bougainville.

Supplement

To the special issue, we added a section that features two contributions, more from the creative writing side. The first is by Ezra S. Engling. He writes about his return to Spain as a member of the Lexington Singers, the premier and oldest community choir in Kentucky, and the second oldest in the United States. With humor and attention to cultural details, he shares with us his account of the choir's first trip to Spain, from Lexington, Kentucky to Madrid and Andalusia, a delighted view of an enlightened tourist. This contribution is an illustration of a travel narrative and real-life writing. The second contribution, "Hamlet Joins a Motorcycle Gang: A Contemporary View of the (anti)Hero's Journey," is by William Donohue. Using poetic license and attributing a figurative meaning to the 'conventional' definition of travel as used in this collection, Donohue applies Joseph Campbell's notion of the "hero's journey" and its key phases of "separation, initiation, and return" to the television series, *Sons of Anarchy*, in connection with *Hamlet*. The resulting comparative study maps an important contemporary iteration of the antihero's inner journey.

Overall, as highlighted by Jean-Luc Moreau in the beginning of this introduction, the range of travel stories, modes of writing, subgenres, concerns, writers, nationalities, and geographies considered in this essay collection attests to the ever-evolving interest in the topic of travel narratives and their open-ended nature. Born to be hunter-gatherers and travel great distances (in search of food, etc.), humans are also natural story tellers. At the risk of repeating the obvious, storytelling and "travel, at [their] essence, both confirm and strengthen our humanity."⁸

⁸ *Select Magazine*, Summer issue 2020 (inside cover)

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PART ONE

REAL-LIFE FICTION: MODERN ITERATIONS

The Words Are Maps: The Contemporary Hiking Memoir as Life Writing

ANN M. GENZALE

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The autobiographical travel memoir is one of the most popular and widely read forms of contemporary travel writing, and in recent decades, there has been particular interest in narratives of long-distance hikes, such as Robyn Davidson's *Tracks*, John Krakauer's *Into the Wild* and Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods*. More recently, Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, which tells the story of her spontaneous decision to hike the Pacific Crest Trail⁹ while grieving her mother's death, has garnered widespread critical and popular acclaim. In an early review, Leigh Gilmore differentiates it from other memoirs of travel and self-discovery written by women, as well as some of the hiking memoirs previously mentioned. "To redeem her own life from a spiral of pain," Gilmore writes, "Strayed upends conventions about gender, grief, and healing," and, in so doing, "contributes a new figure to the literary canon of walking, wilderness, and nature writing, and also to memoir itself" (189). By presenting a months-long hike as a means of processing grief, and by making that healing the

⁹ The Pacific Crest Trail is a National Scenic Trail that spans the 2,650 miles between the Mexican and Canadian borders. Strayed joined the trail just outside of the town of Mojave, California, and concluded her hike at the Bridge of the Gods, which connects Oregon with Washington State over the Columbia River.

thematic core of her text, Strayed revises the conventions of the hiking memoir, and of life writing more generally. Following the success of *Wild*, there has been greater interest in hiking memoirs by women, such as Carrot Quinn’s self-published *Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart*, which she adapted from blog posts written on the trail, and Rahawa Haile’s essay, “Going It Alone” for *Outside*, which is the basis of her forthcoming book. Each of these writers utilizes a different narrative strategy—Strayed, for instance, weaves her life story throughout her trail narrative, whereas Quinn presents her experiences, thoughts and emotions in real-time, and Haile’s essay blends her trail anecdotes with broader discussions of social and political issues in the United States. By presenting their hikes as formative experiences through these distinctive narrative modes, Strayed, Quinn, and Haile expand the possibilities for the hiking memoir as a form of life writing.

The relationship between autobiography and travel writing historically has been a contentious one, as the generic boundaries of what constitutes travel writing has been a topic of consistent debate. Early attempts at defining travel writing drew sharp distinctions between non-narrative texts—such as itineraries and guidebooks—and autobiographical travel accounts intended to be read for pleasure. However, this kind of classification is complicated by the fact that many early travel accounts, even when meant to share practical information, were also framed as a particular traveler’s real-life experiences and often included personal impressions and anecdotes. Additionally, texts that were published as “true-life” accounts were sometimes fictionalized or sensationalized in order to appeal to their audiences, and, especially after the Romantic period, fiction writers incorporated stylistic elements of travel writing as a way of exploring the relationships between place and the self. Because it has encompassed such a wide range of texts in overlapping genres, scholars have tended to favor broad, inclusive definitions of travel writing. Carl Thompson, for example, describes travel as “the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space,” and travel writing, by extension, a record of this encounter between familiarity and difference (9). Even within such broad formulations, there are nonetheless identifiable sub-genres, and autobiographical hiking memoirs could be considered a version of what Thompson calls the “modern travel book.” Combining thematic and stylistic elements of travel narrative and

life writing, the modern travel book is a kind of hybrid genre that, according to Thompson, “enables and articulates an overview of a whole life, or at least, a significant portion of a life” (114). In these texts, the journey serves as both metaphor and narrative structure, in which physical, outward travel inspires internal growth and self-transformation.

Strayed explicitly sets up this metaphor in the opening chapters of *Wild* by pointing out that she and the PCT are the same age. “I am technically fifteen days older than the Pacific Crest Trail,” she notes. “I was born in 1968, on September 17, and the trail was officially designated by an act of Congress on October 2 of that same year” (61). Strayed reinforces this parallel by interspersing her experiences on the PCT with flashbacks that gradually reveal significant events in her life, beginning with her troubled childhood in Minnesota, leading up to her mother’s sudden death from lung cancer, and the subsequent collapse of her marriage and struggle with heroin addiction. Strayed’s life off the trail, in fact, is such a prominent aspect of the text that Megan Brown reads *Wild* as an addiction memoir as well as a travel memoir, in which Strayed’s experiences, she writes, “are portrayed as formative lessons: as the narrator learns more about hiking, she becomes more confident and independent, and, in turn, this newfound sense of confidence/independence allows her to process her feelings about her family and her ex-husband” (40). These lessons, as Brown notes, do not come in the form of straightforward moral advice common in addiction memoirs, but rather from the ways in which Strayed’s experiences on the trail—from the trial-and-error of overpacking her backpack to an encounter with a wild bull—transform her not merely from a novice hiker into a woman who had traversed 1,100 miles, but also into someone who, as she puts it, learns that she “could bear the unbearable” (92). Her emerging ability to endure the physical pain and discomfort that comes with long-distance hiking, then, serves as a metaphor for her ability to transcend the hardships in her life off the trail.

Strayed’s association of her interior emotional life with embodied physical sensation, as Shelly Sanders points out, is “central not only to her hiking and grieving experience but also to her written narrative” and is one of Strayed’s notable contributions to the genre of the hiking memoir (2). As Strayed herself points out, her hike is not the meditative, reflective nature walk she, and perhaps her readers, might have expected: “I’d set

out to hike the trail so that I could reflect upon my life, to think about everything that had broken me and make myself whole again. But the truth was, so far, I was consumed only with my most immediate and physical suffering” (84). This, she discovers, proves to be the most crucial aspect of her journey, noting that, “by being forced to focus on my physical suffering some of my emotional suffering would fade away” (92). Embodiment also features prominently in the poem Strayed reads to comfort herself on her first night on the trail: “Power,” by Adrienne Rich. This poem, a tribute to the scientist Marie Curie, describes her groundbreaking work on radioactivity as her greatest triumph and greatest suffering, and having died of radiation poisoning, as intimately connected with her body, which Rich describes as “bombarded for years by the element/she had purified” (*The Dream of a Common Language* 3). The poem’s closing line, “her wounds came from the same source as her power” echo Strayed’s meditations on her own emotional suffering, which she also describes in terms of physical pain that she had initially tried to numb with heroin (*The Dream of a Common Language* 3). What makes the experience of hiking the PCT so crucial to Strayed’s healing process is not the denial or absence of pain, but the experience of a pain that is, as she puts it, “hard in a way that made the other hardest things the tiniest bit less hard” (95).

Strayed’s use of another of Rich’s poems, “Diving into the Wreck,” as an epigraph underscores the ways in which the hike, like the writing of the memoir itself, represents a kind of excavation of her memories and a process of reclaiming her life’s narrative. The epigraph reads, “the words are purposes/the words are maps,” and the poem continues, “I came to see the damage that was done/and the treasures that prevail” (*Diving into the Wreck* 23). The speaker, like Strayed, comes for “the thing itself and not the myth,” seeking self-knowledge not shaped by narratives constructed by others (*Diving into the Wreck* 23). As Gilmore notes, Strayed’s invocation of Rich’s poetry is a kind of feminist self-determination, which is especially significant given that the literary traditions of travel and nature writing in which Strayed participates have been stubbornly coded as masculine, despite the fact that women have been historically prolific travelers and travel writers. As Sidonie Smith points out, the constellation of meanings associated with the journey in the West have been tied to an “itinerant masculinity,” asserted through “purposes, activities, behaviors, dispositions, perspectives, and

bodily movements displayed on the road, and through the narratives of travel that they return home to the sending culture” (IX). In these narratives, the male traveler, Smith writes, “stands in awe, supplicates, survives, conquers, claims, penetrates, surveys, colonizes, studies, catalogs, organizes, civilizes, critiques, celebrates, absorbs, goes ‘native,’” while women are presented as objects of conquest or relegated to the realm of the domestic space of the home (10-11). Smith finds foot travel to be particularly challenging to these gendered narratives, causing the female traveler to become “other to her unheroic, ‘feminized self,’” through a transformation that, significantly, is “registered in the body” (32). By casting herself as the hero of her story through physical as well as inner transformation, Strayed both invokes and subverts masculinist narratives of travel.

As Smith notes, the very nature of foot travel “puts normative femininity under duress. Endurance, vigor, willpower, fearlessness, ingenuity, all qualities necessary for the negotiation of life at the edges, become so many defining indexes of heroic action,” which have been stereotypically celebrated in men, and discouraged in women (32). Strayed encounters these gendered stereotypes firsthand, and learning to defy them is an important aspect of her process of self-actualization. For example, when she accepts a ride from a miner named Frank and explains that she is hiking the PCT, he puzzles over “what kind of woman” she is. After accepting a sip of whisky from his flask, he decides to call her Jane, “the kind of woman Tarzan would like” and his personal interpretation of a wild woman (73). Sitting in Frank’s truck realizing that she knows nothing about him, she quickly makes up a lie that her husband is hiking toward her from the opposite direction. “Well, then he’s crazier than you,” Frank says. “It’s one thing to be a woman crazy enough to do what you’re doing. Another thing to be a man letting his own wife go on and do this” (74). Frank, and several other people she meets, are surprised by Strayed not because they doubt that a woman could physically handle long-distance hiking, but that they expect that, as a woman, she should avoid placing herself into situations that she knows could be dangerous—in short, they expect her to be afraid. As Strayed writes, “Fear, to a great extent, is born of a story we tell ourselves, and so I chose to tell myself a different story from the one women are told. I decided I was safe. I was strong. I was brave. Nothing could vanquish me” (51). If she could conquer fear

on the trail, to her thinking, she could overcome fear in other areas of her life.

Even so, Strayed candidly describes the realities and the dangers of being a woman traveling alone through remote areas. For instance, when she realizes she needs to hitchhike in order to reach the trailhead in Mojave, she begins to have second thoughts. “Horrible things happened to hitchhikers, I knew, especially to women hitchhiking alone,” she writes, but “hitchhiking was simply what PCT hikers did on occasion. And I was a PCT hiker, right? *Right?*” (47). When she checks the trail register, she notices that most of the hikers who have gone before her are mostly “men traveling in pairs, not one of them a woman alone” (50). This leads other hikers who meet her on the trail to recognize her and greet her by name, and while their intentions are friendly, Strayed wonders how easy it would be for someone to stalk her and predict when she would arrive at different points on the trail. Nonetheless, even when she has the opportunity to join up with other hikers, she finds ways to remain alone, as she recognizes that solitude is crucial to her process of self-realization. “I’d come, I realized, to stare that fear down, to stare everything down, really,” she writes. “All that I’d done to myself and all that had been done to me. I couldn’t do it while tagging along with someone else” (122). She describes this kind of “radical aloneness” as a space where she could be her truest self. “Alone wasn’t a room anymore,” she writes, “but the whole wide world, and now I was alone in that world, occupying it in a way I never had before” (119). Hiking the PCT, then, gives Strayed the knowledge that this is a mindset she could have anywhere, altering the way she sees herself and the ways she moves through the world.

While Strayed credits her time spent on the trail in solitude as most important for her own personal journey toward self-awareness, the unique social bonds that form over the course of a long-distance hike can be similarly transformative. In Carrot Quinn’s account of thru-hiking the PCT,¹⁰ she places more emphasis on these social bonds, and particularly the ways in which her experience is shaped by her immersion in a community of other thru-hikers, trail angels and various other people she

¹⁰ In 2013, Quinn hiked the entirety of the Pacific Crest Trail as her first long-distance hike. The practice of hiking the entire length of a trail is commonly spelled “thru-hiking” or “through-hiking.” I use both variations in this essay in order to be consistent with the spellings used in my sources.

meets along the way. As a result, Quinn’s narrative utilizes dialogue more frequently than Strayed’s, and includes detailed reflections on the social dynamics of the new friend-groups she joins on the trail. Quinn, like Strayed, also provides extensive detail about the logistical minutiae of her hike, with some of her most vivid descriptions reserved for the food she consumes almost down to the calorie, giving readers a sense of the hunger of a thru-hiker and the need to replenish the energy spent from hiking roughly eighteen miles a day for weeks at a stretch. This episodic narrative style, which comes out of the book’s composition as a series of blog entries, reflects the social nature of Quinn’s hike, and, like many examples of travel narratives based on letters or journal entries, provides a balance between reflections on her own experience and useful information for readers who may be inspired to embark on their own thru-hike. The book’s origins as a blog also situate it as travel narrative for members of the “online” generation, and especially those who have begun to consider the advantages and pitfalls of having so much of their lives in constant connection. In fact, the first line immediately following the prologue reads: “I think I’m addicted to the internet” (7). By beginning in this way, and then emphasizing the bonds she creates with other thru-hikers throughout the text, Quinn reconfigures the experience of setting off into nature—not to escape or disconnect from the world, but to inhabit it in a new way.

In an article for *The Guardian*, Quinn reflects on the ways in which long-distance hikes give people access to experiences removed from modern pursuits of comfort and convenience. “Right now, in the western world, our lives are mostly sedentary,” she writes. “But it doesn’t have to be this way... things are changing in ways we can’t yet fully comprehend. It’s up to us to determine what we want our reality to look like, how we want to move through the world in our physical bodies” (Quinn). Like Strayed, she sees her most profound realizations about herself and her capabilities as being physically embodied, describing herself as “living, for the first time in my life, in my body” (Quinn). She also comments on the commonly-held perception that men would be inherently more adept at thru-hiking than women. Indeed, the online forums where she had done her research for her hike, she writes, “were populated by men, holding forth on this and that, and gear was made and sized for men, as though female long-distance hikers didn’t even exist” (Quinn).

However, as Quinn finds, not only do they exist, but are just as skilled as men—the year she hiked the PCT, she points out, is the same year that Heather “Anish” Anderson broke the overall self-supported speed record that had stood for five years. However, more than an impressive feat of athletic endurance, Quinn envisions her own trek as a version of “the hero’s journey,” framing it in terms of the search for meaning in the tradition of Western travel literature, which, it is worth noting, has been typically populated with male heroes with women waiting at home, from Odysseus onward (Quinn). Quinn, a queer woman, further subverts the gendered associations found in travel narrative by writing candidly and matter-of-factly about trail romances with people of different genders that, along with the camaraderie and friendship she experiences, contribute to the sense of connection with herself and others that she had been seeking in her life off the trail.

Like *Strayed*, Quinn challenges narratives that hiking, and the hiking memoir, are primarily the domains of men, and draws a similar parallel between physical and internal transformation. “I am getting better at dealing with the heat,” Quinn writes, “with the lack of water, with the long miles. I am getting better at dealing with everything. I am getting stronger. I can feel it” (59). Later in her journey, she echoes *Strayed*’s point that the most therapeutic properties of the trail do not come from peaceful contemplation in nature, but in being absorbed in the day-to-day of life on the trail. On the PCT, Quinn writes, “one doesn’t have to think about the larger picture of one’s life. On the trail, one thinks about walking, and about eating, and about acquiring food and making it to camp at a reasonable hour” (282). She also experiences a heightened sensitivity to her surroundings as a result of her long-term separation from modern life. She finds herself unable to sleep in a bed, and after browsing through her phone after a stretch of time in the Sierras without using it, she thinks about how far away she feels from her life off the trail. “I have no idea what’s going on in the world right now,” she realizes. “Shootings? Uprisings? Industrial collapse? Kittens being funny? I wouldn’t know” (136). While Quinn still uses her phone periodically to download maps and coordinate with other hikers, it’s important to note that, besides personal safety, her phone, rather than being a distraction or compulsion, offers her a way of staying connected to the trail and the people she meets. In this way Quinn achieves connections with others that are not

determined by technology, and, as a result, becomes more aware of the world around her. For example, in Ashland, she is kept awake in her hotel room by the sounds of the city others would be able to tune out, because, as she puts it, she is now “calibrated to the woods” (238).

While this heightened awareness amplifies all of Quinn’s feelings on the trail, including her emotions of fear, anxiety and sadness, it also empowers her to determine for herself how she lives in her body and in the world. Quinn conveys this sense of being fully present in the moment through her careful documenting of her observations and feelings as she marks the passage of time and distance. While she occasionally reflects on her past, Quinn, unlike Strayed, does not spend as much time on introspection—perhaps because of her memoir’s origins as a blog, she does not seek to tell the story of her life via her thru-hike, but rather to present her account of the PCT as one significant chapter in her life. One exception to this is in the latter half of the book, as Quinn approaches the end of the trail and must confront the painful separation from her companions and her trail life, with its own distinctive rhythms, patterns and ways of being. The intimate conversations she has with Ramen about his Catholic upbringing leads her to reflect on the role religion had played in her own life, beginning with, she writes, “the hallucinatory Catholicism of my schizophrenic mother and then the strict, conservative Catholicism of my grandparents, who adopted me when I was fourteen. The poverty and despair of my youth” (257-8). While Strayed writes her memoir years after she completes her hike and is able to give a birds-eye-view of her life, including her life after the PCT, Quinn’s book ends with her healing in process, from, as she puts it, the beginning of grief to the middle. “I realize now, with new awareness, that I have never grieved before,” she says. “I don’t know what my new life looks like yet, or how to build it” (365). For Quinn, her hike is more than an adventure, or challenge to be conquered, but a transition from one stage in the cycle of the hero’s journey to the next.

By foregrounding the transformative aspects of their hikes, Quinn and Strayed become the heroes of their own stories, re-writing conventions of the travel or quest narrative to include not just adventure and personal redemption, but also a kind of interior self-actualization expressed through the body and physical movement. This appropriation and re-working of elements of travel narrative is especially significant given the

erasure of the narratives of women and queer people in the history of travel writing. As Susan Bassnett has pointed out, in much travel writing before the twentieth century, the encounter between self and other had been focalized through “the singularity of a dominant culture; today, the gaze is more likely to be multi-focal,” with travel accounts by women contributing to this expanding perspective (239). With this expansion, writers of trail narratives have given increased attention to the ways in which race, gender and class intersect in the realms of travel writing and outdoor pursuits more broadly. Rahawa Haile’s essay, “Going it Alone,” which describes her through-hike of the Appalachian Trail¹¹ in the months leading up to the 2016 Presidential election examines the ways in which being a queer black woman effects the way she moves through the hiking community as well as the American nation. Like Strayed and Quinn, Haile portrays her time on the AT as a deeply embodied experience of self-awareness, calling it “the longest conversation I’d ever had with my body, both where I fit in it and where it fits in the world” (Haile).

One of the distinctive stylistic traits of Haile’s essay is the way she intertwines the personal and the political, juxtaposing her trail narrative with reflection on the turbulent political climate and the fact that participation in outdoor activities like hiking and camping remain predominantly white. As Haile writes, “politics is a big reason why the outdoors look the way they do. From the park system’s inception, Jim Crow laws and Native American removal campaigns limited access to recreation by race. From the mountains to the beaches, outdoor leisure was often accompanied by the words whites only. The repercussions for disobedience were grave” (Haile). The AT in particular is rife with painful reminders of this history, as well as dangers that white hikers would not encounter. For example, she includes a quote from an interview with a black hiker named Robert Taylor who had through-hiked both the AT and the PCT, and stated that the hardest part of the AT had been the violent racism directed at him in the trail towns. “My problems were mainly with people... In towns, people yelled racist threats at me in just about every state I went through” (Haile). Haile also describes her own encounters

¹¹ The Appalachian Trail is a 2,190 mile National Scenic Trail that runs between Springer Mountain, Georgia, and Mount Katahdin, the highest peak in Maine. Haile began her through-hike of this trail in the spring of 2016, and completed it six months later.

with racism, including seeing blackface soap for sale in a general store in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and notes that AT hikers would see Confederate flags in every state, “feeling the tendrils of hatred that rooted it to the land they walked upon” (Haile). This complex relationship with the land, as Haile points out, inevitably shapes the experiences of black people on the trail. Haile’s essay casts her through-hike as both a reckoning with her own relationship to nature, as well as an act of reclaiming natural spaces from stereotypes and narratives meant to exclude her. “There were days when the only thing that kept me going was knowing that each step was one toward progress, a boot to the granite face of white supremacy,” she writes. “I belong here, I told the trail” (Haile). In this way, Haile frames her through-hike, and the ways in which it allows her to process and communicate her life experiences, as powerful acts of resistance.

Each in different ways, Strayed, Quinn, and Haile demonstrate the hiking memoir’s development as a form of life writing. By framing their hikes as having parallel inward journeys of self-transformation and self-awareness, these writers not only document their experiences on the trail, but use these experiences as a means of reflecting on their lives off of it. The embodied, physical nature of hiking as movement through space, combined with inner transformation expressed through a relationship to the body, gives hiking narratives particularly unique potential as spaces of exploration and liberation, especially for people whose bodies and identities have been historically marginalized. Taken together, these stylistically different works show how the contemporary hiking memoir is emerging as a malleable sub-genre of travel writing that encompasses different narrative styles and techniques while allowing for the expression of the authors’ unique and individual perspectives, even as they hike the same trails and landscapes.

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Deux voyageuses ibériques en Asie centrale: pour une lecture du féminin dans le récit de voyage de notre temps

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Le but de cette étude est d'observer, à travers des récits de voyage de deux écrivaines ibériques, de quelle manière innovation et tradition s'équilibrent dans les récits produits à notre époque, dans quelle mesure elles suivent le canon littéraire féminin et dans quelle mesure elles l'ont déjà dépassé. Les textes seront analysés du point de vue des motivations à l'origine des voyages, du choix de la destination, des objectifs et réalisations et des dynamiques relationnelles au fil du périple. Le corpus correspond à deux récits de voyage réalisés au cours d'années successives, l'un en 2007 et l'autre en 2008, par deux écrivaines ibériques: *Una viajera por Asia central* [Une voyageuse à travers l'Asie centrale, 2016] par l'espagnole Patricia Almarcegui et *Caderno Afegão* [Cahier Afghan, 2009]¹² par la portugaise Alexandra Lucas Coelho.

Almarcegui situe son récit entre les territoires de l'Ouzbékistan et du Kirghizistan. Outre sa contribution à divers périodiques espagnols, Almarcegui est professeure de Littérature comparée à l'Université internationale de Catalogne. Son domaine de recherche porte justement sur la littérature de voyage et la théorie du voyage et l'orientalisme, sujets sur lesquels elle a publié diverses études ces dernières années. Pour sa part, Coelho a travaillé en tant que journaliste sur plusieurs reportages dans des pays étrangers. Dès 2001, elle entreprend plusieurs voyages au

¹² Les citations extraites des deux récits sont traduites par mes soins.

Moyen-Orient et en Asie Centrale. Bien que son œuvre récente soit essentiellement prédominée par des fictions, c'est surtout le récit de l'expérience vécue dans ces espaces – concrètement, en Afghanistan – que j'examinerai dans cette étude.

Mon choix s'est porté sur ces récits (et non pas sur d'autres écrits des mêmes auteures) étant donné qu'ils coïncident sur cinq aspects, ce qui facilite une analyse comparative: premièrement, les narratrices partent d'espaces européens partageant de grandes affinités historiques et culturelles (Espagne et Portugal), ce qui bien évidemment les rapproche en termes identitaires; deuxièmement, elles n'ont à peine que deux ans d'écart, si bien que nous pouvons dire qu'elles appartiennent à la même génération; troisièmement, elles possèdent une formation professionnelle qui les lie au voyage (et à l'écriture du voyage), ce qui se reflète aussi dans ces récits; quatrièmement, elles choisissent comme destination pour leurs incursions, plus ou moins solitaires, des sociétés patriarcales qui leur permettront de matérialiser une série de réflexions sur la condition féminine, aussi bien en tant que voyageuse (en racontant leur propre expérience, à la première personne), qu'en tant qu'altérité (en observant les autres femmes et en leur donnant une voix); cinquièmement, les destinations choisies, tout comme la période pendant laquelle se réalisent leurs voyages, se chevauchent: elles voyagent, comme je l'ai déjà indiqué, entre 2007 et 2008, à travers trois pays voisins (Ouzbékistan, Kirghizistan et Afghanistan).

Néanmoins, il y a des différences considérables entre les deux récits, qui m'aideront également à structurer ma lecture: Almarcegui voyage en touriste – bien que son identification à la figure du touriste ne soit pas pacifique, ni certainement celle qu'elle préfère. Ainsi, elle a un itinéraire défini qui inclut la visite de certains monuments ou lieux historiques; Coelho se déplace de façon moins prévisible, poussée par les événements qu'elle a l'intention de traiter. En outre, elles utilisent des stratégies textuelles différentes pour représenter les pays d'Asie centrale dans lesquels elles séjournent. Il existe aussi des questions relatives à la mobilité, à l'intégrité physique et aux libertés individuelles qui se doivent d'être analysées et distinguées dans le discours de chaque auteure.

En tant que journaliste, le discours de Coelho est indissociable de sa mission professionnelle. Cette mission lui confère également une série de privilèges qui lui permettent,

malgré sa condition de femme, de se déplacer sur le territoire afghan selon ses intentions: sortir pour les reportages (ou même pour de simples achats) escortée par un agent de sécurité, être accompagnée de guides et de traducteurs, avoir accès à des hautes figures de l'État et se rendre à des rendez-vous auxquels une femme, sans les accréditations d'une journaliste et un réseau de contacts professionnels, n'aurait pas accès dans un tel endroit. Il s'agit d'un aspect déterminant pour la différenciation des deux voyageuses, même si elles ont toutes deux choisi pour destination des territoires voisins et qu'elles peuvent fréquemment recourir aux mêmes tropes.

Bien qu'elle n'arrive pas en Ouzbékistan avec le statut d'une académicienne, Almarcegui garde, quant à elle, toujours présent, l'intérêt personnel pour la littérature de voyages, avec des commentaires qui, d'une certaine manière, légitiment aussi son travail. Ainsi, il ressort du texte non seulement un dialogue intertextuel explicite, notamment composé de récits écrits par des femmes, mais aussi l'intérêt qu'elle porte au sujet comme étant la raison principale de son voyage: le but est de parcourir les pistes de la route de la Soie qui, à travers divers textes, ont façonné son imaginaire.

Les motivations qui sont à l'origine de ces voyages, bien que complètement différentes, influent directement sur l'évolution des récits. Coelho gère ses choix et son itinéraire en fonction des événements fortement ancrés dans le présent (elle essaie d'être, littéralement, *au cœur de l'événement*), alors qu'Almarcegui élabore son programme en fonction d'une cartographie mentale, ou mythique, ancrée dans l'histoire et la littérature (par conséquent, dans le passé), assumant dès lors sa place d'héritière de la tradition romantique. Ainsi, bien qu'Almarcegui corresponde, à plusieurs reprises, à l'archétype de la voyageuse émancipée, quelque peu insouciant, elle se déplace en fait surtout pour apprendre, visiter, attester, et même, à certains moments, se légitimer en tant que voyageuse. Au fond, ces caractéristiques sont aussi celles d'une touriste, voulant jouir de l'expérience et connaître le lieu, ses monuments. Néanmoins, la narratrice cherche à se démarquer de cette image stéréotypée de la touriste, allant même jusqu'à refuser, lors de ses déplacements en voiture, les arrêts typiques pour prendre des photos panoramiques (Almarcegui 100-107). L'attachement à l'idéal romantique façonne beaucoup son discours; la journée se traduit, pour elle, par la recherche de quelque chose de plus précieux que

la détente et les loisirs: elle doit être *significative*, élever ses propres valeurs.

Un degré d'attente et d'idéalisation aussi élevé ne pouvait se solder que par une certaine déception qu'Almarcegui ressent à son arrivé en Ouzbékistan. Tout là-bas lui semble hostile, y compris les femmes, sur lesquelles retomberont plus tard bien des éloges. Mais les contraintes ne s'arrêtent pas là – à l'instar de Coelho, elle est également allée à l'encontre de sociétés organisées selon un modèle patriarcal et où la liberté qu'elle sublime tant s'affaiblit. Comme l'explique Jones, patriarcat et féminisme sont des termes fondamentaux pour n'importe quelle discussion sur la représentation des femmes dans leur propre culture ou entre différentes cultures (15-16). Le féminisme a évolué précisément en réponse au patriarcat et au contrôle masculin sur la vie des femmes.

À la lumière de cette idée, comment interpréter le choix de ces destinations par deux écrivaines qui se considèrent comme indépendantes et solitaires? C'est un trope récurrent des récits de voyage qui veut que le narrateur explique au lecteur le rêve d'atteindre une certaine destination, en visitant une tribu éloignée ou en suivant les pas de quelqu'un – des motivations qui correspondent au désir exprimé par Almarcegui de suivre les pistes de la route de la Soie, en s'inscrivant dans la lignée d'autres écrivaines avant elle (24). La solitude du mode de vie occidental, l'aliénation des villes, l'effondrement de la famille: ce sont ces tropes classiques qui motivent la littérature de voyage romantique, souvent juxtaposés à la glorification de la solidarité physique et relationnelle, qui subsisteraient dans les sociétés les plus pauvres, où les membres restent unis d'une manière qui semble déjà avoir disparu dans un Occident de plus en plus consumériste et divisé (Mulligan 67). Le discours d'Almarcegui s'inscrit dans ce discours romantique de l'Orient "encore pur" et du voyage comme fuite de la réalité quotidienne.

Mais il est rare, comme le démontre Featherstone, qu'un écrivain voyageur, qu'il soit homme ou femme, exprime un ancien désir impliquant d'être bombardé par des avions, de traverser des champs de mines ou d'être séquestré par des milices (76), comme cela peut arriver à n'importe qui voyageant, comme Coelho, en Afghanistan. Un tel choix renvoie cependant aux principales tendances discursives de la littérature de voyage postcoloniale écrite par des femmes, ce qui en a fait une sorte de "contre-voyageurs" (Holland et Huggan 198). Ces tendances discursives

peuvent généralement être définies comme féministes et (anti-)touristiques, rapportant des voyages difficiles et révélant une conscience postcoloniale bien affûtée, centrée sur la pauvreté, les relations entre l'individu et la société, et les questions environnementales (Mulligan 61-62; Bassnett 237). En outre, ces récits mettent à l'épreuve – notamment dans le cas de Coelho – un discours engagé envers certaines causes. Ces écrivaines se rendent sur le même lieu que d'autres femmes avant elles avec la ferme intention de représenter la condition féminine, de la dénoncer, de lui donner une voix. Les écrivaines de voyage contemporaines produisent des textes à une époque déjà marquée par des concepts tels que l'hybridation ou le multiculturalisme, une époque où les théories sur la race et l'ethnicité, auparavant utilisées comme moyen de diviser les peuples, commencent à s'effondrer en raison de nouvelles valeurs éducatives. Le temps où le regard du voyageur reflétait la singularité d'une culture dominante est révolu – aujourd'hui, il est plus probable d'être face à un regard *multi-focal*, comme l'explique Bassnett (240).

Bien qu'aucune des auteures étudiées ici ne correspond au modèle de la voyageuse-activiste, je considère que toutes deux créent, à travers leur discours, des formes contemporaines d'engagement pouvant être qualifiées d'humanitaires, et en particulier les récits de voyage de Coelho, qui sont marqués par une sorte d'attention permanente, un regard engagé sur la vie humaine et les questions sociales – *Caderno Afegão* ne souffre, à ce titre, aucune exception. L'une des caractéristiques de cette approche engagée et attentive est principalement liée à la condition des femmes, à commencer par la place qu'elle réserve à leurs témoignages directs, à leur parole. La narratrice ne se démarque ainsi jamais de son identité féminine et clairement occidentale, mais cette identité est essentiellement caractérisée par l'ouverture à la différence de l'Autre, par la tentative d'énoncer avec précision ses points de vue, les détails de chaque histoire. D'une certaine manière, Coelho déconstruit le genre, puisque son discours ne se laisse emporter ni par la beauté ni par la déception, rejetant ce qui constitue généralement le projet esthétique du récit de voyage. Sa principale préoccupation semble être de citer les femmes, de les mettre dans le discours direct, sans filtres.

En Afghanistan, les restrictions à la liberté des femmes se font sentir dès son arrivée, en apercevant une "femme en fauteuil roulant, couverte de la tête aux pieds comme un sac noir" (Coelho 13) et, peu de temps après: "Pas une seule femme à visage

découvert. Quelques femmes en *burqa* bleue" (15). Avec les vêtements féminins opérant comme l'un des marqueurs de la différence et de sa propre vulnérabilité, Coelho souligne un effort continu pour s'adapter à la culture du pays: "J'ai oublié à Lisbonne le foulard pour mettre quand je sortirais de l'avion. J'achète le plus discret que je trouve (polyester noir à paillettes *made in India*)" (13). Plus tard, une fois installée à l'hôtel: "Je n'ai que deux tuniques et un foulard. Tout le monde dit qu'une étrangère ne se promène pas seule. D'abord parce que les Afghanes ne marchent pas seules dans la rue" (Coelho 19). On peut donc affirmer que Coelho se trouve, dans une certaine mesure, confrontée à la condition féminine à partir d'elle-même, de cette obligation quotidienne d'obéir aux conventions morales du pays, sans négliger les moindres détails.

Le port de la *burqa* sera, bien entendu, une inquiétude tout au long du récit. L'attention portée à cette tenue vestimentaire différenciatrice, selon elle castratrice de l'identité féminine, accompagnera le discours dénonçant les conditions de vie des femmes de manière quasi obsessionnelle: Coelho transcrit des dialogues entiers avec les femmes et ce thème y sera récurrent. Les réponses varient évidemment entre les femmes mariées qui ne rechignent pas à porter la *burqa*, "comme parlant de quelque chose par amour" (Coelho 50), et celles à qui les maris laissent le choix. Bien que le point de vue indigné de l'auteure soit clair, l'aspect qui me semble important de souligner dans ces dialogues est qu'il n'y a en fait aucune intention d'homogénéiser la voix des femmes. Cette idée est renforcée par le fait que, dans tous les dialogues transcrits, chaque femme qui parle porte un nom – en excluant l'anonymat de son texte, elle semble vouloir agir en réponse à l'attitude masculine, qui généralise les silhouettes de *burqa* comme si "ce n'étaient pas des personnes, mais des volumes" (Coelho 83).

La tentative d'observer la réalité du point de vue des femmes marginalisées répond à un discours qui a parcouru un long chemin. Lewis (267-268) et Jones (157) rappellent que cette initiative, également menée ici, pour sauver les femmes de l'oppression du voile, peut parfaitement être lue comme une perpétuation du discours de la suprématie morale de l'Occident. Être "libre" de cette oppression signifie être libre à l'occidentale, ce qui revient à réécrire les mythes d'un certain "retard" culturel et à traiter invariablement l'Autre comme un autre. En outre, il est nécessaire de considérer que le port du voile, dans les pays où il

n'est pas actuellement obligatoire, est souvent une réponse des femmes au capitalisme mondial et aux injonctions néocoloniales – il est vu sous le signe de la résistance et non du fanatisme (Majid 117-125). Comme le souligne Majid, voilée ou non, la condition des femmes ne doit pas être déterminée par leurs tenues vestimentaires, mais par le fait qu'elles sont effectivement capables de se forger une identité propre, en dehors des discours (construits par les hommes) sur la modernité ou l'authenticité religieuse (115). Il me semble que la perception progressive de cet aspect sera déterminante pour ce que *Caderno Afegão* a de neuf à offrir.

Comme on aurait pu s'y attendre, la circulation dans l'espace privé des femmes, dont l'accès serait interdit à un étranger, reste l'une des dimensions les plus importantes de ces récits. Les femmes maintiennent leur présence exclusive dans certains domaines – comme le *hammam*, que Coelho décrira en détail (44-49). Ces descriptions plus réalistes conservent leur importance dans la réhabilitation de l'image de ces espaces fortement érotisés par la tradition orientaliste, en les montrant tels qu'ils sont: lieux de socialisation, de ragots et de routines d'hygiène. En plus du *hammam*, tous les espaces où circule Coelho seront propices au dialogue et à la collecte de témoignages de femmes. À cet égard, il s'agit d'un récit exceptionnellement polyphonique, qui cherche à éviter autant que possible la subjectivité et les notes personnelles. Les propos des femmes rencontrées parlent d'eux-mêmes, donnant souvent une impression de pastiche, probablement influencé par le discours journalistique.

Bien que la condition féminine soit le centre d'attention privilégié de cette narratrice engagée, le fait est qu'en termes de causes humanitaires, son regard a parfois tendance à s'étendre et devient alors transversal aux deux sexes. Cela est dès lors rendu évident par les endroits qu'elle choisit de visiter. Contrairement à Almarcegui, elle ne visite presque pas de monuments ou de lieux touristiques, notamment parce qu'elle se trouve dans un pays en guerre: ainsi, Coelho opte pour des espaces tels que le Centre Orthopédique de Kaboul, où se trouvent les nombreuses victimes de mines (116-120); la prison de Kandahar (192); ou l'hôpital de la Croix-Rouge (194-196). Holland et Huggan ont justement souligné la relation étroite que le récit de voyage établit avec le registre journalistique – il se situe entre l'écriture et l'oralité, de sorte qu'une caractéristique fondamentale d'un écrivain de voyage

est d'être un bon auditeur (13). Cette envie de rapporter, de transmettre les informations, est très claire lors de cette visite à la maternité, où Coelho cherche une fois de plus à donner une voix aux femmes, en les interrogeant presque lit par lit (199-208).

Bien que cette dimension engagée soit moins claire chez Almarcegui, la volonté de se joindre aux femmes du pays, qui deviennent complices de ses émotions, transparait également dans son récit (47). Almarcegui leur pose généralement des questions sur des choses simples, leur nom, leur âge, le lieu où elles vivent: "Elles me répondent en riant et me posent les mêmes questions. C'est comme un jeu. Je suis surprise de leur âge" (48). Comme le mentionne Mulligan, l'idée de "sororité" se retrouve souvent dans les récits contemporains (65): "J'achète des graines à l'entrée et m'assois avec plusieurs mères et enfants sur des bancs en bois rangés pour le spectacle. Nous partageons un cornet et profitons de la répétition" (Almarcegui 62). Les références de ce type, relatives au contact physique entre femmes, sont fréquentes, ainsi que les commentaires sur l'apparence, les vêtements et les cheveux de l'écrivaine, témoignant de la façon dont elle est perçue par les femmes locales. Almarcegui aura également accès à des espaces exclusivement féminins, comme la fabrique de soie de Margillan, à Fergana (85-86). La complicité féminine est présente aussi lors de son séjour à la campagne, au Kirghizistan, où les femmes créent une sorte de langue à part: "Grâce aux dessins que nous faisons dans mon cahier et à deux feuilles ratatinées que je gardais soigneusement contenant des mots anglais transcrits en russe, j'ai appris d'elle qu'elle avait, entre autres, deux filles qui étudiaient à Naryn, cent moutons et vingt vaches" (Almarcegui 142). Tous ces passages sont en parfait accord avec le canon littéraire. Lors de voyages antérieurs au XX^e siècle, les femmes incluaient dans leurs récits des constructions élaborées pouvant être qualifiées de "féminotopies" (Pratt 166-167), à travers des passages qui présentaient des mondes idéalisés d'autonomie, d'*empowerment* et de plaisir féminins.

Dans le monde contemporain, voyager continue d'exiger non seulement de dépasser les limites politiques et comportementales, mais aussi physiques. Et plus le voyage est lointain, plus l'expérience de la différence est ardue, à la fois pour le voyageur et pour l'Autre (le *travelee*, pour utiliser le terme proposé par Pratt). Les deux écrivaines dont il est ici question sont sensibles à la marginalisation liée à leur sexe. Il est donc important de comprendre comment ces écrivaines itinérantes se

déplacent dans ces destinations et comment ces formes de mobilité affectent les histoires qu'elles racontent.

S'il est vrai qu'elles se déplacent presque exclusivement en voiture, il est vrai aussi qu'il existe d'importantes différences entre les types de voiture. Comme le dit Smith, l'automobile est le véhicule qui promet d'amener les gens où ils veulent (170-171). En réalité, l'impression d'être en mouvement, d'être "sur la route", est pour ces voyageuses extrêmement gratifiante. Almarcegui utilise, dans la grande majorité des cas, des taxis collectifs; choix dont l'aspect le plus important est qu'il favorise la socialisation: "Je suis arrivée au Kirghizistan par voie terrestre dans un vieux *cinquecento* partagé avec une mère et ses trois enfants" (93). Elle voyage également en faisant du stop, notamment pour éviter les contraintes de temps qu'impliquent les taxis collectifs. Mais l'insécurité de voyager seule avec un homme inconnu est toujours évidente.

Sa façon de se déplacer, surtout entre différentes villes, semble être guidée par l'instinct, ce qui laisse toujours de la place à l'imprévu: "Il m'a laissée seule, totalement seule. C'était l'unique voiture que j'avais vue sur la route. Pourquoi était-il parti? Reviendrait-il me chercher? Je crois que pour la première fois de ma vie j'ai pensé: 'Et si j'avais un accident, qu'advierait-il de moi?'" (Almarcegui 140-141). Mais malgré les risques, voyager en voiture lui permet d'aller où elle veut. En traversant des paysages changeant constamment, Almarcegui assiste à une scène pittoresque après l'autre, et cette succession d'impressions satisfait parfaitement l'individualisme romantique de cette voyageuse. Toutefois, c'est aussi grâce à ce choix de voyager en voiture qu'elle vivra certains des moments les plus tendus du voyage, qui mettent en évidence le fait qu'elle est une femme, seule, et devant négocier avec des hommes dans un pays dominé socialement par eux. Le prix des taxis doit être marchandé en permanence et Almarcegui doit faire preuve d'autorité lors de chaque nouveau déplacement: "le prix demeure toujours très élevé malgré mes arguments, et je hausse de plus en plus le ton afin de l'ajuster. Ils se moquent de moi pendant que je débats. Je ne sais pas pourquoi. Qui sait, si j'étais un homme, ils ne le feraient pas. Une femme criant dans un espace plus ou moins public" (42). Chaque nouveau départ en taxis collectifs est un test pour sa résilience. Il va de soi qu'une grande partie de ce que Smith décrit à propos de l'utilisation des automobiles ne s'applique pas aux deux voyageuses, car non seulement elles ne

voyagent pas seules en voiture, mais ce ne sont pas elles qui tiennent le volant (mais des hommes). Cette dépendance vis-à-vis des hommes dans les pays qu'elles visitent, le besoin d'être conduites par eux, renonçant peut-être ainsi à une autonomie qu'elles ont depuis longtemps conquise dans leurs propres pays, sont rapportées avec une gêne évidente: dans l'économie automobile, être sans voiture, c'est être prisonnier en ce qui concerne la dépendance relative au bien-être (Smith 189).

Paradoxalement, cette dépendance semble conférer aux hommes un plus grand pouvoir d'attraction: "Une jeep japonaise arrive au Kaboul Lodge. C'est presque une jeep de poche, conduite par Akil, le cousin de Rameen, élégant comme un ascète. Il porte un *shalwar kameez* blanc, une barbe de trois jours et sourit avec les yeux. Il me plaît immédiatement" (Coelho 293). Juste en regardant dans le rétroviseur, Akil éveille encore plus l'attrait de la narratrice: "La voiture saute, les yeux d'Akil sourient toujours. C'est un prince. Et un bel homme" (Coelho 308). Les voyageuses reprennent ainsi la place conventionnellement attribuée à leur genre dans une Europe qui appartient au passé: quand l'homme était le conducteur et la femme la passagère. Mais si les premières narratrices de voyages ne pouvaient se livrer ouvertement à la passion, les écrivaines contemporaines ne cachent rien par rapport au désir sexuel et aux détails érotiques contenus dans les descriptions des hommes qu'elles rencontrent: "Je prends le petit-déjeuner dans le jardin où se trouve déjà Virginia [...], elle parle d'un Afghan 'incroyablement masculin' qu'elle a connu. Nous convenons que c'est le plus beau peuple du monde. Tout cela à propos du jardinier qui marche autour de la pelouse. La journée commence et elle est resplendissante" (Coelho 26). Et Almarcegui, dans une auberge au sommet des montagnes du Kirghizstan, semble d'accord: "La porte de la maison d'en face s'ouvre et il en sort un être humain. Un bel homme. Nos yeux se croisent pendant un instant. Ils sont noirs, très noirs. [...] Combien de beaux hommes ai-je vus depuis mon arrivée au pays!" (133). Ces extases équilibrent, en quelque sorte, ce qui constitue la conduite quotidienne de ces voyageuses, toujours disciplinées et attentives aux conventions morales du pays d'accueil.

Il va de soi que, de nos jours, les femmes occidentales ont plus d'options en matière de voyages. Cependant, les "libertés" dont elles disposent pour consommer ces choix et accéder à des expériences satisfaisantes peuvent être affectées à cause de leur statut social et leur sexe. Les contraintes incluent la peur pour

leur propre sécurité et le sentiment de vulnérabilité lorsqu'elles se trouvent dans des lieux publics. Elles rencontrent aussi parfois la désapprobation des autres, parce que ce sont des femmes voyageant seules. Le récit de Coelho regorge de ce type d'expériences. Quant à Almarcegui, elle ressent non seulement ce type de désapprobation pendant le voyage, mais comprend que le fait de voyager seule est également l'objet de préjugés dans sa culture d'origine (163-164).

Ces réactions contribuent à ce que les femmes s'interrogent sur le motif qui les amène à voyager seules. De manière transparente ou détournée, ce questionnement renforce le message que voyager seule, pour une femme, est en quelque sorte inapproprié et dangereux. À cet égard, les différentes heures de la journée fixent sans doute également des limites, la nuit étant perçue comme particulièrement dangereuse. Cette perception restreint à plusieurs reprises les déplacements d'Almarcegui, qui choisit même de dîner à proximité de son logement, pour ne pas risquer de se faire harceler: "Je dîne vite, je m'inquiète en m'apercevant comment tout s'éteint et se vide aussi rapidement. [...] Je retourne à l'hôtel. Les rues n'ont pas d'éclairage. On ne voit rien. Je me surprends à marcher de plus en plus vite. Peur? Peur de voyager seule? Peur de voyager seule en tant que femme?" (62-63).

Pour Coelho, être observée par un homme est paralysant, quelle que soit l'heure de la journée, la rendant incapable de faire les choix les plus simples, comme sortir manger quand elle a faim (235). De fait, l'attention non souhaitée ou les signes de harcèlement sont des expériences négatives évoquées par les deux écrivaines. La plus évidente est la crainte de sembler sexuellement "disponible" juste parce qu'elles voyagent seules, sans compagnie masculine: "Devant les bars, il y a plein de jeunes hommes, boisson en main, prêts pour la chasse. Cela me fait peur, mais je continue à marcher: une femme habillée comme moi ne doit provoquer aucune sorte d'émotion, ni bonne ni mauvaise" (Almarcegui 109). En outre, il existe également une crainte évidente de s'attarder dans des lieux où il n'y a pas la moindre femme. Coelho le confirme, par exemple, au restaurant de Jalalabad: "Tous les tapis sont pleins et il n'y a pas une seule femme. Tous les hommes me regardent. [...] L'attente me met mal à l'aise. Tareq me conseille de m'asseoir le dos aux hommes, et je m'exécute" (168). Des descriptions de ce genre se multiplient, même dans les logements, qui bien qu'accueillants, la font se

sentir différente, quand Coelho comprend qu' "il n'y a pas une seule Afghane" (188).

En ce qui concerne le sentiment d'insécurité, la nature distincte des deux voyages apporte des différences considérables: Almarcegui se rend sur des lieux touristiques, alors que Coelho se déplace sur des scènes de guerre; Almarcegui évite les rues sombres et les quartiers isolés, tandis que Coelho n'envisage même pas de les fréquenter – mais les deux ont une sorte de "périmètre de sécurité" infranchissable et elles acceptent passivement de s'y tenir. Elles perçoivent le corps comme quelque chose de vulnérable et, sans jamais adopter une posture de victimisation, finissent par réitérer l'idée de la dangerosité, surtout à la tombée de la nuit, des lieux publics des pays qu'elles visitent. Elles reconnaissent, de différentes façons, que leurs corps interfèrent avec l'espace, ce qui s'avère perturbant. Ceci fera qu'Almarcegui, en particulier, se retire souvent dans un monde intérieur, et l'hôtel incarne parfaitement cette espèce de refuge (57).

Dans le récit de Coelho, les descriptions de situations extrêmes sont nombreuses, notamment des bombardements près de l'hôtel où elle loge. Ce qui en Europe serait un simple contrôle routier est rapporté comme une expérience extrêmement terrifiante, "une seconde de tension à couper au couteau" (Coelho 167). Néanmoins, même en tenant compte de ces craintes et des nombreuses recommandations qui lui sont faites relativement aux lieux les plus à risque, le 17 juin, Coelho se trouve déjà à Kandahar pour visiter une prison que les talibans avaient fait exploser quelques jours avant (192). Le risque n'est donc jamais déterminant dans le choix de cette voyageuse – l'envie de documenter, de témoigner en avant-première et, aussi, certainement, une sorte d'adrénaline semblent annuler toute peur qui pourrait se manifester. Il va de soi que le choix de voyages, impliquant d'être en contact direct avec la violence et en état d'alerte constant, n'a pas de portée pacifique. Selon Lisle, c'est parce que le danger garantit l'absence de touristes qu'il agit comme un aimant sur les écrivains de voyages (151). Les endroits dangereux sont les seuls qui demeurent étrangers à l'industrie du tourisme et où il est encore possible de vivre l'authenticité qu'ils désirent tant. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que certains récits de voyage trouvent des chemins coïncidant avec ceux propres au journalisme politique, comme c'est le cas avec Coelho.

Cependant, malgré le discours qui veut qu'elles soient indépendantes et qu'elles agissent sans crainte, ces écrivaines-voyageuses ont été confrontées à d'innombrables restrictions et exposées à des questions de genre avec lesquelles elles ont dû négocier tandis qu'elles voyageaient ou écrivaient. Une manière de répondre à l'hostilité et au chaos dans lesquels elles se trouvent parfois impliquées sera, comme nous le verrons plus loin, par une fuite vers le passé. L'accent mis sur le caractère tribal des relations – terme utilisé par Coelho – tenu pour immuable, produit l'Autre hors du présent, comme étant toujours lié aux comportements primitifs que les sociétés occidentales modernes ont abandonnés depuis très longtemps (Lewis 254). Ainsi, dans une certaine mesure, pour les deux auteures, visiter ces sociétés (ou citer les récits de voyage d'autres personnes) n'en demeure pas moins un moyen de remonter le temps.

Le critère du goût, de la fascination, est défini par le degré d'intensité auquel chaque ville se prête pour une plongée dans le passé. Le retour au primitif – *going primitive*, pour reprendre l'expression de Smith (35) – donne une certaine idée de mouvement lent, intime, en décalage avec la technologie et le progrès. C'est en effet loin des villes, quand elle se rend dans les montagnes du Kirghizistan, que l'esprit nostalgique d'Almarcegui s'intensifie. Plus que de donner une continuité aux stéréotypes qui partout façonnent l'altérité féminine, elle se montre attachée à un certain stéréotype de la femme qui voyage seule, qu'elle cultivera avant tout.

L'élan romantique semble être associé au désir d'échapper à la routine quotidienne. En endossant une nouvelle *persona*, en s'imprégnant de l'identité d'un Autre, les voyageuses se dépouillent de leur peau d'Occidentales, et cette transformation pénètre dans le corps et dans l'écriture. Résistance, vigueur, effort de volonté, courage, ruse – autant de qualités nécessaires pour la gestion de la vie à la limite – deviennent des indices déterminants de l'action héroïque des femmes (Smith 32).

Almarcegui est en fait quelqu'un qui voyage "comme si": "Une des caractéristiques du voyageur depuis l'époque moderne est qu'il suit d'autres voyageurs. [...] Le voyageur se déplace pour vivre ces mêmes expériences. Comme si les destinations pouvaient les lui restituer" (69). C'est toujours dans une sorte de ligne parallèle à l'histoire qu'elle parcourt le chemin. Ses héroïnes littéraires – Annemarie Schwarzenbach et Vita Sackville-West –, en faisant partie d'une construction préalable de ces lieux, en sont

désormais indissociables. Bien qu'elle ne soit que temporaire, Almarcegui endosse symboliquement une autre identité, celle de quelqu'un qui marche à côté de la modernité, voire parfois en dehors d'elle. Nous assistons à une sorte d'incorporation de l'Autre, si apprécié. La narratrice obéit à cette éthique de la transformation (Smith 68), car elle se découvre des qualités et des attributs qu'elle considère nobles chez ces écrivaines qui l'ont précédée.

Il n'est pas surprenant que l'on trouve dans son récit un voyage à pied à travers les montagnes, lors duquel elle finit même par se perdre. Nous sommes donc face à la fuite héroïque du monde motorisé, le monde industrialisé et urbanisé dont les modèles culturels sont épuisés. Misant sur une lecture plus radicale des effets de la mondialisation sur la littérature de voyage, Lisle soutient que le discours de la nostalgie provient d'une appréhension linéaire de l'histoire par les écrivains (25). Selon elle, l'écriture de voyage situe les objets observés (c'est-à-dire les personnes et les lieux étrangers) plus loin dans la file de l'histoire, tandis que ceux qui écrivent se trouvent à l'apogée du présent. Pour rétablir cet ordre historico-téléologique menacé par la mondialisation, qui en quelque sorte homogénéise le monde, les écrivains de voyage produisent le discours de la nostalgie, qui cultive ce désir du passé, permettant d'éviter les angoisses d'un présent postcolonial (une thèse que nous ne pouvons pas exclure de ces récits).

À ce stade, il importe de systématiser certaines conclusions. La présente étude visait à contribuer à une discussion plus approfondie sur les questions de genre dans les récits de voyage de notre époque. Les récits présentent, comme je l'ai montré, deux narratrices qui portent en elles un héritage et qui en même temps s'en dégagent. En choisissant comme destination des sociétés dites patriarcales, on comprend que l'idée de sphères publique et privée récupère une place centrale dans la vision de ces femmes, en concevant la marge où elles se placent. La simple présence de leur corps confronte et menace les normes établies. En somme, l'espace continue de définir les limites, les frontières et les possibilités, en même temps qu'il construit ou déconstruit les paradigmes identitaires à travers lesquels les narratrices s'autodéfinissent (comme indépendantes, solitaires, solidaires, nostalgiques, romantiques). Mais il est également possible d'identifier de nouvelles tendances dans le domaine rhétorique et

discursif, car le focus du regard s'est élargi, diversifié, est allé à l'encontre de l'inattendu.

Les angoisses de la contemporanéité, combinées à une conscience postcoloniale persistante, imprègnent le discours et le marquent, notamment sur le plan éthique. Quand elles regardent d'autres femmes, ces narratrices acquièrent une perception d'elles-mêmes et cela me semble être l'aspect le plus révélateur de leurs récits: la transformation du voyage en une action transitive. Indépendamment de ce que pourrait signifier la rencontre avec d'autres personnes, Alexandra Lucas Coelho et Patricia Almarcegui semblent avoir entrepris des voyages qui les ont surtout amenées à se retrouver elles-mêmes.

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Trips to the Algerian Sahara in the stories of Chawki Amari

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Travel Literature in Algeria

Algeria, a French colony from 1830 to 1962, had no real French literature until the 20th century, and even less travel literature. As early as 1880, French was established as the country's official language, but with a privileged status. During the colonial period, those in administration and education used French, and this explains its use in literary writing:

Traditionally, Algerians relied on the oral transmission of culture. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their culture was systematically eradicated by the French *mission civilisatrice*, which in fact closed the existing Arabic and Berber schools and offered very limited access to education in French. In 1938, the French government went so far as to classify Arabic as a foreign language and forbade its use in schools and in administrative and official documents. (Berger 23)

It was in 1920 that the first Algerian French-language novel appeared, an autobiography, travelogue, and war tale called *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, goumier*, and signed Mohammed Benchérif. In this novel, the hero, a native officer, tells of his military campaigns in Morocco and France, his captivity in Germany during the First World War, and his illness in Switzerland. The other Algerian novels tell about the fight that

Algerians waged against French colonialism in the fifties (the Algerian Revolution). During this period, we count few authors of travel narratives, with the exception of those who wrote about exile, in particular Malek Haddad, who wrote two novels which marked the Algerian literature of French language: *Je t'offrirai une gazelle* (1959), and *Le quai aux fleurs ne répond plus* (1961).

After Algerian independence, Algerian authors continued to write in French. Literature of the seventies and eighties deals with identity and existential questions. It was during this period that Algerian literature asserted itself with an obvious change. Indeed, independence brought a revival in literary writing, with a focus on the identity question and the future to which Algerian people aspired.

The travel novel is among the new forms that Algerian literature took in the early nineties. Many writers chose this literary genre in order to approach the quest for identity. This is the case with Mouloud Mammeri, who published *La traversée* in 1982, a poetic writing that describes the long and painful journey of a caravan crossing the Algerian desert, until the travellers arrive at an oasis. The same year, Rachid Mimouni published *Le fleuve détourné*, the story of an Algerian peasant who is recruited by “les maquisards”¹³ as a shoemaker. After a bombing raid, the hero and narrator of the story is injured and loses consciousness for several days. He is then admitted to a hospital until he recovers his memory. A few years later, the stranger decides to return to his village because he hopes to find his wife and son. In 1984, it was Tahar Djaout who treated the theme of the quest in the novel *Les chercheurs d'os*. It's about the journey of a young adolescent who, in the aftermath of the Algerian Revolution, embarks on a search for the bones of his brother who died during the revolution.

During the Black Decade¹⁴, few travel novels were published. In 1992, Mohammed Dib wrote one of the rare Algerian travel novels, *Le Désert sans détour*. Set in the Algerian Sahara, this short novel is a story of two companions who chatter

¹³ The word “maquisards” refers to the resistance operating during the Second World War or during the Algerian Revolution, working mainly in the mountains.

¹⁴ The nineties were a period of civil war in Algeria. Abominable crimes were committed against the Algerian people for seven years, but the savagery reached its climax in 1998. A long period of terror continued until the early 2000s.

throughout a languid journey with no surprises. However, far from being an adventure novel, *Le Désert sans Détour* is a discussion between two travellers who are still wondering about existence.

Two years later, another travel novel was published in a dying Algeria, *Timimoun*, by Rachid Boudjedra. In this novel about a bus journey from Algiers to Timimoun, a city in the Algerian Sahara, the narrator regularly evokes terrorist acts. Nevertheless, terrorism is not the dominant theme in the novel. Social themes such as alcoholism, suicide, social relations, lack of affection, and repressed homosexuality are addressed throughout the journey.

The Sahara in the Writings of Chawki Amari

In 1998, during the height of the civil war, the journalist Chawki Amari tried a new literary style, mixing laughter and tears in a tragic socio-political context, and sometimes through travel stories whose events take place in the Sahara.

Chawki Amari's literary career began in 1998 with the publication of his first collection of short stories, *De bonnes nouvelles d'Algérie*. The collection was republished ten years later under the title *A trois degrés, vers l'Est*. The collection includes thirteen short stories in different genres (fantasy, thriller, travel, adventure, etc.). The longest short story in the collection is "3°E," which is classified as a travel and adventure story, the events of which take place in the Algerian Sahara. Also, two other works by the author take place in the Sahara: the travel narrative *Nationale 1*, and the novel *Le faiseur de trous*. This choice of the desert emanates from a curiosity to discover and rediscover its eternal vestiges and the geometric harmony of its lines, which fascinate the writer. This desert, according to Amari, represents the final shape that all matter will take, whatever its nature: "*Tout va fondre : hommes et pierres : chaque fois que je réalise que, géologiquement, toutes les planètes, y compris la Terre, ont pour finalité de se transformer un jour en désert stérile, j'ai envie d'y aller.*" ("Everything is going to melt: men and stones: every time I realize that, geologically, all the planets, including the Earth, are destined one day to turn into a sterile desert, I want to go there").

Real Travel Experience

There are some stories that begin in Algiers and extend farther, hundreds, sometimes thousands of kilometres away. Stories that develop and sometimes get lost in the immense Algerian Sahara are those of Moussa, Aissa, Afalawas, and Trabelsi in the novel *Le faiseur de trous*, and that of two young Algerians in the short story, “3°E”. But before placing his imaginary stories in the Algerian Sahara, Chawki Amari travels to this ocean of sand himself and writes about his own experience there. In 2007, he published a travel narrative entitled *Nationale 1*, published by Editions Casbah, about the author's journey in the Algerian desert along the long National Road No. 1, which extends over 2400 km, from Bir Mourad Rais in Algiers to In Guezzam in the wilaya¹⁵ of Tamanrasset, crossing the Tadmait plateau. In an interview with Yassin Temlali, Chawki Amari explains the reasons that motivated him to undertake this long journey:

L'idée de départ était de faire les grandes routes d'Algérie, de faire découvrir aux Algériens un pays que, finalement, ils ne connaissent pas bien. Par ces profondeurs de champs et ces coupes longitudinales, scanner le pays en dehors des lieux communs, des grandes villes et des clichés pour touristes. L'éditeur devait lancer toute une série de livres de voyages. Pour ma part, j'ai tout de suite choisi la Nationale 1, la plus belle et la plus longue, une route que j'aime depuis que j'ai vingt ans, depuis l'époque où elle n'était qu'une piste.

The initial idea was to take the main roads of Algeria, to make the Algerians discover a country that, finally, they do not know well. By these depths of fields and longitudinal cuts, scan the country outside the common places, big cities and tourist clichés. The publisher should launch a whole series of travel books. For my part, I immediately chose the National Road n°1, the most beautiful and longest

¹⁵ An administrative division that exists in several Muslim-majority countries, it corresponds to the state, department, or province.

road. A road I've loved since I was twenty years old, when it was just a track.

The story begins with an introduction followed by ten chapters. Each chapter has in its title a kilometre point and a specific location that often marks the stopovers for travellers. In the introduction to his story, Chawki Amari begins by asking the question, "Partir? Où?" as this is a problem often posed by Algerians. The question remains unanswered, however, as destinations are limited because Algeria is a closed country and the Algerian is unable to travel for financial reasons: "*De l'appréciation générale, il ne fait pas très bon vivre en Algérie, pays difficile s'il en est, où tout ce qui n'est pas cher est hors de prix, et tout ce qui est à portée de main est intouchable*" ("From the general appreciation, it is not very good to live in Algeria. It's a difficult country if ever there was one, where everything that is cheap is priceless, and everything within reach is untouchable").

Chawki Amari chooses the south, an empty and infinite space, and yet few people venture there for holidays, except those for whom the Sahara, with its charm mystery, represents a passion for geography, anthropology, geology, and metaphysics. The journey of Chawki Amari and his companion Kalim starts in Algiers, precisely in Bir Mourad Raïs, where the kilometric bar PK Zero is located. It is from this point that the National 1 starts, thereafter crossing seven wilayas. For the narrator, this mileage bar has "*une grande valeur théorique, symbolique et sentimentale*" ("*a great theoretical, symbolic and sentimental value*"). The National Road n°1 runs from the 37th parallel north latitude to the 19th parallel, and winds around the longitude 3° East to the entrance of the Mouydir Mountains, where it deviates to the East to climb the Hoggar.

Chawki Amari's story describes the Algerian Sahara in a poetic and realistic way. The long descriptions are innumerable, coloured by the Saharan jargon that only a native of the region or a geologist could master: *mektaâ, tizi, khanga, foun, agouni, ablat, tablat, ighil, adrar, aguemmoun, azrou, taourirt, ich, chott, zahrez, chaâba, djorf, reg, stah* and *daïa*. Chawki Amari not only evokes them, but also tries to explain them:

La chebka n'est pas très élevée et constitue un réseau fossile mais la hamada est plate, la sebkha est trop salée tandis que l'aguelmam est doux comme de l'eau douce. Vallées et cuvettes, massifs, rochers et plaines, collines, bras, paumes, montagnes, bouches,

cols sont partout et s'enchaînent les uns aux autres, tout comme les ergs sont traversés par des gassis, du nom de ces couloirs qui se frayent un passage à travers les sables hauts. (Amari, *Nationale 1*, 29)

The chebka is not very high and constitutes a fossil network but the hamada is flat, the sebkha is too salty while the aguelmam is as sweet as fresh water. Valleys and basins, massifs, rocks and plains, hills, arms, palms, mountains, mouths, passes are everywhere and follow one another, just as the ergs are crossed by gassis, named after the corridors that make their way through the high sands.

From the beginning of the journey, terrorism is mentioned: “*Son frère, policier aussi, est mort ici, à Médéa, suite à une embuscade. Hamid ne comprend pas pourquoi on l’a affecté sur les lieux du meurtre de son frère*” (Amari 33). (“His brother, also a policeman, died here in Medea in an ambush. Hamid doesn't understand why he was assigned to the scene of his brother's murder”). The farther south he goes, the less he feels a sense of fear and terror, because terrorism was more active in the northern part of the country than in the south:

Quand on sait que le terrorisme s'est installé dans les maquis, donc les hauteurs, en Algérie quand on descend, c'est toujours bon signe, signe que l'on se dirige vers la paix relative en quittant la statistique meurtrière de la rencontre avec le mauvais côté du hasard au détour de la côte. (Amari 29)

When you know that terrorism has taken hold in the *maquis*, i.e. the heights, in Algeria when you go down, it is always a good sign, a sign that you are moving towards relative peace by leaving the deadly statistic of encountering the wrong side of the tracks at the bend in the coast.

After crossing the Nador pass at 1,000 meters above sea level, the car passes Titteri, an old Roman town founded in the 10th century by Bologhine Ibn Ziri. The small car also goes through some localities such as Ouzra, Fernane, Beni Slimane, Tamesguida, and

Ouled Sidi Abdelaziz. These places have been hit hard by terrorism. Toward Benchicao, at an altitude of 1200 meters, it starts to snow. The National 1 crosses Ksar El Boukhari, meets the famous Citadel and “Le Ruisseau des Singes” (hotels, bars and restaurants), also crosses 150 schools destroyed by terrorism.

The two travellers (the narrator and the driver) continue along the first national highway, describing each place visited and each landscape that characterizes that place. Also, in each chapter, the narrator evokes a specific theme relating to the Sahara or to the country as a whole. We have identified some themes in the table below:

Chapters	Places	Themes
“Chapitre III, PK 100 La Pente de Fernane”	Blida	Roads, terrorism.
“Chapitre V, PK 457 Nom et prénom du vide”	Road between Ghardaïa and Meniaa	Sand, nothingness.
“Chapitre VII, PK 1550 À l’Ombre du Cancer”	Plain of Tidikeft	Tuareg ¹⁶
“Chapitre VIII, PK 1600 Métaphysique du Soleil”	Hoggar	Mountains, marabouts, nuclear testing, religion, myth.

We find the same themes in other writings of Chawki Amari, which also take place in the Sahara. Roads, nothingness, meditations, and origins are all themes relating to the desert and Saharan landscapes. They are found in both the novel *Le faiseur de trous* and the short story “3°E,” published in the collection *A trois degrés, vers l’Est*.

The Sahara and the Question of Origins

Le faiseur de trous was published in 2007 by the Algerian publisher Barzakh. The cover, as yellow as the colour of sand, depicts about fifteen camels and a reddish-brown sun about to set, creating shadows of the same colour on the camels' humps, which, when reversed, become holes : “*Qu’est-ce qu’un dromadaire sinon le contraire d’un trou? Une grosse bosse, c’est un trou à l’envers.*”

¹⁶ Tuareg: Large Berber ethnic confederation. They principally inhabit the Sahara in a vast area stretching from far-southwestern Libya to southern Algeria, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

Inversez un dromadaire et posez-le par terre. Ça fera un gros trou dans le sable. Ou pas” (Amari, *Le faiseur de trous*). (“What is a dromedary if not the opposite of a hole? A big hump is a hole in the back. Reverse a dromedary and put it on the ground. It will make a big hole in the sand. Or not”).

Le faiseur de trous is a fictionalized continuation of the initiatory journey that Chawki Amari had undertaken in *Nationale 1*. But this time the journey does not begin in Algiers. From the very beginning of the story, the reader is projected into the middle of the Tadmait desert, where eight characters, amusing and dark, meet and live in the Sahara, either permanently or temporarily. The story told in *Le faiseur de trous* begins in the Sahara and all the events are set in the Algerian desert, with the exception of the last chapter, which serves as an afterword to the novel. Chawki Amari confided to Yassin Temlali that he wanted to write “une histoire linéaire de gens avec toutes leurs pulsions et contradictions, qui vivent dans un espace dilaté, à l’ombre d’un temps qui n’a pas la même valeur qu’au Nord, qui s’étire à l’infini parce que, justement, il est infini.”¹⁷ (“[A] linear story of people with all their impulses and contradictions, who live in a dilated space, in the shadow of a time that does not have the same value as in the North, which stretches to infinity because, it is precisely infinite”).

Le faiseur de trous is classified as a travel and adventure novel because it features characters who are constantly on the move, with the exception of Yassina and Rimitti, who run a café in the Sahara and hardly ever move. Trabelsi often and regularly travels the roads of the Sahara because he is a truck driver and transports all kinds of goods. Afalawas is forced to travel because he is a smuggler. Lakhdar travels often because he is a gendarme. As for Ami Fotta, he decides to undertake a long journey to find his love again, and Akli travels to dig holes, which annoys the other characters. By digging holes, Akli damages the roads, and vehicles will in turn be damaged and the characters' movements will then be interrupted. This is where the adventure's trigger lies, not to mention other natural factors that can jeopardize the journey and the characters' lives, such as sandstorms, extreme heat, water

¹⁷ Temlali, Yassin. “Rencontre avec Chawki Amari, écrivain et dessinateur : Le désert loin des clichés pour touristes”, www.babelmed.net/article/2251-rencontre-avec-chawki-amari-ecrivain-et-dessinateur/. Accessed 11 June 2020.

shortages, sudden passage of camels on the roads, etc. *Le faiseur de trous* is composed of seventeen chapters, among which are inserted five chapters in italics devoted to philosophical, scientific, and historical reflections:

- Oui je sais. Je sais qu'il y a quelque chose. Les sables, les grands regs. Les millénaires de présence ici. Il y a forcément quelque chose sous ces milliards de kilomètres cubes de sable. Combien de temps qu'on est ici ? 1000, 2000 ans ? Plus, sûrement, 10.000 ans, puisqu'au Néolithique il y avait déjà des hommes ici . . . Où sont-ils allés ? . . . Où sont alors les squelettes ? Bien sûr, le sable est trop fort, il recouvre tout. Il a englouti des civilisations entières. Mais y a-t-il eu une civilisation ? Pourquoi ne retrouve-t-on pas leurs ossements ? Où ont-ils été enterrés ? (Amari 14)

- Yes, I know. I know there's something. The sand, the big regs. The millennia of being here. There's got to be something underneath all those billions of cubic inches of sand. How long have we been here? 1,000, 2,000 years? More, surely, 10,000 years, since in the Neolithic age there were already men here . . . Where did they go? Where are the skeletons then? Of course, the sand is too deep, it covers everything. It has swallowed up entire civilizations. But was there ever a civilization? Why can't their bones be found? Where were they buried?

If the author is so interested in ancient civilizations, geology, and archaeology, it is because he is constantly questioning the origins of the Maghreb people. According to him, no ancestor could have lived on a land, or at least crossed it, without leaving a mark. It is perhaps the traces of this passage that Akli is looking for by digging holes in the roads of the Sahara, and it is perhaps the answers that Chawki Amari is looking for through his travel accounts. The chapters in italics are not part of the story and are devoted to meditations. The first chapter in italics is not numbered, so it cannot be included among the other chapters, but rather represents a kind of preface to the novel. The table below shows the themes of the chapters in italics:

Preface	Holes
Chapter 7,5	Ancient civilisations
Chapter 10,5	Ancestors
Chapter 13,5	Ancestors
Chapter 17,5	Prolepse: Zahra, Trabelsi's daughter and wife of Akli, talks about her father and her husband.

Le faiseur de trous is the story of Akli, a foreigner who digs holes in the desert roads, which disturbs the peaceful daily life of the population and excessively annoys motorists, especially Afalawas, a Tergui who sells goods illegally:

Afalawas est en colère. Une roue est foutue. Pas seulement le pneu, mais toute la roue. Sa Toyota vient de tomber dans un énorme trou. Afalawas est très énervé; pourtant, en tamacheq, son prénom signifie "le souriant." Mais là, il n'a pas du tout envie de rire. Un imbécile a creusé un énorme trou. (Amari 20)

Afalawas is angry. A wheel is ruined. Not just the tire, but the whole wheel. His Toyota just fell into a huge hole. Afalawas is upset; yet, in Tamacheq, his first name means "the smiling one." But right now, he doesn't feel like smiling at all. A fool has dug a huge hole.

In addition to Moussa and Aissa, two roadmenders working for the wilaya of Tamanrasset are trying to repair the damage caused by the hole-maker. But *Le faiseur de trous* is also the story of several charming, mysterious, even ghostly characters such as Trabelsi, a truck driver from El Oued who learns that his wife has just given birth to a daughter named Zahra. He lives in the El Kono camp and decides to go see a woman named Saida, the woman he loves, after receiving a letter.

Two female characters also appear in the novel: Yassina and Rimitti. Yassina, 64, and Rimitti, 24, run a café in the middle of the desert. They mainly serve tea and an omelette when there are eggs; water is scarce in this desert, which sleeps on underground rivers. Yassina has to wait for the occasional arrival of Trabelsi, who brings her two containers of water. Trabelsi is

also her friend, her confidante, and her faithful customer. Yassina and Rimitti live in the middle of the desert. It is nothingness, as cafes and restaurants, places of leisure and relaxation, are rare. Yassina and Rimitti bring what is missing in this desert place: a feminine touch to the decor, affection, esteem, tea, a meal, and sometimes even a roof.

Le faiseur de trous is the story of an existential quest undertaken in the depths of Algeria. The search for answers takes place in the meandering Saharan landscapes, in the sandy dunes, and in the depths of the desert. Akli digs holes in order to find answers, but the quest proves to be tedious and doomed to failure. In chapter sixteen, Trabelsi sees Akli's car and goes down into a hole to look for him. The reader remains curious, but learns nothing about the fate of Akli and Trabelsi. In the last chapter, the narration projects us into the future, where Trabelsi's daughter is now Akli's wife, and she speaks to evoke her father and her husband.

Fantastic Adventures

The third story that puts the action in the middle of the desert is a short one. It is the sixth short story in the collection *A trois degrés, vers l'Est*, published in 2008. The short story, entitled "3°E," is about a long journey to the Sahara. The two protagonists, two anonymous young Algerians, leave Algiers in the morning and head south. During this long journey, the fantastic is gradually introduced through inexplicable events that develop and worsen as they travel. These fantastic events perplex the characters, who confuse reality and unreality, get lost in their memories, and go down into a rabbit hole. The story ends up taking a tragic turn when the two characters are directly confronted with death.

"3°" is a literary text that can be classified in two different genres: fantasy and adventure. According to Jean-Yves Tadié, "*Un roman d'aventures n'est pas seulement un roman où il y a des aventures; c'est un récit dont l'objectif premier est de raconter des aventures, et qui ne peut exister sans elles*" (5). ("An adventure novel is not just a novel where there are adventures; it is a narrative whose primary objective is to tell adventures, and which cannot exist without them"). The adventure novel is therefore a novel whose main objective is to tell an adventure that is "*l'irruption du hasard, ou du destin, dans la vie quotidienne, où elle introduit un bouleversement qui rend la mort possible,*

probable, présente, jusqu'au dénouement qui en triomphe – lorsqu'elle ne triomphe pas” (Tadié 5). (“[T]he irruption of chance, or of destiny, in daily life, where it introduces an upheaval that makes death possible, probable, present, until the outcome that triumphs - when it does not triumph - is reached”). The adventure novel begins with an initial situation quickly upset by an unforeseen event that disrupts the balance of the situation. This initial situation can be the result of some upheaval, or it can represent the pre-trip, and it is the journey that comes as a consequence, causing the protagonist to move, run away, or hide.

“3°E” does not quite correspond to this definition of the adventure story, but it has, as we will see, some elements and characteristics of the adventure story: the initial situation (the discussion of the two friends), the element triggering the trip (the borders, the south), the element triggering the adventure (the map, the stones), as well as obstacles and dangers (the sandstorms). Concerning the fantastic, it represents an important element in the story, since it is itself the trigger of the adventure. The plot in “3°” revolves around one or more strange phenomena in the face of which the characters hesitate between a rational and a supernatural explanation. This is the definition of the fantastic as explained by Tzvetan Todorov: “The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event” (25).

The fantastic in “3°” also corresponds to the notion of indeterminacy (the inability of the reader to determine the nature and/or existence of a phenomenon in the real world), used by the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, and successively taken up by Wolfgang Iser and Rachel Bouvet in their studies on the reading of fantastic narratives. We add to this the notion of “enigmatic code,” which is the set of enigmas that the character is confronted with in a fantastic story. We have the enigma of the map: “*Ça ne vous étonne pas ? On met des gens et des arbres sur une carte, comme s'il s'agissait d'un village ou d'une montagne*” (Amari, *A trois degrés, vers l'Est* 98). (“Doesn't that surprise you? You put people and trees on a map as if it were a village or a mountain”); the enigma of Tindi: “*Qu'a voulu dire Tindi ? Le triangle, ce sont les trois. Le point au centre c'est l'acacia. Peut-être que c'est lui le plus important*” (Amari 105). (“What did Tindi mean? The triangle is the three. The point in the center is the acacia tree. Maybe he's the most important one”); and the enigma of the stones: “*Devant la maison de Tindi, à la place de ce qu'aurait pu*

être un jardin sous un autre climat, des pierres sont disposées par terre, dessinant des formes géométriques particulières” (Amari, 115-116). (“In front of Tindi's house, instead of what could have been a garden in another climate, stones are laid out on the ground, drawing particular geometrical shapes”).

“3°” has the particularity of being classified as both a travel and an adventure story, but also as a fantastic one too. The strange phenomena that gradually arise at the beginning of the journey are the trigger for the adventure that will later take a tragic turn. Indeed, the two characters are confronted with several unfortunate events, during which they will meet strange characters in sinister places, thus provoking doubt, fear, and sometimes even paranoia.

Conclusion

Chawki Amari is one of the rare writers of the new Algerian literature who dares to mix literary genres: travel , adventure , fantastic, and philosophical . Thanks to his training as a geologist, the writer has a great deal of knowledge in this field and in related disciplines: geography, cartography, archaeology, palaeontology, history, and astronomy. This explains the spatio-temporal framework chosen in his stories. In addition to the urban setting, Chawki Amari prefers to place the events in the Sahara desert, which, according to the writer, evokes the past, and abounds in mysteries around ancestors, civilizations, and cultures. Saharan landscapes are an enriching and inexhaustible source of inspiration for the writer, who has published a novel (*Le faiseur de trous*), a travel narrative (*Nationale 1*), and a short story (“3° E”) with the Algerian desert as a spatial framework.

The Algerian author writes travel stories to help Algerians who don't know their country discover the Sahara. He first tells a true and credible story (*Nationale 1*), and then he uses his imagination to create travel stories and bring certain poetry to his work. He chose the desert because it is the privileged place of mystery and dream. . The philosophical character of his travel stories lies in the author's endless questions about his country's past and future.

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Liquid Modernity and Fluid Identity in Caryl Phillips's Counter Travelogue *The Atlantic Sound*

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Introduction

Caryl Phillips's *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) relates his journey through the multiple homes that construct his fluid identity in liquid modernity. He was born in the Caribbean island of St Kitts; he has African origins; he grew up in Great Britain, and he is presently living in the United States. To understand his liminal position between these different places, this article relies on some theoretical concepts like María Lourdes López-Ropero's counter travelogue, Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modernity, Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, and Michel Foucault's heterotopia of the ship. Phillips's counter travelogue revisits the Atlantic slave route of his ancestors, as well as the migration route of the "Windrush generation"¹⁸ to which his parents belong. He attempts to understand the concepts of home and identity not only from different perspectives (the stories of Ocansey, Quaque, Waring, and the African American Jews), but also from different locations (Liverpool, Elmina, Charleston, and the Negev Desert).

¹⁸ The "Windrush generation" refers to Caribbean people who migrated to Britain after World War II on board the Empire Windrush. In June 1948, "500 passengers from the Caribbean" went "to take up jobs in Britain. This ship [the Windrush] was the first of many ships to transport African-Caribbean migrants to Britain over the next two decades" (Weedon 76).

Reading *The Atlantic Sound* as a Counter Travelogue

British sociologist of Polish descent Zygmunt Bauman believes that writers of different ethnic origins born in Britain are subject to the ambivalence of belonging and exclusion because they live in an in-between space. They feel that their fluid and hybrid identity is not recognized by the mainstream hegemonic establishment (*Identity* 77). He celebrates their fluidity insofar as “Fluids travel easily,” and “unlike solids, they are not easily stopped - they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and bore or soak their way through others still” (*Liquid* 2). He claims the triumph of “nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement” (13). In this era of globalization, characterized by the facility of traveling between homes, “the mobility and in-betweenness of the transnation injects the principle of hope” (Ashcroft 75) instead of the feelings of displacement, loss or exile. In this regard, it is important to highlight the utopian dimension of literary works that open up the horizon of “absolute potentiality,” by liberating “the writing subject from the myth of a fixed identity” (82). Phillips claims the same principle of hope in *Colour Me English* when he celebrates a fluid sense of being self nurtured by travel:

The gift of travel has been enabling for me in the same way that it has been enabling for writers in the British tradition, in the African diasporan tradition and in the Caribbean tradition, many of whom have found it necessary to move in order to reaffirm for themselves the fact that dual and multiple affiliations feed our constantly fluid sense of self. Healthy societies are ones which allow such pluralities to exist and do not feel threatened by these hybrid conjoinings. (131)

This attitude springs from Phillips’s personal history of mobility as his parents migrated to Britain when he was a four-month-old infant. He grew up in Leeds, studied at Oxford University, then started his career as a playwright in the UK and USA, as reflected in all his writings that span from the fifteenth-century Atlantic slave trade to the twentieth-century migration movements. He believes that Britain lacks “a well-articulated black British identity,” and his “frustration” for the “under-representation of minority voices” is a motive for his writing (Schatteman 49).

The Atlantic Sound is a travelogue in which the author partly tries to reconstitute his personal history of crossing the Atlantic as an infant. The travelogue is a hybrid genre that Barbara Korte describes as “omnium-gatherum” (5), a travel narrative that unites multiple discourses, disciplines, mainly in the postcolonial context where it carries issues of home and identity. She traces the beginning of the “imperialist travelogue” (92) to the early modern period when it was used to promote overseas expansion. It has presently turned from an instrument of cultural domination to an instrument of cultural rehabilitation. More importantly, *The Atlantic Sound* is a space of “discursive conflict” (Holland and Huggan 10), a “counter travelogue,” at once a cultural critique and a “personal” attempt to solve an “inner conflict” (López-Ropero 51). It belongs to a hybrid form between fact and fiction because it refers to real persons, settings, and events, mingled with the author’s imagination.

The Atlantic Sound is not only about a physical journey, but also about a psychological journey in which Phillips tries to revisit the history of slavery. He tries to relive that “sort of been on a ship before,” when forty years earlier, his “parents travelled by ship from the Caribbean to England” (4). In “The Site of Memory,” Toni Morrison believes that the bare memory of slavery is fragmented, and it is the role of writers, through their imagination, to remember by putting together fragmented pieces through their imagination (119). Regarding the reasons for choosing a cargo ship as a setting for the travelogue, Phillips argues, “it is cheap;” one has “nothing else to do” because of the long idle journey, and it provides the occasion for “perverse curiosity” (*The Atlantic* 17). The slowness of the trip on a cargo ship is important for this travelogue; Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan believe the velocity of contemporary means of transportation prevents travel writers from enjoying “the leisure time they need. Speed is antithetical to the physical and verbal meandering of conventional travel writing” (23). The trip on a cargo ship, therefore, provides Phillips with ample time to reflect on his parents’ and ancestors’ ordeals during the journey. The ship is, for Michel Foucault, the heterotopia par excellence. As opposed to utopias—“arrangements which have no real space,” and in which society is “brought to perfection”—heterotopias are “real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter arrangement” (333). For Foucault, heterotopias can juxtapose, in

one place, many incompatible spaces. Examples include the mirror, the cemetery, the prison, the theater, the library, the museum, the brothel, and the ship. The ship is “a floating part of space, a placeless place, that lives by itself, closed in on itself and at the same time poised in the infinite ocean, and yet, from port to port, tack by tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies, looking for the most precious things hidden in their gardens.” It has been the main vehicle of economic progress, but also “the greatest reserve of imagination for our civilization from the sixteenth century down to the present day” (336). This heterotopia, as an immense storehouse of imagination, adventure, and dream, has influenced many contemporary writers, mainly of Caribbean origins like Phillips.

The cargo ship echoes Paul Gilroy’s argument that ships “were the mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected” (4). Ships, moving across the triangular trade routes between Europe, Africa, America, and the Caribbean, are a “living, microcultural, micro-political system in motion” (4). Phillips needs time to fathom the “roots” and “routes” of his mobile, non-fixed identity as ships are a metaphor for the fluid identity that is “always on the move;” they stand for “the shifting spaces in between the fixed places” they connect. They “immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts” (4). The ship has become a place of creativity and negotiation of Caribbean identity; it is the place of two traumatic crossings: slave deportation and present-day migration. Both Gilroy and Phillips use the Atlantic Ocean to revisit the issues of slavery, memory, and identity. They both use the Atlantic as a “means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory” (Abigail Ward, *Caryl Phillips* 80). Yet, Phillips’s book “has lost the racial specificity” of Gilroy by omitting the word “black” from “Black Atlantic,” and as explained below, a white judge plays an important role in *The Atlantic Sound*. Moreover, the word “sound” in Phillips’s title stands for the multiple voices of different races, but more importantly, the voices of the African diaspora, the “many-tongued chorus of the common memory” (Phillips, *Crossing* 235).

Revisiting Multiple Homes

The Atlantic Sound relates Phillips's Atlantic stopovers and meetings with historical figures who were, like the author, "caught up in the effects of slavery" (Powell 100). To do so, he hybridizes historical facts, geographical locations, and journalistic excerpts with fictional narratives. He divides his counter travelogue into three parts framed by a prologue and an epilogue. Each part is set in a place that the author considers as a home of some sort.

Liverpool: Facing Historical Amnesia

In the part entitled "Leaving Home," the journey starts when Phillips arrives by plane to Guadeloupe, a West Indian island, from which he boards a cargo ship to the English city of Dover. He tries to reopen "a chapter of [his] own personal narrative," not with a sense of "hope and expectation" like his parents before him, but with a sense of "knowledge and propriety" (*Atlantic* 16). Enlightened by both his Caribbean history and British education, he engages in the journey with a sense of cultural critique, complaining about inconveniences on the banana ship, the exploitation of the Burmese crew, and the overall British treatment of its colonial subjects.

In Liverpool, which was the essential slave port of the British Empire, the history of slavery "is so physically present, yet so glaringly absent from people's consciousness" (*Atlantic* 117). In *The European Tribe*, Phillips contends that Europe "still shudders with guilt" (54) as the Holocaust has been massively reported in hundreds of books, articles, movies, and television programs, but "the pillage and rape of modern Africa" and "the transportation of 11 million black people to the Americas" have been eluded in Eurocentric mainstream discourse (54). Stephen assists the narrator in looking for the "hidden history that is centred on the slave trade" (109). *The Atlantic Sound* is hence an attempt to face "the amnesia that characterizes the Eurocentric and Afrocentric agendas" (Ledent 206). The "Windrush generation," which contributed in the economic prosperity of the city, is also responsible for this amnesia. Phillips maintains:

West Indian immigrants, such as my parents . . .
travelled in the hope that the mother country
would remain true to her promise, that she would

protect the children of her empire. However, shortly after disembarkation the West Indian immigrants of the fifties and sixties discovered that the realities of this new world were likely to be more challenging than they had anticipated. In fact, much to their dismay, they discovered that the mother country had little, if any, desire to embrace her colonial offspring. (15)

Phillips's African-Caribbean heritage is not, however, a hindrance for his integration into British society because his parents have not told him about that heritage to allow him to feel British. Yet, he deplores their silence about his "roots" and "routes" (Gilroy 101). He also discovers the animosity between the Liverpool Born Blacks (LBBs), descendants of West African slaves, and the "Windrush" generation that migrated to Britain from the West Indies in the 1950s. LBBs do not appreciate new "black outsiders;" their "crab-eat-crab attitude of the Liverpool ghetto" (*Atlantic* 87) precludes the celebration of a collective Black British identity. Therefore, despite having similar "roots," British Blacks had different "routes" that can be a source of discontent.

In Liverpool, as well, Phillips learns about the story of a West African merchant, John Ocansey, who traveled to Liverpool to claim his due for his father's palm wine. Through this story, set in the late 19th century, the author shows that the spoliation of Africans outlived slavery. The same "Liverpudlian companies" which, "before the abolition, had been active in the buying and selling of human beings" used "their experience and contacts" to "continue to trade in West Africa, albeit in a different type of local product" (*Atlantic* 25). This story subverts "the imperialist imperatives of the traditional travel narrative by inverting the subject/object position, by inscribing the right of the Other to be a traveller" (Powell 93). Phillips points at racial segregation in post-slavery Britain by mentioning Ocansey's derogatory by-name "blackey" and the girl who asks him to send her a black boy to "carry her books to school for her" (*Atlantic* 64). When Ocansey meets poor white children asking for alms, however, he observes that "even in the poorest village of his native Africa," no child would "behave in such an uncouth manner" (65). He subverts preconceptions about the African continent in which children are treated with dignity, as opposed to a prosperous European city in which children are obliged to beg for a living.

Elmina: Facing Historical Folklorization

In the part entitled “Homeward Bound,” Phillips boards a flight to Accra, Ghana, to attend the Panafest (Pan-African festival) which celebrates the diverse cultures of the continent and the diaspora. According to publicity, the Panafest is “the biggest gathering of the African family to celebrate our cultural unity” (*Atlantic* 114). It is supposed “to be a time when the diasporan family returns to Mother Africa to celebrate the arts, creativity and intellectual achievements of the Pan-African world” (133). It turns into an occasion for the folklorization of African culture, a tourist attraction, in which Africans slaughter rams, lay wreaths, and wear tee-shirts with the slogan “Never forgive, never forget” (148). Even the “Day of Memorial and Remembrance,” which is supposed to be celebrated in poise and respect, becomes a badly-organized party for drunken gamblers and revelers. Phillips does not feel a sense of home in the festival where according to him, a group of people united by pigments contrive to give a sense of historical and cultural unity.

Phillips visits Elmina Castle from which Africans were taken as slaves to the Americas. He is disappointed by the absence of reference to the history of slavery in the continent and to the inhuman treatment of slaves in Elmina castle, and from there, in the Atlantic crossing. The tour guide does not make any reference to the dungeons where Africans were jammed waiting for their expedition on slave ships. The small gift shops, set in a place of former slave torture (*Atlantic* 306), reflect the contemporary rulers’ intention to evade the question of slavery, and instead, look for pecuniary benefits by selling postcards and figurines.

In the Panafest, Phillips meets Dr. Mohammad Ben Abdullah, a man of power, who enjoys privileges in return for his “clumsily constructed” intellectual productions (*Atlantic* 140). Instead of honoring the Pan-African ideal of resisting Western hegemony, he uses Western funding to restore Elmina castle. Ben asks him the complex question on belonging, “Where are you from?” (124), which causes an argument between the two men on what is home for a British African-Caribbean living in the USA. For Ben, home is Africa while for Phillips, this means locking him in an identity that does not fit his complex belonging. He believes this is a “problem question” for those “who have grown up in societies which define themselves by excluding others.” For him, Ben is lucky because he is “whole” and “of one place” (126). He is

“an African, a Ghanaian, a whole man. A man of one place. A man who will never flinch at *the* question, ‘Where are you from?’” (100; original emphasis). Edward Said argues that exiles “look at non-exiles with resentment. Non-exiles belong in their surroundings” while exiles are “always out of place” (143) to the point of feeling their difference “as a kind of orphanhood” (144). Phillips’s attitude towards Ben’s belonging is similar to his childhood attitude towards the Pakistani boy Ali who, despite being victim of racism in Britain, was somehow better than him. “Ali *did* have some essential place of identity to which he could, should he wish to, turn as an alternative to the perceived hostility of British life” (Phillips, “Colour” 19, original emphasis) while Phillips does not have a stable place of identity, but a fluid one.

In Elmina, Phillips learns about Philip Quaque, the first Westernized African man appointed as minister of the Church of England. As a teenager, Quaque had gone to England to get a religious education. It was common “for English religious organizations to identify African ‘prodigies’ and arrange for their education in England, the understanding being that they would eventually return to the African coast to help ‘civilize’ the natives.” As one of the elite “prodigies,” Quaque went back home and served “as a missionary to his own people” (*Atlantic* 176). He resided in Cape Coast Castle to provide spiritual preparation for the “thousands of his fellow Africans awaiting transportation to the Americas”; he also worked for the “British merchants who were engaged in the slave trade” (176), meaning that Africans were equally guilty of this dehumanizing enterprise. Phillips describes Quaque’s “ambivalence, pain, and pathos,” as well as his “loss of home, loss of language, loss of self” (180). Even though he had spent his earlier years in Ghana, his reintegration proved difficult, as he could no longer communicate with his people.

Charleston: Facing Historical Struggle

In the part entitled “Home,” Phillips moves to Charleston, South Carolina, an American town known for slave labor. Considering the previously-mentioned chapter headings, “Leaving Home” and “Homeward Bound,” all the visited places can be considered as his home. Yet, Charleston is simply called “Home.” The reason probably lies in the influence of the Civil Rights Movement and African American scholars like W.E.B. Dubois, Richard Wright,

James Baldwin, as well as the Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon.

In Charleston, Phillips visits “pest houses” in which slaves were crammed before going to the auction market, as well as the grave of Judge Julius Waties Waring who defended the right of African Americans to vote. This judge enjoyed the status of “a respected man of great influence and importance” (*Atlantic* 240). Yet, in the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement, he defied a number of “discriminatory practices in his courtroom,” and decided to allow African Americans the right to vote (225). He fought against what he called American “slave-ocracy” using the American Constitution as an argument, saying:

It is well that the eyes of the Nation be turned upon this great evil and that the people of America awake to the necessity to stamp it out by taking active measures to make these people recognize and obey the tenets of the Constitution of the United States. I shall continue to fight for freedom and democracy. (231)

Considered as a traitor by whites, he spent the rest of his life as a “lone wolf” (226) in New York. By telling the story of this white man, Phillips highlights his interest in questioning the manner by which history has influenced the lives of black and white people (Schatteman 52). The judge’s story shows that Phillips’s counter travelogue is an attempt to “relive not just [his] parents’ voyage but Columbus’s, the slave ships’” (Ward 63-64), the shared legacy of slavery and its effects on blacks and whites alike.

The Revelation of Liquid Modernity and Fluid Identity

Unlike his parents’ journey “into the unknown” (*Atlantic* 4), Phillips knows the world on which he lands at the end of the Atlantic journey and feels comfort for reaching it. When he ends his journey in England, he expresses his relief to be home again, saying, “As I look at the white cliffs of Dover I realize that I do not feel the sense of nervous anticipation that almost forty years ago characterized my parents’ arrival, and that of their entire generation” (16). Phillips celebrates a fluid notion of belonging and a plural sense of self. In an interview with Ward, he praises young people’s “ability to flaunt a plural identity without apology”

(645). He equally believes that “there will never be any closure to this conundrum of ‘home’ ” (*New World* 308). Through the subtitles of *The Atlantic Sound*, “Leaving Home,” “Homeward Bound,” and “Home,” the reader can notice that leaving home leads to home, meaning that Phillips considers all the visited places - Guadeloupe, Liverpool, Elmina, and Charleston - as home. For Stuart Hall, “Identity has many imagined ‘homes’ (and therefore no one single homeland); it has many different ways of ‘being at home’—since it conceives of individuals as capable of drawing on different maps of meaning and locating them in different geographies at one and the same time” (207). Phillips reflects on the African Americans who choose exodus in the Negev desert as their Babylon, the Kingdom of God on Earth (*Atlantic* 269). They believe in the Biblical parable by virtue of which slavery is a punishment for the descendants of ancient Israelites for disobeying God’s commandments, a religious justification of slavery that Phillips rejects. He cynically asks, “Are they serious?” Have they really “found their ‘home’?” (213). For him, even if roots are important, identity cannot be found in the past because historical wrongs cannot be corrected, and ancestral lands are locations of no return. The “routes” he takes, rather than the “roots” he has, shape his fluid identity (Gilroy 101).

The concepts of “roots” and “routes” of belonging call attention to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of “rhizome.” This bulb, with vertical roots and horizontal shoots, “has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, favoring instead a nomadic system of growth and propagation” (25). Any point of the rhizome connects to any other point; it can split at a given point, but it has the ability to sprout up again. By analogy, in an age of globalization and liquidity, cultural identities have become rhizomatic because human beings are constantly crossing national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, mingling with the other in an unprecedented manner. Caribbean writer Edward Glissant borrows Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of the rhizome and deterritorialization in his discussion of Caribbean identity. He begins his *Poetics of Relation* with the image of the ship as both the site of an original trauma and the place of a poetic order in which the diasporic identity can flourish. He views that deterritorialization leads to the loss of ties between culture and territory, creating fluid identities that celebrate the diversity of the

One and the unity of the Diverse [*“la diversité du Un et l’unité du Divers”* (23)]. He coins the word *Tout-Monde* [Whole-World] to conceptualize his idea of a creolized world in which all human beings and all cultures harmoniously live together.

In *A New World Order*, Phillips explains that he “had to understand the Africa of his ancestry, the Caribbean of his birth, the Britain of his upbringing, and the United States, where he now resides, as one harmonious entity” (6). In *The Atlantic Sound*, Phillips realizes that whenever he stands “on the ramparts of Elmina Castle,” looking “at the Atlantic Ocean,” he knows where he comes from. He maintains, “I can look to the north and to the west and see the different directions in which I have subsequently journeyed. And, on a clear day, I can peer into the distance and see where I will ultimately reside” (309). By his ultimate residence, he refers to the mid-Atlantic home where he wishes his ashes to be scattered, “at a point equidistant between Britain, Africa and North America” (304). For Benedicte Ledent, “the choice of this watery grave is no doubt the expression of his being forever enmeshed in the complexities triggered off by the Middle Passage and the triangular trade.” This choice “marks a development from a feeling of being homeless and existentially ‘adrift’ to a sense of having finally found an anchorage in the ocean” (199). The ultimate oceanic abode Phillips has chosen involves continuous movement, just as his fluid identity of a British African-Caribbean living in the United States of America.

Conclusion

In *The Atlantic Sound*, Phillips attempts to understand the sense of self and the sense of place from different perspectives, not only through his own story, but also through the stories of Ocansey, Quaque, Waring, and the African American Jews. He shows that the African diaspora is not alone that suffered from the hardships of crossing the Atlantic, but also whites who participated in the slave trade. Being of African origins, born in the Caribbean, raised in Britain and residing in the USA gives Phillips a particular understanding of the concepts of home and belonging. For him, home can no longer be just one place; his identity is fluid, and his home is the liquid space where he wishes his ashes to be dispersed midst the Atlantic Ocean.

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Facts and Fiction in Maurice Herzog's *Annapurna*

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A classic of mountaineering literature, Maurice Herzog's *Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8000-Metre Peak* (1951) chronicles the unprecedented ascent of one of the fourteen highest summits on earth, which in 1950 marked a new epoch in the history of climbing by simply proving it was possible to reach the top of an eight-thousander, an elevation that had "acquired a mythic resonance" since nineteenth-century height calculations of the Himalayas (Venables 86). As its title and subtitle indicate, *Annapurna* is supposed to exemplify a first-hand account of a momentous climb, "one of the most enduring and popular forms of mountain writing" (Bainbridge 446-47). Yet what makes the reader ponder is its author's classification of his eyewitness story as "a true novel," the comment Herzog shared with David Roberts (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 103), which implies the intersection of fictional and factual elements, thus posing a question of what kind of narrative, in effect, this mountaineering classic that became an international bestseller emulates. In addition to scrutinizing the authorship of the memoir, which is not so indisputable as the book's title page would apprise us, this article examines rhetorical techniques applied to convince the reader of the authenticity of the account.

To acquire a broader understanding of the significance of Herzog's *Annapurna* adventure for the mountain world, it is worthwhile to provide a historical context that outlines the final phases of the quest for what Stephen Venables defined as "the all-consuming holy grail for Himalayan climbers" (86). After a sequence of the well-known British pioneering attempts to scale

Everest in the 1920s, foiled by the disappearance and death of their primary visionary, George Mallory, appetites for scaling one of the world's tallest summits only increased among mountaineers. In the spring of 1939, climbers from different nationalities were very optimistic that the summit of one of the fourteen eight-thousanders could be reached in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Second World War made them shelve their plans (Isserman and Weaver 223-24).

After the end of the Second World War, mountaineers' hopes of returning to the Himalayas were quickly shattered by a subsequent military conflict: the First Kashmir War (1947-49) between Pakistan and India, which hindered safe travel and blocked access to the western Himalayas and the Karakorum. The hopes were reignited when, after centuries of inaccessibility, unwelcoming Nepal opened its borders to American ornithologist S. Dillon Ripley, allowing his team to survey the country's birds in 1947 and 1948-49 expeditions, fearing a possible Chinese incursion, but still preferring to let in Western scientists rather than mountaineers (Tilman 4; Isserman and Weaver 240-41). Then in 1949 Nepalese authorities abated their entry requirements and permitted a British team of scientists and climbers, including legendary Bill Tilman, to reconnoiter glaciers of the Ganesh, Langtang, and Jugal Himals. In that same year they also permitted Rene Dittert's Swiss expedition to explore the mountains and glaciers near Kangchenjunga, although their explorations were still meant to be organized under the auspices of science, and not mountaineering associations. While those decisions gave an edge to the Western appetite for the foremost peaks, the permission granted to the French mountain climbing federation to attempt either Dhaulagiri I (8,167m) or Annapurna I (8,091m) in 1950 came as a bitter-sweet surprise to the mountain world, as other nations with more impressive climbing records felt they were more deserving of this distinction than the French (Isserman and Weaver 242).

It is easy to envision French climbers' enthusiasm for the possibility of a Himalayan expedition to attempt an eight-thousand-meter holy grail (Herzog 1). Nor is it surprising that the first known Westerners to explore the Kali Gandaki Valley leading to the foot of the two aforementioned mountains (Venables 87), and who ultimately succeeded in summiting one of them, were willing and expected to share the story of the historic 1950 climb. This achievement was first published in France one year after the

successful ascent of Annapurna, and in the English-speaking world in 1952, translated by Nea Morin and Janet Adam Smith, both women climbers, as well as authors of mountaineering literature. Consequently, with over eleven million (fifteen million, according to its author,) copies sold since its publication, Herzog's *Annapurna* has turned out to be "the most successful expedition book of all times" so far. This led to its author's becoming the first living mountaineering personality recognized not only by the climbing world but also by ordinary mortals (Isserman and Weaver 252-53).

But the accolades were not unanimous. Not an original stylist lampooned, in fact, for his pompous manner of writing by W. E. Bowman in *The Ascent of Rum Doodle* (1956), Herzog, nevertheless, was appreciated by Joe Simpson, a winner of the 1988 Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature. In Simpson's view, *Annapurna*, at the moment of its 1997 publication, still appeared to constitute "the greatest mountaineering book ever written" (xiii). However, in the late 1990s, a controversy over the authorship of the then indisputable classic was sparked off by other publications that queried the epoch-making venture, thus opening heated discussions over the authenticity of Herzog's version.

Described as a factual narrative by Herzog, *Annapurna* appears to fall into a category of "personal literary nonfiction . . . characterized by the presence in the narration of the author-reporter-protagonist whose views, interpretations and feelings form an inherent part of the narrative" (Durczak 7). Thus, by definition, the book appears to typify a memoir, and Maurice Herzog should be regarded as an author recounting the first-hand experience of summiting Annapurna. Nevertheless, the authorship of the gripping story about the first ascent of an eight-thousand-meter giant in human history is not as certain as the genre classification might indicate. In "Foreword," dictated in June 1951, while still recuperating in the American Hospital near Paris, Herzog admits that his "comprehensive and exact" account of the Annapurna conquest could not have been written without the expedition's log kept by Marcel Ichac, second summiteer Louis Lachenal's private journal, and the information received from other team members (Herzog xvii). In the introduction, Herzog also concedes that the professional editorial work was carried out by his brother, Gerard Herzog, and declares that "this book is the work of the whole party" (xvii), which implies *Annapurna's*

collective authorship. Certainly, Ichac's record must have helped Herzog to chronologically reconstruct events, although on one occasion he quotes extensive fragments of Ichac's log when reporting on the climax of the mission (Herzog 185-187).

Furthermore, the events taking place before and after the work's publication call into question the collective authorship that Herzog suggests in the introduction to the Annapurna narrative. In *True Summit: What Really Happened on the Legendary Ascent of Annapurna*, David Roberts reveals that before the team's departure from France, the other participants of the expedition had been contracted not to publish their versions of the Annapurna climb for a period of five consecutive years after their return to the country (43). There is no mention of this agreement in the memoir. Neither is there any reference to the fact that they could not issue public statements, give interviews, deliver speeches, or release photos. This secret ban indicates that Herzog, and as it would later turn out, together with the Club Alpin Français embodied in the person of its president, Lucien Devies, had fully intended to control all the materials concerning the legendary conquest (Roberts, *True Summit* 43). Interestingly enough, Lachenal attempted to publish his own Annapurna story in *Le Monde* before the contract expired. However, as related in Yves Ballu's *Gaston Rébuffat: une vie pour la montagne* (1996), not translated into English yet, he reconsidered the idea of breaking the legally imposed silence when a Himalayan Committee member threatened him with the loss of his job (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 180). When the contract was no longer binding, Lachenal still intended to release his diary with help from Philippe Cornuau, who collaborated on its printed copy. Unfortunately, the fatal accident in the Alps in 1955 ruined his plan, and the prepared manuscript was intercepted by Herzog (Cornuau qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 172).

Initially published in 1956, and still not translated into English, the first version of Lachenal's autobiography *Carnets du Vertige* [*Notebooks of the Vertiginous*] did not differ substantially from the Herzog story presented in *Annapurna* (Roberts, *True Summit* 25). The discrepancies came out forty years later when Michel Guérin put in print Lachenal's original manuscript, showing that the 1956 *Carnets* was "a sanitized, expurgated whitewash" meticulously combed through mainly by Devies, but also by the Herzog brothers (Roberts, *True Summit* 25, 53). As further investigated by Roberts, the heated debate over the

truthful account of the historic ascent was additionally fuelled by the aforementioned 1996 publication of Yves Ballu's biography of Gaston Rébuffat, another team member of the memorable French expedition, whose efforts had helped to save the summiteers' lives. When asked about the discrepancies, Herzog admitted in a 1999 interview conducted by Roberts in Paris: "I have a clear conscience . . . and the experience of the truth. No one has doubted what I wrote" (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 101), which was dubious in light of Ballu's biography of Rébuffat. At the meeting, Herzog also shared with the interviewer:

At one point we had the idea of each of us writing a chapter of the expedition book, each on his specialty. . . . Oudot on medicine, Ichac on cinematography. . . . If we had done that, the book would not have been so interesting. It would have sold maybe one thousand copies.

Why did it sell fifteen million copies? *Annapurna* is a sort of novel. It's a novel, but a true novel. (Herzog qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 103)

The above-cited statement expressed in the late 1990s undermines Herzog's assertion made in the 1951 "Foreword," stating that "this book is the work of the whole party" (xvii), since the idea of writing the account together was apparently rejected. Furthermore, this peculiar genre—a true novel—must have been decided upon before the 1990s contentious revelations, because in the preface to the 1950s editions, there is already a claim made by Devies, contending that Herzog's *Annapurna* "is not like any other book. It reads like a novel, but it is truth itself, truth almost too elusive to grasp or to express" (xx).

In "Truth, Lies, and Travel Writing" Daniel Carey discusses repetitively used techniques applied by writers, commenting on their journeys, mainly between 1500 and 1800, to convince readership of their accounts' authenticity (3-8). Several tactics analyzed by Carey are easily identifiable in the twentieth-century *Annapurna*, which helping its author to persuade readers that his novel, by definition a piece of fiction, constitutes factual writing. First of all, Herzog authenticates the depiction of the 1950 climb with its title that not only pertains to a geographical feature effortlessly found on various maps but also makes a direct reference to a specific physical activity, accentuated in the subtitle *The First Conquest of an 8000-Metre Peak*. In a style as old as

Marco Polo's travel writings, the author of the Himalayan adventure also ensures his readers in the introductory remarks that "the record is comprehensive and exact" (Herzog xvii). And as a "true story relating eyewitness events would have it" (Carey 6), *Annapurna* comprises fragments repetitively stressing that the depicted places have been seen by the author and other expedition members with their own eyes. Thus, at the very outset of his true novel, Herzog notes that the first sight of the Himalayas "far exceeded anything we had imagined" (13), the comment followed by numerous dialogues as well as depictions recounting what the climbers had seen during the following stages of their reconnaissance (15, 44, 84, 117), once jumping out of the tents almost naked to catch sight of Dhaulagiri (15), once admiring Tibet (149), and, finally, penning a surprisingly skimpy description of Annapurna's summit and the views stretching from the peak (159).

Another tactic deployed to assure readers of a narrative's truthfulness is the expression of the unfamiliar with familiar terms (Carey 6). As the region explored by the French team was unknown in the 1950s, some ridges of the surveyed Himalayas described in *Annapurna* are juxtaposed with the classic mountain, the Matterhorn and some sections of the Mont Blanc range (Herzog 44, 149), vistas generally recognizable to mountain-goers, thus validating Herzog's account. As commonly expected from travel writers at least by the eighteenth century (Carey 7), the plain style is additionally characteristic of *Annapurna*, sometimes exemplified with apparent simplicity that leaves no doubt about the credibility of sometimes painfully compelling descriptions. Recounting the series of amputation resulting from severe frostbite injuries, Herzog writes with persuasive honesty: "Just for a change Oudot [expedition's doctor] did some operating that afternoon. During this session I lost my second big toe and the thumb of my right hand" (230).

Besides, the French expedition to the Himalayas is not shown as the satisfaction of a few gentlemen's caprice to scale an eight-thousander, but as "exploration: a great deal of hesitation, doubt, error and then, quite suddenly, a discovery" (Herzog 58). Hence, in the manner of writers wandering through the world since the Renaissance and publishing their accounts as a source of knowledge (Carey 6), Herzog informs the reader that the expedition has been obliged to make various "investigations . . . – medical, geological, ethnographical, meteorological and

geographical” (6), thus enhancing the reliability of the provided information. To further authenticate his travelogue, Herzog also employs paratextual elements such as black-and-white photographs capturing, for instance, passed-on-the-way hamlets, the mountaineers trudging up slopes, subsequent camps, the facsimile of Herzog’s message communicating a summit attempt, and escorted, snow-blind Lionel Terray. There are maps detailing the following stages of the high-risk venture, including misleading charts of the Himalayan ranges and those with applied corrections (Herzog 24-25, 59-60, 102). To validate the presented information, Herzog additionally cites testimonials in the form of letters, messages, and telegrams. However, the majority of the records quoted within the main text of *Annapurna* constitute the author’s notes to other team members and to Devies in France, but not the texts sent to Herzog (57, 101, 119, 138, 139, 143, 200). This tactic reinforces the appearance of authenticity, yet apparently also strengthens the voice of the main narrator by making his story more credible.

In the light of the intended control of the manuscript and the determination to publish only one record of the events, the author’s claim that his story “is a true novel” also raises a question about the literary genre *Annapurna* epitomizes. Aware or unaware of the 1990s revelations provided by other versions of the memorable climb, the reading audience doubtless interprets the mountaineering classic as an outdoor adventure memoir of man’s endurance in a world about which little was known reliably in the early 1950s. Despite its comprehensible pomposity, it is also a compelling tale of human vulnerability in life-threatening situations, experienced both in a crevasse at an altitude of over seven thousand meters, and during amputation operations performed under unhygienic conditions. Hence, it is hard to disagree with Simpson, the author of the unforgettable *Touching the Void* (1988), that Herzog’s story, factual or fictional, “has the uplifting effect of proving that it is possible to win against all the odds if you just keep trying” (xv). Obviously the story becomes even more inspirational when one is accompanied by: the Levinasian Other, in the person of Lachenal, Rébuffat, and Terray; the expedition members who simply felt responsible for the Other’s safety; Herzog’s reference to the group’s sometimes underestimated devotion, that probably saved his life. Due to its subject-matter, the time of its publication, and its discourse, *Annapurna* should also be regarded as an outdoor piece of writing

glorifying white masculinity in which virtues traditionally tied to the topos of the hero echo throughout the whole story.

The outdoor memoir that is *Annapurna*, also appears to exemplify an imperial adventure narrative, in which observations on indigenous people delineate the distinction between alleged civilization and purported savagery. What dominates Herzog's descriptions is usually his colonialist attitude, visible, for instance, when a Tibetan caravan passes by the French camp. The women's faces are not simply depicted as "dirty" or "filthy," but as "adorned with pats of cowdung applied to both cheeks" (Herzog 21). Enchanted by the view of the Tibetan dancers against the beautiful Himalaya, Herzog reveals a deeper meaning of their "wild dance" that he even elevates to the status of ballet, yet he does not let the reader forget that primitivism is characteristic of the Asian indigenous inhabitants:

The ballet, which appeared to express the eternal dualism of joy and sorrow, life and death, was perfectly controlled. Its beauty was rough and primitive, for a dance always reflects the spirit of a people. (21)

In the paragraph following this fragment, the French mountaineer openly declares that he is a citizen of a more civilized world. Using the third-person singular and speaking of himself as "Bara Sahib," capitalized throughout the book, Herzog, the Big Master, "display[s] his generosity" by paying the dancers for their improvised performance.

Strangely enough, towards the end of his *Annapurna* account, Herzog, exhausted after several amputation operations, displays fear of some indigenous inhabitants of Asia. In the need of a shave, not only is he suspicious of a local barber's primitive equipment but also protests loudly against rough handling by the shaver with "smelly hands" (231). And to Oudot, the expedition's doctor, who checks what the meaning of a noise in the tent is, Herzog admits that he would "rather have an amputation . . . than the attentions of this savage." [source?] Besides, one of the porters is perceived as a barbarian with cannibalistic tendencies, since according to Herzog's observations, "He had a stentorian voice, and the teeth of a savage, which terrified me: I was always afraid he would take a bite out of me" (225). Thus, on the last page of his novel, when he relates his journey home, Herzog looks forward to his "first contact with the civilized world" awaiting him in France

(246). Nevertheless, even more disturbing seems to be the fact that the white civilized men turn a blind eye to the practice of employing porters by force when retreating from the mountains, and when the expedition lacks *coolies* to carry their gear as well as the injured Herzog (Herzog 224-25).

As a male imperial adventure narrative aspiring to be true, Herzog's *Annapurna* also falls into the category of a classic mountaineering text, in terms of the military vocabulary employed to weave a story (Wukowits 43-44; Roberts, *True Summit* 37). As in numerous climbing accounts penned since the 1492 ascent of Mont Aiguille that conventionally marked the beginning of mountaineering (Hansen 22-23), the reader of Herzog's novel encounters such words as "attack," "assault," "valley marches," and "retreat" (71-72, 81, 104, 196), constituting the lexicon characteristic of both war and mountaineering literatures. Yet, unlike other accounts concerning Annapurna climbs, Reinhold Messner's *Annapurna* (2000), or Simone Moro's *Kometa nad Annapurną* [*Comet Over Annapurna*] (2003), the French saga overflows with military-tinted vocabulary. For instance, Herzog compares their attempt to climb the mountain to "a sort of commando raid" and depicts Annapurna as "a giant fortress" keeping the climbers continuously "on the outer defences" (84, 89). In addition to issuing a command that is "not just an ordinary order," and keeping their "rearguard" (the convoy's last section) informed, the 1950 expedition leader organizes a "council of war," (also the title of chapter six) in order to reconsider their climbing possibilities and finally decide which eight-thousand-meter peak to attack (68, 71, 81, 103). After their strenuous endeavors "to lay siege to the mountain," the summiteers overcome Annapurna's "last line of defence" and finally their "mission . . . [is] accomplished" (157, 159). What also draws the reader's attention is that in the closing remarks of his novel Herzog speaks of their "unexpected victory," whereas the word "victory," together with its derivatives and synonyms, recurs all along the course of the account (Herzog 40, 101, 117-118, 129, 148, 150, 157, 164, 187). In the selected fragments we read: "Victory is ours" (101), "Victory was in sight!" (117), and on the page where the term reappears a few times: "it was a victory for us all, a victory for mankind itself" (164).

There are other reasons why Herzog's text abounds in military terms than just the practice of adhering to the convention dictated by mountaineering classics released mainly by the 1970s

when the style of climbing began to alter. A member of the Resistance movement and captain of the French Partisans and Riflemen formation, Herzog had drawn on the first-hand experience of war when leading the Himalayan expedition (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 184), which influenced his idiolect observable in the account. Moreover, the type of mountaineering that the French expedition followed was *siege-style climbing* (Rak 112), the technique prevailing until the mid-1970s and involving a large number of porters, Sherpas, and climbers, who carry heavy loads to successive camps established higher on a mountain. It thus comes as no surprise to see that the very word “siege,” together with all possible military connotations certainly audible in the climbers' and organizers' conversations before, during, and after the expedition, resonates in Herzog's descriptions and dialogues.

The realities of the world's political situation in the mid-1940s additionally provide justification for the relatively frequent usage of military terms conspicuous in Herzog's narrative. Defeated like Germany and Japan, post-war France needed a spectacular victory to mark its presence on the international scene again. Since it was no longer possible to uphold its honor on battlefields, the country, priding itself on most accomplished climbers, turned to high-altitude mountaineering, which at that time, as Julie Rak notes, “was a symbolic way for its men, who often had been forced to take part in military defeats, to regain respect for their nations and to reinvigorate a national sense of male power as well” (114). And as in the case of British and American mountaineering endeavors turned into imperial ascents (Bayers 3-5), the French could attempt to reclaim the status of the hero confirming that French national identity was strong and vigorous, and Annapurna, like Everest and Denali, could be turned into a national and imperial icon. As a result, the project to conquer the first eight-thousand-meter peak became of national importance, with the French government's decision to grant one-third of the funds and a nationwide subscription campaign launched to help in collecting the expedition's total budget of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (Isserman and Weaver 242).

Interestingly, it was not Herzog who orchestrated the offensive's preparations. The steam engine of fund-raising and press promotion was Devies's. In his efforts to turn a mountaineering expedition into a nationally-authorized military operation, Devies compelled the team members to take the oath of

absolute loyalty to the expedition's leader (Herzog 6-7). That the moment was awkward to the participants is easily felt in Herzog's story—they all are unwilling to make the vow, which Herzog explains as mountaineers' aversion to solemnities. Nevertheless, in his private notes, Rébuffat depicts the situation as an act of “Depersonalization. . . . a certain Nazification” (qtd. in Roberts, “Introduction” xxvii), which, even if exaggerated, conveys the militaristic ambiance sensed throughout Herzog's narrative. The depersonalization experienced by Rébuffat also shows that the oath was not the moment when the mountaineers' “partnership was born,” as Herzog documents (7). On the contrary, it foreshadowed interpersonal conflicts in the group, deliberately muffled in the official version of the 1950 Annapurna story, yet disclosed in the later uncensored biographies and memoirs.

Cognizant of the facts uncovered in the 1990s, Reinhold Messner, first to scale all fourteen eight-thousanders, defends the French leader claiming that “Herzog was certainly not interested in falsifying the story” (74). However, its main censor, Devies, intended “to express his very own nationalistic and moral fantasies” (Messner 74). Exploiting Herzog, Devies saturated the novel with pathos and turned the “heroic deed,” the conquest of Annapurna, into a national affair that all of France could identify with (Messner 75-76). In effect, long before *Annapurna's* publication, Devies had felt hurt that France had achieved nothing spectacular in the highest Himalayan ranges. In his 1939 essay “Alpinisme et Nationalités,” Devies, uncovering his chauvinism, is distressed by the fact that the last great walls of the Alps, the Walker Spur and the Eiger's north face, were successfully challenged by foreigners, not the French, who are equally able to perform such technically-difficult climbs (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 30-31).

In the “Preface” to Herzog's *Annapurna*, Devies continues his nationalistic crusade to accentuate French climbers' exceptionality. Quoting Francis Smythe, the then British authority on mountaineering, Devies emphasizes that not only did the French team ascend the first eight-thousander but they also achieved that at a first attempt, thus attaining what Smythe had considered impossible (xix). With the mention of the group's effort, Devies develops his preface into a paean of praise to Herzog, whose decision to assault the mountain cost *him*—Lachenal is not mentioned—the price about which “all France knows,” and whose book, itself “a triumph without parallel,”

makes us feel that “the summit is at our feet” (Devies xx-xxi). Otherwise put, Devies officially wrote only the preface to *Annapurna*, dedicated to him, yet, in reality, he influenced the book's content, although we will probably never know to what extent he shaped Herzog's thoughts. Nevertheless, when reading the mountaineering classic, we should be aware of Devies's autocracy in French mountaineering circles (Ballu qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 32). In 1950, he was not only the president of the Himalayan Committee, but he also headed the most influential mountaineering groupings in France: the Club Alpin Français, the Groupe de Haute Montagne, and the Fédération Française de la Montagne. And with absolute power, he did not allow his subordinates to lay down their arms. He continued “international rivalry in mountaineering” that Smythe criticized in his letter to James Thorington, treating the Annapurna expedition as a military campaign, the ascent as an unquestionable victory, and Herzog as its all-conquering hero.

The fragments picturing the ascent's final phase confirm that Herzog was intended to be the main protagonist of this heroic narrative. As in most mountaineering writings, in *Annapurna* there is mention of the biting cold, slow pace, and other altitude-related problems connected with breathing and focus. However, Herzog's depiction of the culminating moment is rather a single-voice story, although at the beginning of his account there is a claim of the collective authorship. In the excerpts depicting the summit attempt, we hear more of Herzog's emotions and reflection than of his climbing partner's feelings, and even though there are two mountaineers, they do not seem to form a team. Herzog recalls: “Each of us lived in a closed and private world of his own,” and in another excerpt, “An enormous gulf was between me and the world” (156, 158). Despite his deliberations over a leader's responsibility for other participants almost throughout the book, Herzog ignores Lachenal's concerns about frostbites and possible future amputations, ready to continue the march to the top alone although his companion expresses a wish to turn back. Not linked by ropes during the whole attack, which symbolically emphasizes the gulf between them, they both marched for different reasons: Herzog—to complete the entrusted mission, Lachenal—to protect the leader by bringing him to rationality. As he mentions in his *Commentaries*, “That march to the summit was not a matter of national glory. It was *une affaire de cordée*” (qtd. in Roberts, *True Summit* 225), the well-known

phrase among climbers denoting “the brotherhood of the rope” and understood literally and figuratively as a bond binding mountaineers together for better or worse (Rébuffat 195-98).

It is useful to stress that Herzog lives in a sort of surreal world when summiting Annapurna. “[P]lunging into something new and quite abnormal,” he finds himself “in the mountains of . . . [his] dreams,” which appear to be transparent and quintessentially pure (Herzog 158). In contrast to the majority of mountaineers, who usually recount constant ponderousness and monotonous plod on their way up a mountain, he begins to feel the lightness of being, as though no efforts were necessary, “as though there were no longer any gravity” (158). Overwhelmed with emotions and in a state of euphoria impossible for him to explain, he has “the strangest and most vivid impressions” in which Lachenal and the surroundings are unnaturally distorted. And with a vision of Saint Theresa of Avila, the French leader even seems to undergo a mystical experience (158). It is impossible to decide whether his unusual state of consciousness near the top of Annapurna is the effect of amphetamine, or other drugs, included in the expedition's medical kit (Messner 21). Yet clearly, Herzog is aware when he leaves his surreal world. After the return to the camp, he recollects that when he saw the familiar faces waiting for him, “the strange feeling” disappeared, and he “became, once more, *just a mountaineer*” (Herzog 164; emphasis added). The question of who he thought he was during the final stage of the ascent remains unanswered in the text. Apparently, he approved of the role of the all-conquering hero ascribed to him to play, and the evidence in the account supporting the claim underscores the close collaboration between Herzog and Devies.

From Herzog's text, we learn about the picture of him victoriously holding up the French flag (160), in fact, used by French and American publishers as the first-edition book cover, giving undue prominence to one man, not the team. Moreover, Roberts reveals that Herzog also asked Lachenal to take a photo of him with the banner of the tire producer Kléber-Colombes, Herzog's employee that had made the most generous contribution of 500,000 francs to the expedition (Roberts, *True Summit* 217-220). As a result, the French summit attack turned out to be not only a matter of national glory but also part of Herzog's tribute to the sponsor, which could be read as his public advertising campaign, as well. Whatever the interpretation the reader opts for, the act of holding the banner made Lachenal so disgusted that

together with Rébuffat, he spared no effort in preventing Herzog from possessing the Kléber-Colombes photograph, first published by *Montagnes* magazine during the 1996 controversy. It is worthwhile noting that the conduct regarded by Lachenal as inappropriate in the 1950s and onward has become the norm in mountaineering circles over the following decades, since gratitude for funding an expedition's costs is nowadays reflected in sponsors' cloth badges sewn onto climbing suits worn on a top.

In conclusion, like Herodotus's *The Histories*,¹⁹ Herzog's gripping *Annapurna* is not devoid of shortcomings. Despite the official claim that the memoir mirrors the adventure story narrated by the whole team, other group members' versions of the climb were ignored, and the dominant censor of the manuscript turned out to be Lucien Devies, although he officially composed only the preface. As a result, the reader will never be able to differentiate the fictional from the factual, even if it is feasible to single out the techniques employed to authenticate the account and recognize whether they validate the provided information, or rather serve to reinforce the official version of the Annapurna tale, which nowadays needs to be read with its companion, David Roberts's *True Summit*. Herzog's assertion that the book "is a true novel" has also raised the question about *Annapurna's* literary genre. Reflecting the times when this mountaineering classic was published, the memoir constitutes a male imperial adventure narrative. Strongly following the convention conceivable in the tradition of mountain-travel writing, *Annapurna* presents the memorable ascent of a first eight-thousander as a military operation orchestrated by Devies and carried out by Herzog in the role of victor of the national crusade. Thus, the contention that *Annapurna* "is a true novel" appears to highlight the widespread intersection of fictional and factual and cultural components, paradoxically implying that it is not veracity that is at stake, but

¹⁹ "The capacity of travel writers to distort the truth—amplifying their observations, claiming credit for what they never witnessed or inventing fabulous narratives wholesale from the imagination rather than experience—has always been recognized" (Carey 3). Nicknamed by Cicero, the so-called "father of history," and frequently quoted as the first travel writer, Herodotus also earned an unsavory reputation as the father of lies (Cooke 15; Evans 11). Admittedly, some depictions in his magnum opus *The Histories* exemplify folktales, and the author tends to be biased when portraying those whom he encountered during his wide travels. Yet nowadays, despite his shortcomings as a historian, Herodotus is regarded as an engaging story-teller capable of entertaining his readership (Marincola x, xiv-xv).

the story recounted in a convincing way (Carey 13), which makes Herodotus an excellent storyteller and Herzog the author of “an inspirational read for people of all ages, whether mountaineers or not” (Simpson xvi).

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PART TWO

TRAVEL NARRATIVES: THE COLONIAL GAZE

**De l'invention du Maure et de l'Amérindien dans
Relación de los naufragios y comentarios (1555)
d'Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca**

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Voyage et formations normatives

La tentation d'imposer sa propre manière de voir le monde et celle de son temps suit le voyageur comme le marcheur, son ombre. Il va de soi que penser l'autre revient à produire un certain savoir à partir de codes culturels, d'intérêts propres ou communs, d'émotions et de pressions circonstanciées. Ce qui, pour le chercheur intéressé aux soubassements épistémologiques et moraux d'un texte, revient à aborder une question prééminente: qu'est-ce qui donne le droit d'inventer ou de réinventer les mondes visités? D'un point de vue éthique, une telle interrogation est d'ordre normatif, le normatif étant ce qui "justifie" une action au nom d'une idée préalable du bien (Darwall). Parler d'invention et de réinvention de l'autre renvoie à des injonctions d'ordre stratégique (dans le sens discursif du terme) fondées sur des principes d'intentionnalité, de motivation et de programme. Ce qui invite à l'exploration de la logique derrière l'expérience du voyage dans des terres inconnues, les rapports entre croyance et probabilité, entre désir et révision de ce même désir à l'aune de l'expérience, entre le principe moral et sa traduction éthique. Ce positionnement renvoie à des questions sur la construction sociale du sens, les modes de représentation et la naissance de catégories fondamentales autour de paradigmes ethniques, confessionnels et écologiques, selon une "magination de la communauté" propre à la naissance du projet d'expansion, colonisation et impérialisme

qui a marqué l'histoire depuis l'arrivée de Christophe Colombe à Guanahani (San Salvador, Bahamas), le 12 octobre 1492.

Bien évidemment, s'engager dans une telle mission ne peut se faire sans le risque de juger le passé à l'aune du présent, de décontextualiser et simplifier. Cet avertissement renvoie au dévoilement du fond de la pensée qui motive cet essai: questionner l'idée même de contexte comme ce qui compartimente et claquemure dans le temps et l'espace. Dans cet esprit, il faut prendre en considération l'autre face de la médaille, à savoir l'environnement, dans le sens de ce qui limite. La limite est le propre des croyances, comme ensemble d'idées qui cadrent, influencent et déterminent l'action humaine. Or les croyances se nourrissent chacune de l'autre; pour qu'une nouvelle existe et fasse sens, elle doit s'appuyer, à différents degrés, sur une ancienne. Appliqué au domaine de l'histoire, ce principe permet de parler, non pas en termes d'époques, mais de formations normatives, de corps de croyances et comportements qui vont par-delà les catégories contextuelles usuelles. Partir de ce principe renvoie à se poser des questions du genre: qu'est-ce qui fait qu'un amérindien Ayoreo, natif du Chaco paraguayen, soit appelé Moro (Maure)? Comment expliquer que pendant les années cinquante du siècle dernier, des soldats paraguayens posent avec des têtes coupées de ces mêmes Ayoreo? Pour quelle raison, la même pratique est commune pendant la guerre du Rif (1911-1927), avec des photographies de soldats espagnols posant avec des têtes de Maures (Marocains)? Nous sommes devant des contextes temporels et géographiques distincts, unis, néanmoins, par une violence, dont la source se trouve dans un environnement (constitués d'idées fondamentales justifiant un certain comportement) qui nourrit la croyance par-delà le contexte. Cette justification normative trouve son ferment dans l'iconographie religieuse autour de l'Apôtre Saint Jacques, adoubé Matamoros (Tueur de Maures) par les Espagnols pendant la *Reconquista*, cette guerre qui marque la fin de l'Espagne musulmane, avec la chute de Grenade, la même année de la "découverte" de l'Amérique. Le saint homme est souvent représenté entouré de têtes coupées de Maures pour servir comme ingrédient principal dans l'invention de l'ennemi de l'empire (Beggan, 263).

Le *contextere*, qui veut dire action de tisser ensemble, est le domaine du travail historique, de forces et dynamiques, de lutte des classes et de conflits identitaires, religieux et autres, qui marquent un chapitre donné dans la vie d'une ou de plusieurs

société(s), alors que l'environnement est un ensemble d'idées fondamentales nourrissant et encadrant ces dynamiques; il est la matière première pour le tissage, comme la fibre (quel qu'en soit le degré de pureté) que l'on traite, teint et dispose en motifs et formes. Même après cinq siècles de la "découverte" de l'Amérique, dans un contexte tellement différent, la mort de l'Afro-américain George Floyd sous la main policière, le 25 mai 2020, est marquée par des assauts contre les statues de Christophe Colomb, comme pour rappeler l'exigence de s'attaquer à un terreau symbolique (incrusté dans ce que nous avons désigné d'environnement), plutôt de se concentrer sur une bavure policière, inscrite dans un contexte étroit, la ville de Minneapolis.

Dans le cadre de ce travail, l'intérêt pour la littérature de voyage au temps de la conquête de l'Amérique correspond au besoin d'explorer des formations normatives durables, relevant de l'eurocentrisme épistémologique et ses effets endémiques, sa logique générationnelle, comme dans l'expression arabe *ummahaat al afkar* (les idées mères). Une critique radicale de l'histoire ne peut se faire sans garder l'œil sur ce rapport d'ascendance et de fluidité vitale entre passé et présent.

Naufragios, entre invention et réinvention

L'histoire des heurts et malheurs d'Alavar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (entre 1481 et 1488 – entre 1557-60) commence le 17 juin, 1529, jour où il accepte de faire partie de l'expédition organisée par le conquistador, Pánfilo de Narváez (1528-1536), dépêché par le roi d'Espagne, Charles V, à la tête de six cents hommes, pour continuer la mission espagnole de conquête d'une bonne partie de ce qui est maintenant connu comme le nord du Mexique et le sud des États-Unis (Floride, Nouveau Mexique, Arizona et Californie). Une telle aventure est le pendant de celle de Ponce de León, gouverneur de Puerto Rico qui, le premier, a mis pied en Floride en 1512 sans pour autant, du moins à l'instar d'une partie des hommes accompagnant Pánfilo de Narváez, pénétrer le territoire, fréquenter ses habitants et en brosser un portrait digne de servir dans des conquêtes prochaines. Cette période d'expansion et de résistance trouve dans le conquistador Adelatado Hernando de Soto sa figure de proue. Ses aventures nourrissent *La Florida* (1605), un classique du Péruvien, El Inca Garcilaso (1539-1616).

L'expédition a un début désastreux, avec des désertions, suivis de la perte de deux bateaux et de leur équipage à cause d'un ouragan. L'auteur raconte comment le gouverneur Pántifilo de Narváez est un homme qui n'en fait qu'à sa tête, comment ce trait de caractère cause les événements tragiques dont il fait part dans *Nafragios*, avec la mort de tous, sauf quatre: Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes Carranza, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, et un esclave d'origine marocaine, nommé Estebanico. À leur arrivée en Floride, le gouverneur décide de diviser ses hommes (ceux qui n'ont pas déserté ou péri) en deux groupes, dont trois cents, expédiés sur le continent sous son commandement, et le reste (une centaine), restés à bord de la flotte. Cabeza de Vaca consacre sa chronique aux événements tragiques entourant cette aventure. Ce projet d'écriture consiste en élaborer un tableau dantesque, où abondent des scènes d'égarements, de déchaînements des éléments, de pertes humaines et matérielles, d'assauts par les autochtones, de faim qui pousse parfois au cannibalisme, de fatigue, de maladie, mais aussi de descriptions relevant d'un souci ethnographique colonial. Le livre abonde de rapports sur les us et coutumes des peuples rencontrés, les langues, les paysages, les ressources minérales, la flore et la faune, le tout avec un intérêt pratique.

Pour survivre dans un monde hostile, l'auteur et ses compagnons se convertissent en guérisseurs, que les natifs appellent "enfants du soleil" (215-16). Cette activité leur assure, non seulement logis et couvert, mais aussi un pouvoir sans conteste, nourri d'un chapelet d'histoires sur les miracles prodigués par la Providence et la science (notons qu'il n'est mentionné nulle part qu'ils ont des connaissances préalables en médecine), autant de détails qui rappellent d'autres histoires fabuleuses de conquistadors espagnols, comme quand Christophe Colomb décrit sa rencontre avec des sirènes au large de Saint-Domingue (30) où le père jésuite Gaspar de Carvajal qui donne son nom à l'Amazonie en référence aux Amazones qui y habitent (26) ou les motifs derrière le nom donné à la Californie.²⁰

²⁰ Espace fictif créé par García Ordóñez de Montalvo dans son roman *Las sergas del muy virtuoso y efforcado cavallero Esplandian, hijo de Amadis de Gaula* ("Les exploits de très vertueux chevalier téméraire, Esplandian, fils d'Amadis de Gaule," publié en 1542), California est une île dirigée par une Mauresque (Polk 266) nommée Calafia, nom qui veut dire en arabe, "succession", comme dans royauté. Mot hybride, Californie a gardé de l'arabe la racine *Calif*, ou souverain, et de l'espagnol *orno*, ornement, en référence aux

Des *Naufragios*, il y a eu deux éditions, celle de Zamora (1542) et celle de Valladolid (1555). Ce travail est basé sur cette dernière. Comme genre, les chroniques de la conquête de l'Amérique sont, en principe, des rapports rédigés par les conquistadors pour informer le roi sur le déroulement des opérations. Dans cet esprit, le souci d'assurer une rigueur et une crédibilité administratives est explicite. D'où la référence régulière à la présence du notaire (notamment avant d'être emporté par la mort) dans des passages du genre: "Cela se passa en présence du notaire du pays, et de beaucoup d'autres témoins" (277) ou encore: "Cependant, celui-ci [Porfilio Narváez] suivit son propre avis appuyé par celui des autres. Voyant sa détermination, je le requis, au nom de votre majesté, de ne pas quitter les bâtiments avant de les avoir mis dans un port sûr, et je pris à témoin l'écrivain qui était présent" (33). En même temps, ces chroniques ont un caractère autobiographique. Le statut de leurs auteurs, comme rapporteurs participants, rappelle, à bien des égards, celui de l'actuel *embedded journalist* accompagnant les troupes.

Le compte-rendu des aventures de ces voyageurs sert essentiellement à agir sur une audience au pouvoir décisif: le roi et sa cour. D'ailleurs, le récit de Cabeza de Vaca a tellement influencé le roi Charles Quinte, qu'il l'a adoubé, en 1540, gouverneur du Paraguay et capitaine général de la Nouvelle Andalousie (territoire englobant le Paraguay, l'Uruguay et une partie du Brésil, de l'Argentine et du Chili). Il a eu notamment le titre d'*Adelantado* (expliqué ultérieurement).

Le livre se distingue par son ton élogieux et courtisan. Adoptant la forme épistolaire, l'auteur s'adresse à la majesté dans les termes les plus pompeux: "A Sa Majesté sacrée, impériale et catholique." (3) Pour, ensuite, enchaîner: "De tous les princes connus qui ont gouverné le monde, je crois que l'on n'en pourrait trouver aucun que les hommes se soient efforcés de servir avec une volonté aussi sincère, avec autant de soin et d'ardeur" (4). Ceci, sans oublier de mettre le point sur les sacrifices et les peines endurées:

Dieu a permis que de toutes les flottes qui sont allées dans ces mers, aucune n'ait souffert d'aussi grands dangers, et n'ait eu une fin aussi désastreuse

bijoux en or et argent qui couvrent la reine Calafia. Ainsi, pour son créateur, California connote l'idée du "riche califat."

et aussi misérable que la nôtre; il ne me reste pour tirer parti de cette expédition, que d'offrir à votre majesté la relation de ce que j'ai pu voir et apprendre pendant dix années passées dans les contrées les plus extraordinaires, et que j'ai parcourues étant dénué de tout (6).

Les études sur la qualité littéraire de ce livre montrent combien il est influencé par les genres en vogue au seizième siècle, notamment le roman picaresque, l'hagiographie et l'épique, dans une logique qui rappelle combien la fiction peut faire le jeu des idéologies dominantes: *Cabeza de Vaca's Naufragios, make use of fictional conventions in order to be more convincing and to elevate their persuasive potential* [Dans *Naufrages*, Cabeza de Vaca fait usage de procédés propres au domaine de la fiction avec l'intention d'accroître la portée persuasive et mieux convaincre.] (Juan-Navarro 71). Fictionnaliser l'autre, à lui seul, ne suffit pas; il faut, conformément à la règle dans ce genre de situation, ajouter une dose de sensationnel: "Ils [les Amérindiens] ont d'autres coutumes fort étranges: je n'ai rapporté que les principales et les plus remarquables, afin de continuer mon récit et de conter ce qui nous est arrivé" (117).

Autour de la figure de ce conquistador, le consensus fait défaut. Malgré sa participation à ce que l'histoire a du mal à représenter autrement que le pire de tous les génocides, pour beaucoup, Cabeza de Vaca est l'apologiste des peuples d'Amérique, une sorte de Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566), ce père jésuite qui défendait les indigènes.²¹ Il correspond aussi à la figure hollywoodienne du Blanc indien, sans oublier celle du médecin révolutionnaire (bien avant Che Guevara). Ce que les traducteurs des *Naufragios*, Martin A. Fernández et B. José, dans leur préface soulignent avec concision: *[I]t [Naufragios] is one of first Spanish accounts that calls for a compassionate and tolerant policy toward the natives of the Western Hemisphere* ["*Naufrages*" est l'un des premiers écrits espagnols qui appellent

²¹ Le père De las Casas a déclenché un débat sur le fond de sa pensée: était-il contre l'institution de l'esclavage, ou bien voulait-il tout simplement substituer les esclaves amérindiens avec ceux d'Afrique ? (Zavala, 1944; Lawrence, 2009; Mendéz, 2015).

à adopter, envers les indigènes de l'hémisphère occidentale, une politique marquée par la compassion et la tolérance.”] (11).

L'exceptionnalisme moral de *Naufragios* trouve ses défenseurs les plus fervents parmi quelques traducteurs. Nous pouvons illustrer ce constat en nous basant sur un passage décrivant la rencontre avec les Timucuaens de Floride. Dans la version espagnole, l'événement est rapporté ainsi (l'emphase est nôtre): *Passados a la otra parte salieron a nosotros hasta dozientos indios, poco mas o menos; el Governador salio a ellos y despues de auerlos hablado por sertas ellos nos senalaron de suerte que nos ouimos de reboluer con ellos y prendimos cinco o seis* [“Une fois sur l'autre rive, nous fûmes accueillis par environ deux cents Indiens. Le gouverneur est parti à leur rencontre. Après leur avoir parlé avec des signes, ils nous ont indiqué qu'il fallait rentrer avec eux, et nous décidâmes d'en prendre cinq ou six.”] (20). Contentons-nous de deux points: a- le nombre de Timucuaens (“hasta dozientos indios” [“environ deux cents”²²]) et b- leur attitude à la vue des Blancs (“nos senalaron de suerte que nos ouimos de reboluer con ellos y prendimos cinco o seis” [“ils nous ont indiqué qu'il fallait rentrer avec eux, et nous décidâmes d'en appréhender cinq ou six”]). Sous la plume d'Henri Ternaux-Compans: “Quand nous fumes sur l'autre bord, douze cents Indiens environ vinrent à notre rencontre; le gouverneur s'avança vers eux, et, après leur avoir parlé par signes, ils nous firent entendre de les suivre. Cinq des six nous conduisirent à leurs maisons, éloignées d'une demi-lieue de là” (38). De deux cents Indiens, plus ou moins, selon Cabeza de Vaca, nous sommes passés à “douze cents Indiens environ.” Ceci ne peut servir qu'à exagérer le danger affronté par les Espagnols qui, par la même occasion, ne procèdent à aucune arrestation (comme dans “prendimos cinco o seis” [“nous en arrê tâmes cinq ou six”]). De son côté, Fanny Bandelier reprend ainsi la scène: *When we got across, there came towards us some two hundred Indians, more or less; the Governor went to meet them, and after he talked to them by signs they acted in such a manner that we were obliged to set upon them and seize five or six.* [“Une fois sur l'autre rive, deux cents Indiens, plus ou moins, se dirigèrent vers nous. Le gouverneur est parti à leur rencontre. Et, après leur avoir parlé en signes, ils agirent de telle manière que nous fûmes obligés de les prendre en assaut et en appréhender cinq ou six.”] (12). Nous

²² Toutes les traductions de l'espagnole sont miennes.

pouvons voir combien le danger est éminent: *they acted in such a manner that we were obliged to set upon them and seize five or six* [“ils agirent de telle manière que nous fûmes obligés de les prendre en assaut et en appréhender cinq ou six.”] Notons comment la traductrice ajoute au récit l’idée d’une agressivité aux contours flous (*they acted in such a manner* [ils agirent de telle manière]). De quelle “manière” s’agit-il? La réponse est dans l’attitude des conquistadors, décrits comme des victimes innocentes (*we were obliged to set upon them* [“nous fûmes obligés de les prendre en assaut”]), même si Cabeza de Vaca atteste le contraire, puisque la décision d’arrêter les Timucuians est purement arbitraire: les autochtones invitent les étrangers, et ceux-ci, en revanche, en capturent cinq ou six. Avec Martin A. Favata et José B. Fernández, l’éthique du traducteur prend le même coup: *They indicated by signs in such a way that we had to fight with them. We captured five or six of them* [“Ils s’exprimèrent en signes de manière à ce que nous fûmes poussés à les combattre. Nous en avons capturé cinq ou six.”] (38). Quant à Cyclone Covey, la représentation suit la même logique: *They gestured so menacingly that we fell upon them and seized five or six* [“Devant leurs gesticulations menaçantes, le seul choix devant nous fut de les prendre en assaut et d’en appréhender cinq ou six.”] (36). D’environ deux cents Indiens inoffensifs, nous sommes passés à douze cents individus (dans la traduction française) d’une violence viscérale, des êtres assoiffés de sang blanc qui attaquent sans être provoqués (dans les traductions anglaises). N’oublions pas que, dans la version espagnole, les autochtones ne parlent même pas, et c’est le gouverneur (Porfilio Narváez) qui procède par signes (*hablado por sertas* [“parlé en signes”]).

Ce détail montre combien, consciemment ou inconsciemment, le traducteur se comporte en “colonisateur de bonne foi.” Le gouverneur, pourtant victimisé comme nous venons de voir, s’est illustré, en réalité, par sa cruauté. Dans *Torture. An American Tradition*, de ce personnage, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, en se basant sur des pièces d’archives, en brosse un portrait radicalement différent: “Using methods of intimidation mastered during earlier campaigns in Cuba, Jamaica, and Mexico, Narváez terrorized the Indians” [“Faisant usage de méthodes élaborées lors de campagnes précédentes à Cuba, en Jamaïque et au Mexique, Narvaez terrorisait les Indiens.”] (13). L’auteur décrit, alors, comment, sans raison apparente, il donne l’ordre de brûler le village des Tocobaga (de la région de Tampa en Floride)

et de lâcher les chiens sur ses habitants. Ensuite, Narváez coupe le nez du chef tribal, Hirrihigua, qui vient d'assister à la mort de sa propre mère, déchiquetée par un molosse. Ces faits et bien d'autres sont passés sous silence dans *Naufragios*.

Non seulement ces traducteurs reproduisent l'horizon normatif propre à Cabeza de Vaca, mais, de plus, l'altèrent. Le principe "traduire, c'est trahir" peut conduire à conclure que la manière de traiter le texte espagnol est influencée par le contexte intellectuel de l'époque, que le travail de traduction entre dans une stratégie discursive plus large reproduisant des croyances d'un enracinement tellement profond qu'il affecte toute distance objective. Henri Ternaux-Compans est un bon exemple, puisque sa traduction remonte à 1835, à une période où la Troisième République française (1870-1940), connue notamment par son expansionnisme, offrait un cadre favorable à une telle "trahison". Il est aussi possible d'imaginer, simplement, les traducteurs ignorant le texte espagnol pour ne faire que "retravailler" les traductions anglaises précédentes. Une autre explication, plus en rapport à la question méthodologique qui anime cet article, penche vers le principe de la traduction, plutôt, comme auto-trahison. Ce qui conduit à considérer le traducteur comme obéissant à un instinct à la portée tellement profonde qu'il affecte la production du savoir, les sphères subjectives et intersubjectives et définit le langage dans sa matérialité. L'ampleur est tellement grande qu'elle touche l'univers archétypal, comme *shared cognitive and behavioural patterns that constitutes the collective unconscious*. ["schémas cognitifs et comportementaux partagés qui constituent l'inconscient collectif"] (Hogenson). Cet univers est constitué d'images mentales qui définissent l'horizon de pensée et ses modèles de réalité, par-delà une époque historique donnée, tout en déterminant le normal et le comportemental.

Invention et formation normative. Entre conquête et reconquête

De ce que nous avons avancé, nous sommes arrivés à la conclusion que l'invention du lointain par Cabeza de Vaca se faisait à partir du besoin d'influencer le monarque. Ensuite, nous avons vu comment, à travers la traduction, la réinvention du conquistador risquait de se laisser prendre par le travail sur l'inconscient individuel et collectif, considéré, dans l'introduction, comme formations normatives. Par formations normatives, nous

désignons des modes cognitifs collectifs qui, à l’opposé de toute évidence propre au contexte actuel, restent fidèles à une manière donnée de voir le monde. Malgré le génocide tant physique que culturel qu’elle a causé, la conquête de l’Amérique est normalisée à plus d’un terme.

Naufragios fait partie, comme d’ailleurs la somme des écrits des conquistadors, des textes fondamentaux dignes d’éclairer le lecteur sur la genèse du capitalisme global, de l’impérialisme et le corps normatif qui le soutient jusqu’à nos jours. Le classique de l’Uruguayen, Eduardo Galeano, *Las venas abiertas de América latina* [“Les veines ouvertes de l’Amérique latine”], résume, à partir de la première phrase, l’ordre normatif défendu depuis l’arrivée de Christophe Colomb aux Amériques jusqu’à nos jours: “La division internationale du travail tourne autour de deux catégories de pays: les gagnants et les perdants” (15). Cette manière de voir le monde et les rapports qu’elle perpétue trouve dans l’Espagne de la fin du quinzième et début du seizième siècle son lieu d’éclosion. 1492 est une année d’une importance cruciale; en plus de l’arrivée de Christophe Colomb à ce qui porte actuellement le nom d’Amérique, l’Espagne, encore en gestation, a connu deux événements d’une notoriété fondamentale: 1- Les Maures, vivant dans la Péninsule ibérique depuis 711, ont perdu leur dernier royaume, celui de Grenade; 2- la langue espagnole a maintenant son livre de grammaire, signé par Antonio de Nebrija. La guerre contre les Maures de la Péninsule a duré des siècles, depuis la bataille de Covadonga, à une date peu précise, entre 718 et 722, un événement que plusieurs historiens, surtout ceux ayant consulté les sources arabes de l’époque, traitent de pure affabulation, “une fantaisie espagnole” selon Miguel Catalán (212).

Retenons de cette époque, le fait que la frontière entre Chrétiens d’un côté et Musulmans et Juifs de l’autre se dessine et se redessine selon un jeu de gains et de pertes. Ensuite, la fin du règne mauresque et l’arrivée au pouvoir de la Reine Isabelle la catholique (reine de Castille et Léon) et son mari le Roi Fernand de Navarre, est derrière la naissance d’alliances entre royaumes pour former l’Espagne actuelle. Ces alliances et l’ordre social qu’elles ont inauguré n’ont rien de postcolonial. La “guerre de libération” (qualificatif nullement en usage pour décrire cette situation) manque de l’ingrédient principal dans la mythologie de résistance: un passé authentique dans un paradis perdu. La péninsule d’avant 711 ne peut relever d’une telle nostalgie. Jusqu’à

nos jours, l'historiographie espagnole n'a jamais hésité à distinguer négativement l'ère visigothe, désignée, même actuellement sous la catégorie *Reinos bárbaros* (Royaumes barbares), alors même que l'événement fondateur de la résistance antimusulmane, la bataille de Covadonga, était sous les commandes de leur roi Pelagius. En outre, la lutte contre les Maures ne prend pas le caractère d'une guerre de libération, puisqu'elle est considérée comme *Reconquista* (reconquête). Au lieu de réparer une injustice historique, dans un esprit purement défensif et revendicatif, la guerre engage, de part et d'autre, des conquérants désireux de s'approprier une géographie, plus qu'un territoire. Pour ce qui est de la frontière; son caractère fluctuant et son traçât au rythme des conquêtes et d'alliances évacue toute notion de territoire national, clairement limité et défendu au nom d'un groupe uni par des liens identitaires et symboliques, une situation qui marque la fragilité d'une Espagne encore confrontée aux nationalismes dissidents, notamment catalan et basque. La géographie sert de projection à un programme de *Re-conquista* et non de récupération d'une légitimité usurpée relative à un lieu précis, d'expansion et non de retour à un territoire mythique, de manière que l'Espagne était déjà un empire avant d'être un royaume. D'où la fameuse phrase d'Antonio Nebrija, dans la préface à son livre: *Siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio*. ["La langue a toujours accompagné l'empire"] (6) . La formalisation normative de la langue espagnole ne sert pas seulement comme socle à une imagination nationale, mais, et surtout, à exporter le modèle de la *Reconquista*.

Nous pouvons voir comment Cabeza de Vaca est le produit de cette imagination et de ses mythes, à commencer par la manière dont il se présente au lecteur: "Alvar Nunez Cabeça de Vaca, fils de Francisco de Véra , petit-fils de Pedro de Véra , le conquérant des Canaries; sa mère se nommait dona Térésa Gabeça de Vaca, de Xérès de la Frontera" (298). Le nom de famille, Cabeza de Vaca (qui veut dire Tête de vache), relie le personnage à l'histoire de la Reconquête. Au dire de David A. Howard, en 1212, l'un de ses ancêtres du côté maternel, un certain Martín Alhaja, a aidé le roi Sancho de Navarre, dans une bataille contre les musulmans. Il a aidé les troupes en leur signalant un passage dans les montagnes à hauteur de Séville en se servant de la carcasse d'une vache. C'est ainsi que le roi a décidé de lui donner le nom Cabeza de Vaca (1). Alhaja (nom qui désigne quelqu'un qui travaille le métal précieux, un bijoutier) est, sans

doute, lié à un Mudejar (de l'arabe *modajjane*, qui veut dire domestiqué), un Musulman assimilé. Quant au grand-père, Pedro de Véra, son nom est lié à la naissance, de facto, de l'empire. Parallèlement à l'arrivée aux Amériques et leurs conquêtes, les Espagnols avaient attaqué les îles Canaries et fini, en 1496, par éliminer ou réduire à l'esclavage ses autochtones, les Guanches. L'ennemi est partout le même: "L'Église, ou du moins la hiérarchie espagnole, ne préféraient pas les Guanches aux Maures ni aux Juifs. Ils étaient tous satanisés, des monstres, des démons" (Ribas & Vizueté 88). Une fois le Maure et le Guanche terrassés, l'Apôtre Saint Jacques a traversé l'Atlantique et, comme dans ce texte datant de 1746 (deux siècles après la publication de *Naufragios*), où il est toujours décrit comme "l'amoureux" porté à l'aide du conquistador dans ses opérations militaires contre Indiens et Maures (Cabrera y Quintero 280). Ce n'est pas pour rien qu'en Amérique latine, jusqu'à nos jours, bien des lieux et des gens portent encore le nom Matamoros.

Le Maure (comme l'Indien, d'ailleurs) n'est bon qu'éliminé ou domestiqué. À la fin de *Naufragios*, l'auteur a pris le soin de citer les noms des survivants. Parmi eux, "Estevanico, [...] un nègre arabe, natif d'Azamor" (298). Celle-ci est la seule fois où l'origine est mentionnée. Les Zemmours, habitants de la région de Zemmour, sont des Amazighs du Maroc atlantique. Estebanico a été capturé et vendu par des Portugais à "Andrès Dorantès, fils de Pablo Dorantes, natif de Bejar, bourgeois de Gibraleon" (297), qui l'a emmené avec lui aux Amériques. Avant de se lancer dans cette aventure, Estebanico Dorantes a subi une première phase dans le processus d'invention; il a été rebaptisé dans la honte: Estebanico, qui veut dire "petit Stéphane", est signe de rabaissement et soumission. Il porte aussi le nom de son maître pour déterminer le destin de sa descendance dans une logique qui rappelle l'un des visages de la réalité de l'esclavage, décrite par Philippe Chanson comme *blessure du nom*.

La présence des conquistadors est motivée par la volonté de conquérir et gouverner (*conquistar y gobernar*, selon Cabeza de Vaca [9-10]). L'ordre émane du roi, avec la bénédiction de l'Église, le souverain étant comme déjà mentionné, une majesté "sacrée, impériale et catholique". Pour réaliser un tel projet, il y a, bien entendu, besoin de financements. Pánfilo Narváez était un *Adelantado*. Les *Adelantados*, en vertu d'un ordre royal, sont des entrepreneurs qui partent à la conquête d'un territoire avec l'espoir d'en tirer un butin assez gros pour payer les frais de

l'expédition et s'assurer une marge de bénéfice. En échange, ils assurent à la couronne contrôle sur les espaces conquis (Buckley & Rensink 4). Ce qui atteste du fait que la privatisation de la guerre remonte à très loin. C'est pour cette raison que dès l'arrivée de l'expédition aux Caraïbes, "[p]lus de cent quarante hommes abandonnèrent la flotte dans cette île, et voulurent y rester, s'étant laissés séduire par les avantages et les promesses que leur firent les habitants" (10). Quant à la méthode à suivre, elle est symbolisée par l'emblème de la conquête: la croix et l'épée, qui veut dire convertir (dans le sens de domestiquer pour recréer le *modejar*, sujet colonial idéal) ou anéantir. Ainsi, l'auteur de *Naufragios*, trésorier et agent de l'ordre (*alguacil* major) de profession, est-il associé à une campagne sous l'égide de l'État, l'Église et le Capital.

Revenons à Estebanico (ou Estevanico selon le traducteur). Depuis sa capture par les négriers portugais, sa vie a subi deux métamorphoses. Tout d'abord, il a perdu son ethnicité, dans ses dimensions culturelle et identitaire (en tant que Marocain et Musulman; à l'époque, les musulmans étant banni du "Nouveau Monde" par décret royal), pour se réduire à sa dimension raciale, dans son essence biologique comme *Negro*. La négation de l'ethnique en faveur du racial est au cœur de l'expansion européenne. Cette négation est le prélude de la genèse d'une nouvelle identité, celle du "domestiqué", capable de servir le projet de conquérir et gouverner comme dans ces propos emblématiques, prononcés au dix-neuvième siècle par le capitaine R. H. Pratt, directeur de The Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania: "Kill the Indian, keep the man" (Danver 603).

L'expérience tragique a fait d'Estebanico l'homme qu'il est. Le passage entre cultures l'a équipé notamment d'outils linguistiques (nous pouvons imaginer ses compétences en arabe, amazigh, portugais et espagnol, sans oublier la darija, cette lingua franca, parlée dans les pays du Maghreb), capables de permettre des pouvoirs de communication et d'ouverture que ses compagnons n'ont pas: "Le nègre était toujours chargé de s'entendre avec eux [les Indiens]; c'était lui qui prenait des informations sur la route que nous voulions suivre, sur les peuplades et sur tout ce que nous voulions savoir." (246) Les gens du pays lui font confiance, plus qu'aux Espagnols, comme dans cette scène où, à la vue des étrangers, un Amérindien se met à courir. Ce qui se passe ensuite illustre ce que nous venons d'avancer: "Nous envoyâmes le nègre à sa poursuite. L'Indien

voyant que cet homme était seul, s'arrêta: alors le nègre lui dit que nous cherchions les gens qui faisaient la fumée que nous avions vue" (158). Il est, selon Federico Italiano, *the first transatlantic interpreter* [le premier interprète transatlantique] (68). Et pourtant, surtout au début du récit, le lecteur ne peut pas discerner ses actions de celles du maître, Dorantes, dans des expressions du genre "Dorantes et Estevanico". L'usage du "nous" (en référence au groupe) au détriment du "je" sert le plus souvent à diluer l'action individuelle et à réduire l'apport de l'esclave à sa pure instrumentalité comme dans ce passage sur le savoir en matière de langues indigènes:

Dieu ne cessa de nous protéger; car toujours nous les entendions [en parlant des autochtones] et nous nous faisons comprendre. Nous nous exprimions par signes, ces gens nous répondaient de même, et avec autant de facilité que s'ils avaient parlé notre langue et nous la leur. Nous en connaissions six, mais nous ne pouvions pas nous en servir dans tous les endroits; puisque nous en trouvâmes plus de mille différentes dans toute cette contrée (246).

Ces propos résument, au fond, la nature du rapport entre Estebanico et les peuples rencontrés, les Espagnols étant le plus souvent terrifiants, et la capacité (par la pratique de communiquer) d'établir le dialogue avec eux. Quant aux "six langues" en question, l'auteur a omis de souligner qui connaît quoi.

Réflexions finales

L'une des caractéristiques de la conquête est l'appropriation épistémologique. La ligne entre soi et l'autre s'estompe dans une logique qui conduit à son absorption, son savoir inclus. L'aliénation, comme incapacité de jouir du fruit de son travail, trouve dans Estebanico sa figure de choix. Une fois la mission accomplie, malgré les aléas et déboires partagés, arrivés à Tenochtitlan (Mexico), Dorantes l'a vendu au gouverneur Antonio de Mendoza (d'autres auteurs disent qu'il le lui a donné en cadeau) pour servir de guide à Francisco Marco de Niza dans une expédition à la recherche des fabuleuses Sept Ville d'Or de Cibola (Italiano 69) et finir tué par les Zunis.

L'appropriation épistémologique propre au conquistador se fait selon une idée agressive et moniste de la vérité (incarnée par le Roi et l'Église) comme dans l'expression latine, *veritas omnia vincit*. Autrement dit, rien ne peut résister devant la vérité du conquérant, la conquête étant, avant tout, un appétit sans limites. L'intérêt porté dans *Naufragios* aux langues indigènes s'explique essentiellement par la volonté de dévoiler les secrets des contrées saisies afin de rendre possible leur soumission et gouvernabilité. Le récit est jonché de scènes de prisonniers indigènes convertis, malgré eux, en interprètes; butin humain, ils permettent à la *veritas* de la conquête de pénétrer pour s'appropriier tout en réinventant le monde de l'Amérindien.

Ces interprètes participent dans la recréation du monde selon les caprices des nouveaux venus. Ils n'hésitent pas à servir à leurs nouveaux maîtres des tableaux fantaisistes de l'Eldorado tant rêvé, comme dans ce passage: "On vit aussi quelques traces d'or. Nous étant informés près des Indiens où ils avaient eu ces objets, ils nous apprirent par signes qu'il y avait fort loin de là une province nommée Apalache; et leurs gestes indiquaient qu'on y trouvait une grande quantité du métal que nous estimions tant" (29). Plus loin, il continue: "nous nous remîmes en marche pour la province que les Indiens nomment Apalache; nous emmenions pour guides ceux que nous avons pris" (41). Arrivés à hauteur de "l'endroit désiré, et où l'on disait que nous trouverions tant d'or et de vivres, une grande partie de nos fatigues et de nos maux disparut" (45). À leur grande surprise, et au bout d'escarmouches menées par la population locale, le narrateur conclut: "Voyant la misère de ce pays et le mal que tous les jours les naturels nous faisaient [...]. Nous résolûmes donc de partir" (53).

Convertie en *veritas* absolue, l'image du monde rêvé conduit l'expédition à sa perte. Pour s'en débarrasser ou bien pour les lancer sur leurs ennemis ou les égarer, d'autres interprètes leur font part d'un lieu idyllique différent, un point sur le chemin vers une fin tragique: "aller chercher la mer, et ce village d'Haute, dont on nous avait parlé" (54). Pour une fois, le *tradire* (trahir) du traducteur s'est transformé en une stratégie de résistance des plus redoutables devant le conquérant, ses armes, armures et chevaux.

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Aboard the *Castilia*: Clarissine Formation for the New World

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On August 12, 1875, two women travelled from the Monastery of San Lorenzo in Rome, Italy to the seaport in Marseille, France where they boarded a steamer that would take them to the United States of America. The pair were biological siblings and members of the Order of Poor Clares (primitive observance). They were selected to join two other members of the Franciscan family, Mother Ignatius Hays and Fr. Paolino, to strengthen the Franciscan presence in the New World.

The pair, Mother Maddalena Bentivoglio and Mother Costanza Bentivoglio, recorded their journey in their *Memoirs*, a work composed eight years later, in 1883. The *Memoirs* is described by its English translator as a “history of their trials and wanderings up to the time of the canonical establishment of the Monastery in Omaha (Nebraska)” in 1888.²³ The sisters’ “Preface” to the *Memoirs* supplies its particular orientation and tone. The sisters explain that while “it be one of the duties of our office” to provide a record of activities, they do so with humility—with gratitude to God, their “guide and support,” and to their fellow sisters, who accept “the burden of the day” (Fiege 224), the

²³ Marianus Fiege, O. M. Cap., *The Princess of Poverty: Saint Clare of Assisi and the Order of Poor Ladies* (Evansville, IN: Poor Clare Monastery of St. Clare, 1900), 222. The translators “give their (ie. the sisters) narrative verbatim, omitting a few things of minor importance, and making certain verbal alterations demanded by the idiom of the English language” (223). Fiege wrote this history of the Order of St. Clare to mark their Silver Jubilee in the United States; his history includes the translation of the *Memoirs* used here. As a Franciscan missionary, from the United Kingdom, Fiege was not a disinterested author.

suppression of their religious order, in their absence. The sisters define their humility in relational terms, as recognition of “the wonderful things He performs amongst men by His grace” (Fiege 224). As a sign of God’s activity, the *Memoirs* are thereby evidence for “the goodness and mercy of God” (Fiege 225). An examination of the sisters’ account of their voyage on the *Castalia*, the cargo steamer that carried them from Marseille to New York, indicates that their use of the humility topos exceeds mere convention. The voyage section, consisting of five short entries, sits near the center of the *Memoirs* and marks a transitional period in the sisters’ religious identity. Their voyage bridges their selection and preparation in Europe—as Poor Clare nuns—with their encounters and efforts in the United States—as missionaries and monastic foundresses. In the midst of changing conditions, the sisters retain the stability of their contemplative worldview.²⁴ The voyage section demonstrates that as they forego the “old” world for “passage” to the “new” world, this transition is secured by ongoing formation, through prayer, in the practice of humility.

This essay proposes a literary approach to examine the construction of humility in the voyage section of the *Memoirs*. A literary approach to the voyage section illumines the sisters’ understanding of the expressed purpose of the *Memoirs* in the context of their religious identity. This approach signifies how memoir renders meaningful the religious life of the sisters. As Mary J. Oates writes: “In choosing a decidedly unconventional life-style, sisters had always been at variance with social norms governing female behavior” (151). For the Bentivoglio sisters, Oates’ observation applies to their home environment as well as to the environment into which they entered given that “Popular stereotypes about women’s capabilities and professional status characteristic of the period were held by bishops and clergy at least as strongly as by their lay counterparts” (151). The sisters’ small numbers and lack of political capital often reinforced existing stereotypes about women religious. A literary approach can filter such bias. Bernadette McCauley explains that “Unfortunately, the history of women religious still remains

²⁴ See Albert Kleber, OSB, *A Bentivoglio of the Bentivoglio: The Servant of God Mary Magdalena of the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (Evansville, IN: Monastery of St. Clare, 1984), 53-56. Unfortunately, I was unable to consult Joseph Chinnici, OFM, *Maria Maddalena Bentivoglio Foundress of the Poor Clares in the United States: Her Life, Her Writings, Her Memory*, 2004.

mostly marginal in the landscape of American women's history when the narrative is not written from their perspective" (67). McCauley observes a need for scholars to examine "the powerful attraction of the religious life" (67) as an "empowering" (67) option for many women, and a domain "that acknowledges the spiritual dimension of American women's experiences" (68). A literary approach takes seriously these aims: it decenters the "master narrative" by focusing on a source written by and about women religious.²⁵ To this end, it complements studies that seek to lift the voices and experiences of religious women in their own words and on their own terms. As a result, a literary approach attends to the range of expressions in source material. Specifically, the *Memoirs* fit into Joseph Chinnici's classification of foundress travel narratives as "rituals of passage to the New World" ("Religious Life in the Twentieth Century" 32). Such classification provides a hermeneutic for interpreting the *Memoirs* that avoids duplicating the social marginalization of religious life by centering the symbolic worldview of these women. Chinnici contends that the religious life

itself is a dense *symbolic life form* standing at the intersection where person and society meet; it is often born in the liminal space between established social and ecclesiastical identities; it institutionalizes modes of human exchange which both mirror and critique the established political and ecclesial economy; and, most important, it attempts to sacramentalize a transcendent religious experience. ("Rewriting the Master Narrative" 3)

An interpretation of the voyage section against a background of liminality aligns well with Chinnici's claims by acknowledging the religious identity of the sisters. It also affirms the work that Eileen Flanagan has done on the sisters' spirituality. Over the course of

²⁵ See Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM, "Rewriting the Master Narrative: Religious Life and the Study of American Catholicism," *American Catholic Studies* 117.1 (2006): 1-20. See also Eileen Flanagan, "Poor Clare Life Incompatible with American Lifestyle, 1876-1888: Mother Maddalena Bentivoglio Challenges the Perception," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 29.1 (Winter 2011): 95-111. Flanagan writes: "That such marginalization exists is compounded by the sparse number of published and archival sources concerning attempts at Poor Clare foundations in the United States" (96).

founding monasteries in the United States, Flanagan shows, Mother Bentivoglio maintained “trust in God, and perseverance in her vocation and mission.”²⁶ Both features figure prominently in the particular construction of humility presented in the voyage section.

This essay offers a close reading of the literary construction of humility in the voyage section of the *Memoirs*. By representing humility in metaphorical terms that foreground its relational qualities, the sisters craft a memory that hearkens to their ongoing pursuit for stability in an unpredictable period of monastic foundation. As a result, their work impacts the theological imagination of their sisters and informs the historical reconstruction of their origins in the United States.

Literary Signification

As the sisters made their way from their Monastery of San Lorenzo to the port of Marseille on August 12, 1875, they had occasion to visit the Pope, to conduct a pilgrimage to Assisi, and to receive hospitality from several monasteries whose members were suffering like their own, along the way.²⁷ Within a month they had made it to Marseille where they boarded the *Castalia*. Their voyage - around the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and across the Atlantic Ocean to the port of New York - lasted approximately one month. The voyage section of the *Memoirs* chronicling their time on the *Castalia* breaks naturally into two parts: the first part recounts travel from Marseille to Gibraltar (during which they travelled along the Spanish coast of the Mediterranean Sea, see 1-6); the second part covers travel from Gibraltar to New York (during which they travelled across the Atlantic Ocean, see 7).²⁸

²⁶ Flanagan, “Poor Clare Life Incompatible with American Lifestyle, 1876-1888: Mother Maddalena Bentivoglio Challenges the Perception,” 106. Flanagan contends that “To identify what drew some faithful not only to value but also to advocate for the new venture is to retrieve this Poor Clare narrative from marginalization in the American historical memory and to illuminate significant elements of their religious practice and spirituality that contributed to their contemporary relevance” (96).

²⁷ The sisters observe that this is the feast of St. Clare.

²⁸ The map offers a basic attempt to visualize their route. I’m grateful for conversations about the sisters’ travels with Alexis McCall and for assistance from Tusa McNary.



Each part opens similarly with a moment of prayer and theological reflection; an intentional reference in the second part to the first part suggests that the parts be read as a single unit. Doing so illumines an extended reflection on the practice of humility.

From the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean

The sisters boarded the *Castalia* on a foggy evening in mid-September, 1875, and stayed on deck to offer prayer for a safe voyage. They returned to the deck again the next morning, for the purpose of prayer. This prayer—identified by “say(ing) our office and make(ing) our meditation” (Fiege 259)—stresses the role of ritual in their daily lives. In particular, it emphasizes the centrality of prayer. In the monastic worldview of the sisters, formal and informal periods of prayer are believed to facilitate continuous union with a divine presence; prayer permeates and informs their thought, activity, and relations. Their monastic rule, the *Rule of St. Clare*, instructs how and when the sisters are to “pray the Hours” (Clare of Assisi, “Rule of St. Clare” III.1, 131) in accordance with biblical teaching and Franciscan custom. It is in the context of this contemplative worldview that the sisters recollect the impact of the natural world on their prayer; they appeal directly to the language of analogy and symbolism.

Next to being before our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, we cannot imagine anything better calculated to impress one with the nearness of God, than being on the broad expanse of the ocean. The

clear blue sky, rising above, like an immense vault, reflected in the deep blue waters below, which extend as far as the eye can reach, till they touch the very heavens: all this is an image, however faint, of the immensity of God. And as you look out into the immensity above and around you, a silent awe steals upon your soul. Your soul loses itself in the infinitude of God. A sweet calm fills your soul. Your soul is at rest, at rest with God. God is near. (Fiege 259)

In their analogy, “the nearness of God” recognized by “being before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,” extends to their impressions about the “the broad expanse of the ocean.” Their analogy prompts an analogical awareness as they weigh the divine presence felt within the created order—the water and the sky as “an image, however faint, of the immensity of God”—and their capacity as embodied beings to experience and encounter the natural world in this way through sight and sound. Their awareness elicits an affective response of receptivity as the act of seeing renders an act of feeling deliberately articulated in the final lines of this entry, connecting the sight of “immensity” and the response of “silent awe.” The nearness of God “calculated” in the sacrament is thereby likened to the nearness of God in the sea which, in turn, is likened to the nearness of God in the soul; just as they are capable of knowing—spiritually—the nearness of God by venerating and receiving the “Blessed Sacrament” (a consumptive act) that brings them into oneness with Christ so, too, they are capable of knowing—again spiritually—the nearness of God by envisioning the expanse of the sea; the sea, like the sacrament, becomes a portal for accessing encounter with a divine presence. For the sisters, the shared impact of both the sacrament and the sea assures them of the ongoing capacity for a divine presence to be seen, known, and received.²⁹

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Port of New York

The sisters’ theological insight intentionally informs further reflection as the *Castalia* leaves the Mediterranean Sea at

²⁹ For Roman Catholic teachings about the Blessed Sacrament, consider those of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) on transubstantiation— that Christ is “truly, really, substantially” present in the Blessed Sacrament (eucharist).

Gibraltar for the Atlantic Ocean; specifically, their description of the directional change of the steamer facilitates reflection on their own situation in this theological framework. Whereas their account on the sea emphasizes affect, as “a silent awe steals upon your soul,” their account on the ocean supplies the ethical implications of that emotional response. Specifically, the sisters indicate learning about their place—as both integral and intimate—in the natural order. In their entry, the sisters explain that the “color of the water” (Fiege 263) and “the billows of the waves” (Fiege 263) of the ocean differ from those of the sea.

But in other respects, too, there is a vast difference between the narrow cramped Mediterranean and the broad open Atlantic. If the former already impressed us deeply with the thought of God’s immensity, the latter did so still more. Here everything is on a grander and more majestic scale. Yes, indeed, how little and insignificant did we not appear in the face of this immensity! And in the deep silent recesses of *our awe-stricken hearts*, we *humbly* adored the great Creator, invisible to mortal eye, yet visible and tangible in His works; and we thanked and blessed Him most sincerely for His goodness and mercy towards all His creatures. We were on deck as much as possible in order to contemplate nature and study the lessons it taught. (Fiege 263; italics added)

“Still more” does the ocean, “on a grander and more majestic scale,” welcome theological reflection. Here, the sisters turn their attention more directly to the practice of humility: as their previous recognition of a divine presence (the soul “at rest with God”) renders a cognitive awareness of their place in the natural world. Significantly, they define their place in terms of size (“how little and insignificant did we not appear”), and not in terms of affect. The sisters’ recognition of place does not make them feel diminished in their role or in their value given their appeal—repeated from their previous entry—to their affective state of “awe-stricken hearts.” This state is, therefore, the foundation for their interpretation of a divine presence and their place before it. It is noteworthy, as well, that their recognition of place renders a response of adoration and gratitude, and not self-abnegation; here

humility is not constructed principally as the antithesis of pride. The sisters' desire to remain in this relational state before and with a divine presence is evident in their claim to remain on deck "as much as possible" (Fiege 264)—thereby locating this moment as a site of deep and ongoing religious formation.

For the sisters, such formation envisions a natural world in conformity with a divine creator. Subsequent observations of the sun are rendered by the sisters in terms of birth and death—in the morning the sun "emerges from the waves in all its new-born splendor" (Fiege 264) offering a "morning salutation to the risen lord of day" (Fiege 264). In the evening, the sun "sinks into the grave, while the waves, dyed in purple red, seem to mourn over its departure" (Fiege 264). The characteristics of the light of day—"genial, reassuring" (Fiege 264)—are juxtaposed with the night, "when all is still and dark as death" (Fiege 264) that is only aggravated by the moon and stars.

Like the conformity of the natural world so, too, the sisters envision their mission in conformity with a divine creator. The sisters deem God responsible for guiding their travel. They appeal to God when they remark on the smoothness of their travel across the ocean: "our Lord seemed to have tempered the winds and the waves in our regard. How kind he was to us" (Fiege 264)! Their appeal extends, as well, to the Captain's temperament towards them: "The Captain told us, he never before had experienced such a smooth passage; and he did not know to what kind genius he owed this exceptional favor . . . no one could have been as kind and gentle to us as he was" (Fiege 264). The sisters affirm their conformity to a divine will in their final entry covering the three-day period from October 10-12, 1875. As they approach the port of New York, the sisters notice "a little bird that entered by our sitting room window" (Fiege 264) as "the first welcome to our new home" (Fiege 264). This biblical allusion to the journey of Noah on an ark aligns the "old" and the "new" as they embark—renewed by their trust in God—to strengthen a Franciscan presence in the United States.³⁰

³⁰ They disembark at the port of New York on October 12, 1875. It is noteworthy that they appeal to the date in their recollection. Upon seeing land, they write, "We were experiencing a little of the joy and consolation Columbus and his companions must have felt, when, after a long and adventurous voyage, they caught the first glimpse of the New World" (Fiege, *The Princess of Poverty*, 265).

In the voyage section of the *Memoirs*, the sisters' prayer remains a stable source for theological reflection in a changed environment. In this environment, they encounter a divine presence symbolically in the natural world. The sea and the ocean, the sun and the moon, the steamer and its Captain, become significant sites for interpreting their purpose and place. As the sisters acknowledge "the immensity of God" and their direction, under the guidance of God, they signal heightened awareness of their own vulnerability. Their expressions of certitude and trust demonstrate their response of absolute obedience and dependence on God, as mandated by their monastic rule.

Conclusion

The voyage section of the *Memoirs* of Mother Maddalena Bentivoglio and Mother Costanza Bentivoglio recollects a transitional period in the sisters' journey to the United States. The sisters' literary construction of humility was pregnant with meaning not only for themselves, but for their intended readers. By recording the stages of their formation in humility as a relational value with affective, cognitive, and ethical features, the sisters propose a way to encounter vulnerability—for themselves, for their fellow sisters, and for their mission. Remaining in a contemplative state of prayer over the course of their travel on the *Castalia*, the sisters uphold their belief in the stability of their religious identity during a particularly challenging time. As a result, their narrative invited readers to reflect on the practice of humility and its role in Clarissine religious formation.

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Voyage à l'Isle de France de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: de la valorisation de la nature au rappel d'une société esclavagiste

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“Ce n’est pas pousser au paradoxe que de dire que le récit de voyage ressortit à la fiction. Pour lui comme pour les autres, entrent en jeu le travail de la mémoire, la finalité de cette écriture, la qualité du narrataire,” disait Jeanine Guerin-Dallemesse.³¹ Autant de qualités requises pour celui qui ose voyager ainsi que pour toute forme d’écriture viatique. Si la lecture des odyssées dans des pays situés aux antipodes les uns des autres en passionne plus d’un, il convient tout de même de souligner que le XVIII^e siècle reste marqué par deux catégories de voyageurs: la première catégorie concerne ceux qui ne sont plus attirés par les voyages quand, entre 1700 et 1750, voyager pour découvrir les océans diminue considérablement; la deuxième catégorie concerne, à l’opposé, ceux qui démontrent un certain intérêt pour les nouvelles découvertes, entre 1750 et 1800. Les voyages financés par l’Académie des Sciences et l’Académie de la Marine promeuvent les circumnavigations et autres expéditions en mer. Ainsi les voyages deviennent-ils plus scientifiques. L’abbé Lenglet-Dufresnoy dira:

La lecture des voyages . . . on s’en sert ordinairement comme un amusement, mais les personnes habiles s’en servent pour la géographie, pour l’histoire et, pour le commerce (7).³²

³¹ Guerin-Dallemesse, Jeanine (textes réunis par). *Le voyage: de l’aventure à l’écriture*. Poitiers, La Licorne, U.F.R, langues-littérature, actes du colloque international organisé par l’université de Poitiers le 5- 6 mai 1994. Textes réunis par J. Guerin- Dallemesse, 1995, p.7.

³² Lenglet-Dufresnoy l’abbé, *Méthode pour étudier la géographie dans laquelle on donne une Description exacte de l’Univers, tirée des meilleurs Auteurs, et*

Pourtant, plusieurs auteurs se proclament “spécialistes” comme Tournefort (un amateur de statues) ou Anquetil-Duperron (qui s’intéresse à l’Inde) même si ce sera à la fin de XVIII^e siècle que l’on verra naître de vrais spécialistes. La fin du XVIII^e siècle privilégie en effet des auteurs qui visent non seulement à faire réfléchir le lecteur (en l’instruisant tout en le divertissant) mais aussi à enrichir les sciences. Nous pouvons citer Louis Hennepin, l’abbé Prévost ou encore Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre comme faisant partie de ceux-là.

En 1768, “le jeune capitaine-ingénieur du Roi”³³ (Jean-Michel Racault, *Études sur Paul et Virginie* 7) effectue un voyage à l’Isle de France, colonie française dans l’océan Indien (aujourd’hui île Maurice). D’abord, et comme tout voyageur en quête d’un peu d’exotisme – la grande mode de l’époque – Bernardin de Saint-Pierre est fasciné par ce voyage sous les tropiques. Le voyage lui permet de découvrir un monde nouveau, et lui permettra, lui, écrivain-voyageur, de mettre sur papier ses émotions, ses réactions, et ses moments privilégiés. Mais ce voyage nous permettra aussi d’y voir les explorations de la nature qu’il n’a de cesse de valoriser.

Nous verrons, dans un premier temps, comment Bernardin de Saint-Pierre explore et valorise la nature tout en prêtant une attention particulière à la recherche qui s’effectuait au XVIII^e siècle dans ce domaine en analysant ses répercussions sur l’œuvre étudiée. Dans un deuxième temps, nous évaluerons l’Homme au centre de cette exploration. Ce qui va nous permettre de porter un regard avisé sur le rapport entre Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, la nature et la manière dont les hommes qui habitent l’île réagissent dans un contexte esclavagiste.

La valorisation de la nature

Les voyages et les explorations de la nature connaissent deux périodes : la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle était inscrite sous le signe des découvertes, pérégrinations maritimes, comptoirs commerciaux, exploitations des ressources alors que la seconde

formée sur les Observations de Meilleurs de l’Académie Royale des Sciences. Paris: Rollin fils et Debure l’aîné (3^e éd.), 1741, t. 1, p. 163.

³³ *Études sur Paul et Virginie*, textes réunis par Jean-Michel Racault, CRLH, La Réunion, 1986, p. 7.

moitié du XVIII^e donne un nouveau visage à ces voyages puisqu'ils deviennent plus scientifiques. L'aspect scientifique fait partie de l'approche scripturale et paratactique de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre comme en témoigne *Voyage à l'Isle de France*.

Dans cette œuvre, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre aborde par exemple et en trois occasions, la longitude. Ce faisant, l'auteur décèle les difficultés auxquelles les navigateurs font face car ils n'ont pas les moyens de prendre les bonnes mesures. Il faut savoir, à cet effet, que la longitude a jusqu'alors été mesurée par "la méthode astronomique" (Christophe Rocher). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre dit devoir observer des oiseaux et leurs déplacements afin de "suppléer au moyen qui . . . manque de déterminer les longitudes" (*Voyage à l'Isle de France* 69). Cela permet à l'oiseau de jouir d'un statut plus scientifique que celui d'une créature bénéficiant d'une métaphore poétologique, comme cela se faisait au Moyen-Âge (Hughes de Fouilly). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ne manque pas, un peu plus tard, de préciser d'ailleurs combien "[l]a longitude des Canaries et celles des Isles du Cap Vert est mal déterminée" (98). Ce sera en effet La Pérouse qui, quelques années plus tard, apportera des précisions sur l'utilisation des longitudes, où il notera par exemple que Lozier-Bouvet "était en erreur de 4 degrés" sur "celle de Sainte-Catherine" (*Voyage de La Pérouse autour du monde* 155). Ici, la praxis du narrateur demeure fondamentalement scientifique, même si l'on ressent dans cette écriture, la curiosité et la joie que lui procure cet oiseau aussi bien que l'incertitude du dépaysement. Le lien avec l'oiseau permet d'amoinrir la souffrance physique et psychologique de ces voyageurs car son apparition dépasse le simple cadre métaphorique pour annoncer la symbolique de l'espoir dans l'attente de voir la terre plus loin: "Nous avons tous aujourd'hui éprouvé des faiblesses quelques-uns, des vertiges et des maux de cœur. Cependant, nous sommes à plus de cent lieues, au vent, de terre connue. On prétend avoir vu un paillencu (paille-en-queue)" (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à l'Isle de France* 8).³⁴ Bernardin de Saint-Pierre va aussi mettre en avant les lacunes de son navire – le Marquis de Castries – à bord duquel il voyage, en précisant, par exemple, "Je crois qu'il serait utile de border de

³⁴ Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne Espérance, etc. avec des observations nouvelles sur la nature et sur les Hommes*. On fera référence au texte comme *Voyage à l'Isle de France* dans cet article.

feuilles de cuivre toute la circonférence des vaisseaux sur une largeur de trois pieds” (86).³⁵ Il va “assurer aux bateaux une longévité plus grande en renforçant leur étanchéité et en empêchant l’adhérence de coquillages et d’algues (parfois plusieurs dizaines de centimètres) qui les alourdissait et les ralentissait . . . A la fin du XVIIIe siècle, les bateaux doublés de cuivre pouvaient faire sept à huit voyages” (René Favier 36). Aussi, quand la plupart de ceux qui voyagent à bord du navire sont atteints de scorbut, il annonce qu’on peut guérir de cette maladie avec “les bouillons de cet animal (la tortue)” (*Voyage à l’Isle de France* 91) mais ne manque pas de préciser qu’il a été le premier guéri après “n’avoir usé que des végétaux” (92). En effet, en 1793, paraîtra *L’encyclopédie méthodique* (de médecine) où il sera précisé que “[l]e traitement (de la maladie) peut être commencé par de doux dépuratifs tirés des plantes du pays, analogues [aux] chicorées et [aux] crucifères” (Lamark, *Encyclopédie méthodique* 344). La valorisation de la nature passe par la reconnaissance de l’apport des conséquences positives des avancées en ce qu’il s’agit de la botanique et de l’agriculture³⁶. Ce sera dans une succession de précisions botaniques que Bernardin de Saint-Pierre évoquera les spécificités de chaque plante comme l’“herbe à panier” (110), qui est bonne “pour la poitrine” (111), le “bois de natte [...] en charpente” (114) ou encore le “vacoa” qui “sert à faire des nattes et des sacs” (118). Plus loin, il ne s’agit pas uniquement des bienfaits que représentent les animaux et plantes pour l’humain mais aussi leurs effets néfastes comme les perruches vertes qui sont des “ennemis des récoltes” (122) ou encore le “pigeon Hollandais” (125) qui donnent des “convulsions” à qui voudrait le manger. Si la liste est longue, c’est que le narrateur a voulu rester le plus fidèle possible à l’image de la nature telle qu’elle était et non à une sorte d’artificialisation liée au développement que l’Homme mènera sur l’île par la suite. En effet, la surexploitation de ces ressources naturelles liée à la colonisation entraînera des bouleversements sans précédent sur la faune et la flore mauriciennes.

³⁵ C’est en 1770 notamment que le cuivre est utilisé pour doubler les coques des navires.

³⁶ “Tout moyen qui tend à augmenter la population, est précieux à l’humanité, et le législateur ne peut l’embrasser avec trop d’ardeur. Le reste égal, plus un pays est fécond, plus il est peuplé”, Tiphaigne dans “Dissertation”, reproduite dans les Mémoires de l’Académie des arts et belles-lettres de Caen, Caen, impr. P. Chalopin, 1758, pp. 146-173.

L'auteur parvient également faire ressortir l'esthétique de la laideur. Dans la citation "La mer formait des lames monstrueuses semblable à des montagnes pointues . . ." (*Voyage à l'Isle de France* 77), il met en évidence la comparaison entre la terre et la mer, comme pour rappeler qu'il y a une fusion entre les éléments et que leur unicité est indivisible. Le voyage en mer se positionne dans un entre-deux, entre les deux terres, celle qu'il connaît, la France, et celle qu'il va découvrir, l'Isle de France. Mais, cet entre-deux, ne représente-t-il qu'un espace-temps fugitif? Est-ce que le déracinement qu'il engendre permet d'appréhender la dynamique du futur auquel il donnera lieu? N'est-il pas également un signe précurseur de l'hécatombe liée à l'excessive anthropisation qui a fait de l'Homme l'ennemi direct de la nature?

L'Homme au centre de son exploration

Les perceptions nouvelles liées à la nature expriment la valorisation de l'auteur pour la nature. Les modalités de son expression sont spécifiques; d'une manière très distincte, il explore "les plantes et les animaux naturels," tout en décrivant le climat et le sol, avant de conclure avec l'Homme. Ainsi n'hésite-t-il pas à voir chez l'Européen un comportement tyrannique: "Au reste je croirai avoir été utile aux hommes, si le faible tableau du sort des malheureux Noirs peut leur épargner un seul coup de fouet, et si les Européens qui crient en Europe contre la tyrannie et qui font de si beaux traités de morale cessent d'être aux Indes des tyrans barbares" (avant-propos, iv). L'exploration de son nouvel univers – à savoir le voyage initiatique qu'il s'est lui-même imposé – aura tendance à faire un rapprochement, en une sorte de télescopage même, entre les sentiments de l'homme et les descriptions de la nature. En faisant partie de la nature, il se met au niveau des éléments et autres substrats qui la constituent afin qu'une fusion ait lieu. Lorsqu'il y a fusion, il ne semble pas possible d'avoir suffisamment de recul pour poser un regard critique sur un événement. Quand la nature est contenue dans l'homme, il y a comme un rapport de force qui s'établit et qui, en toute subjectivité, lui permet de maintenir son autorité et sa maîtrise. Comme le voudrait la pensée aristotélicienne, "si l'on ne pose qu'un seul principe, on rend le mouvement impossible" (*Encyclopédie Universalis* en ligne). Donc le rapport de force est nécessaire pour le principe même de causalité et sa non-existence

rendrait illégitime la notion de liberté. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre nous invite à une sorte d'introspection, surtout en analysant sa réaction lors d'une tempête: "J'ai vu . . . sur le rivage des troupes de femmes transies de froid et de crainte, un sentinelle à la pointe d'un bastion, tout étonné de la hardiesse de ces malheureux qui pêchent avec les mauves et les goélands au milieu de la tempête" (19).

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre semble promouvoir une ouverture aux autres. Pour lui, être en rupture est équivalent à une forme de résistance à l'esclavage institutionnalisé d'alors. Joseph-Elzéar Morénas disait déjà au sujet des esclaves:

Au mois de septembre 1825 . . . le navire l'Orphée, ayant à bord sept cents noirs qu'on transportait à la Martinique . . . ces malheureux sont condamnés à faire un long voyage, ayant à peine de quoi vivre, privés le plus souvent d'un verre d'eau pour apaiser une soif ardente, tourment le plus horrible qu'on puisse éprouver sous le climat embrasé des tropiques (*Précis historique de la traite des Noirs et de l'esclavage colonial* 123-124).³⁷

Ainsi Bernardin de Saint-Pierre précise-t-il: "Les matelots n'ont point assez d'eau dans les chaleurs . . . Elle [l'eau] est souvent d'une infection épouvantable et remplie de vers . . . Les matelots sont très mal nourris. Leur biscuit est plein de vers" (84-85). Autant l'auteur remarque les difficultés des matelots lors de leur voyage en mer, autant il mettra en évidence celles vécues par les esclaves plus loin lors de la découverte de l'île. Si sa présentation du peuple se fait plutôt à la fin du récit, c'est sans doute pour mieux mettre l'accent sur lui. Les récits de voyages avaient tendance à qualifier l'Autre de "sauvage" ou de "barbare," même si Bernardin de Saint-Pierre semble voir les aspects mélioratifs de cet Autre. Ainsi fait-il une comparaison entre l'Européenne et la Créole, en précisant: ". . . une Européenne se croit supérieure à une créole," et "Ils [Les Noirs] sont très hospitaliers" (191). Il dit même des Noirs de Guinée, qu'"[i]ls sont adroits, intelligents, sensibles à l'honneur et à la reconnaissance . . . [et qu']ils font dans leur pays quantité de petits ouvrages avec beaucoup

³⁷ Consulté à partir de: <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/aristote/6-la-philosophie-de-la-nature/>. Consulté le 2 mars 2019.

d'industrie" (190). Comme un véritable exote, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre observe, décrit et note ses observations brutes faites au hasard de ses rencontres de l'Autre. Il semble même vouloir préconiser une porosité des frontières qui fonctionne comme une légitimation de la représentation de l'Autre.

C'est dans l'exiguïté du lieu qu'est le navire que l'auteur observe le comportement humain. Il précise qu'une fois à bord, l'influence de cet état de renfermement doublé par le fait d'être en mer aurait une influence certaine sur les marins³⁸ qui adoptent même une attitude particulière en fonction d'un événement particulier: "Ce n'est pas que, suivant les circonstances, ils ne soient dévots, même superstitieux. J'en ai connu plus d'un, qui n'aurait pas voulu appareiller un Dimanche ou un Vendredi. En général leur Religion dépend du temps qu'il fait" (33). Bernardin de Saint-Pierre réinterroge ce faisant l'homme dans son rapport avec autrui en démontrant les qualités intrinsèquement progressives de l'écriture réaliste. Les observations brutes du déroulement chronologique de la vie de l'écrivain lors de ce voyage permettent une forme de poétisation de la réalité.

L'image de la société esclavagiste

Le voyage de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre dans l'océan Indien relève de la "culture de la curiosité" (Pomian 75). Si la curiosité est un phénomène qui prend de l'ampleur au XVIIIe s, on observera le plaisir et l'esthétisme de la ramener vers tous les animaux, poissons et plantes qui occupent la faune et la flore mauriciennes. Dans cette logique rationnelle et utilitariste, la place de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre au centre de son exploration est tout aussi importante. D'ailleurs lui-même démontre une forme de bonté lorsqu'il n'hésite pas à porter secours à son esclave, Duval, qui s'est blessé. Pourtant, on pourrait aisément le catégoriser d'esclavagiste puisqu'il a un esclave. Il précise d'ailleurs lui-même au sujet de Charlevoix: "Ce qu'il y a de plus étrange, c'est de voir l'embarras où est l'auteur de concilier des préjugés d'Européen, avec ses observations de voyageur, ce qui produit des contradictions perpétuelles dans le cours de son ouvrage" (211). Il donne l'impression de ne pas prendre parti ouvertement pour l'antiesclavagisme même si son récit s'apparente par beaucoup à

³⁸ "La promptitude qu'exige la manœuvre les rend grossiers dans leurs expressions" (32).

une éthique réclamant l'abolition de l'esclavage. Hélène Cussac pense même que Bernardin de Saint-Pierre a montré un aspect "neutre" voire positif des esclaves dans son journal de voyage (*Dix-huitième siècle 201-219*). N'est-il pas étonné de constater que le Code Noir, qui était censé être rédigé pour assurer une meilleure vie aux Noirs comporte, en fait, des exemples formels de sa non-application? "On dit que le Code Noir est fait en leur faveur. Soit; mais la dureté des maîtres excède les punitions permises, et leur avarice soustrait la nourriture, le repos et les récompenses qui sont dues. Si ces malheureux voulaient se plaindre, à qui se plaindraient-ils? Leurs juges sont souvent leurs premiers tyrans" (*Voyage à l'Isle de France 202*). Cependant, il n'hésite pas non plus à observer que sur cette île règne une joyeuse hypocrisie, car il s'agit d'un "peuple de différentes nations, qui se haïssent très cordialement" (182) et qui est dépourvu de tout "goût pour les lettres et les arts" (183).

Parfois nous pouvons même ressentir une pointe de sarcasme dans sa manière de présenter les esclaves. Il s'agirait d'une attitude qui relèguerait moins l'esclave à une entité chosifiée qu'à vouloir démontrer les pratiques courantes et humiliantes de l'époque. En effet, le botaniste précise qu'"[u]n grenadier fut tué d'un coup, une Négrresse d'un autre, ainsi qu'un bœuf sur l'Isle aux Tonneliers," le substantif "grenadier" précédant "Négrresse," et "bœuf" lui succédant, donnent l'impression que la personne pourrait facilement se fondre dans un décor relevant de la plus grande banalité. Il profite même avec un certain humour d'"excuser" les mœurs des habitants blancs, en soutenant que s'ils sont pauvres, c'est, d'une part, en raison de "la facilité de trouver des concubines parmi les Négrresses" et, d'autre part, parce qu'il est "rare de trouver une fille qui apporte deux mille francs comptant en mariage" (174). Cette vérité saintpierresque se dédouble et consolide l'image que les habitants projettent en indiquant que s'il existe autant de mépris des Blanches envers les Noires, c'est aussi parce que "les hommes . . . ne les négligent que trop souvent pour des esclaves Noires" (186).

"[L]a notion d'espaces géographiques . . . n'est pas essentielle; le voyage . . . est d'abord un voyage hors de soi-même, à la recherche de l'autre et, plus encore d'un autre rapport entre soi et l'Autre" disait Jean-Michel Belorgey (15). On pourrait qualifier de voyage d'initiatique celui qu'effectue Bernardin de Saint-Pierre car les événements de ce récit lui permettent de comprendre les autres, leur culture, leurs coutumes, leur

mentalité, leur mode de vie, leur accoutrement et leur nourriture mais aussi de porter un autre regard sur le monde. Il s'agirait d'une nouvelle approche de l'interprétation d'un monde qui, jusqu'à présent, lui était inconnue. Dans son article intitulé "À quoi reconnaît-on un récit initiatique?,"³⁹ Xavier Garnier précise:

Un personnage est le résultat d'un processus d'individuation, que le récit initiatique a précisément pour vocation de mettre en œuvre. Cette individuation est indissociable d'un processus de mise en forme du monde comme milieu. Le récit initiatique se situe donc en amont du face-à-face entre un personnage et un milieu, il en raconte précisément la genèse.

Pour vivre l'instant présent de cet environnement nouveau, il est nécessaire à l'homme de passer par le processus de "désindividuation."⁴⁰ Ce processus nécessite également une forme d'appropriation de l'espace-temps dans lequel il évolue. Il se met dans la peau de cet *en devenir* que l'on souhaite trouver. L'auteur est soit ami bienveillant du peuple nouveau qu'il côtoie soit rapporteur subjectif du roi pour qui il travaille. Il s'intègre dans le discours narratif en tant que celui qu'on lui demande d'incarner, sa vision du monde est alors pluridimensionnelle. Il s'adapte aux différentes circonstances au gré de son parcours. Cela lui est presque comme un rite de passage, un devoir initiatique de celui qu'il souhaiterait atteindre. Il est témoin du binôme "pouvoir/subalternité" et nous entraîne dans un tourbillon de sentiments atroces qui lui obscurcissent soudain l'esprit: "Ma plume se lasse d'écrire ces horreurs, mes yeux sont fatigués de les voir et mes oreilles de les entendre," dit l'auteur. Mais cela suffit-il pour amoindrir les actes barbares commis?

Une esclave presque blanche vint un jour, se jeter à mes pieds sa maîtresse la faisait lever de grand matin et veiller fort tard lorsqu'elle s'endormait, elle lui frottait les lèvres d'ordure si elle ne se léchait pas,

³⁹ Consulté à partir de: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-poetique-2004-4-page-443.htm>. Consulté le 11 novembre 2018.

⁴⁰ Pour reprendre le terme utilisé par Gilbert Simondon dans *L'Individuation psychique et collective*, Paris, Aubier, 1989, p. 18.

elle la faisait fouetter. Elle me priait de demander sa grâce que j'obtins. Souvent les maîtres l'accordent et deux jours après ils doublent la punition. C'est ce que j'ai vu chez un conseiller dont les Noirs s'étaient plaints au Gouverneur il m'assura qu'il les ferait écorcher le lendemain de la tête aux pieds. (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 198)

Le récit de voyage est, comme le précise Aline Gohard-Radekovic, un “lieu-miroir des représentations de soi et de l'autre [...] des matériaux fondamentaux pour la compréhension de l'évolution des conceptions de l'altérité, de sa construction et de son évolution, à travers l'histoire respective des pays, peuples, nations et communauté”⁴¹ (*L'homme et la société* 95). Ces “conceptions de l'altérité” seraient toutefois empreintes d'une grande forme de leurs représentations car l'altérité demeure un concept évolutif; plus on découvre l'autre et plus on se permet de s'y adapter, plus le fossé d'incompatibilité et d'incompréhension tend à diminuer. Plus Bernardin de Saint-Pierre comprend les us et coutumes des habitants de l'île, plus il arrive à mieux en jauger les contours et à s'y adapter. Il n'hésitera pas à préciser que “la plus grande insulte qu'on puisse faire à un Noir, est d'injurier sa famille” (190) mais il ne manque non plus de souligner comment la violence de l'esclavagisme passe systématiquement par l'oppression, l'atteinte à la dignité humaine, la torture ou encore la peur. Ainsi nous est-il décrit qu'un “commandeur, armé d'un fouet” peut donner “jusqu'à deux-cents coups” et que, par la suite, “on détache le misérable tout sanglant: on lui met un collier de fer à trois pointes, et on le ramène au travail . . . Les femmes sont punies de la même manière”.

Par ailleurs, l'auteur nous démontre les réalités sans fard de l'époque esclavagiste. La confrontation avec les êtres humains ou non humains dans un espace autre que celui où il a l'habitude d'évoluer éveille son imaginaire et tend à métamorphoser le voyageur qu'il est. Alors même qu'il nous démontre une véritable écriture ethnographique avec des descriptions mêlées à des faits, son récit de voyage s'avère un véritable lieu privilégié d'observations et de sérieuses remises en question. Cela pourrait

⁴¹ Gohard-Radekovic, Aline. ““L'altérité” dans les récits de voyage” in *L'homme et la société*. Paris, L'Harmattan, n°134, p. 95.

être la raison qui le poussera quelques années plus tard à rédiger ce qui deviendra un des plus beaux fleurons de la littérature française de l'époque, *Paul et Virginie*. En effet, dans *Paul et Virginie*, nous observons une succession de comparaisons ou de calques de ce que Bernardin de Saint-Pierre aurait vécu à l'Isle de France. La description du décor semble en adéquation avec la dureté des relations maîtres-esclaves. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre précise par ailleurs: "Si je m'enfoncé dans les solitudes, j'y trouve une terre raboteuse, toutes hérissée de roches, des montagnes portant au-dessus des nuages des sommets inaccessibles" (*Paul et Virginie* 199). Mais, il semble vouloir se reconforter et, surtout, reconforter le peuple français, en écrivant *Paul et Virginie* dans une toute autre manière. Pour que le roman incarne réellement le rêve français de l'époque (un rêve d'évasion ou encore de justice sociale à quelques temps de la Révolution française), il fallait imaginer un monde heureux quitte à ce qu'il soit éphémère. C'est ainsi que dans *Paul et Virginie*, il parle de symétrie, comme lorsque Paul "avait disposé [l]es végétaux de manière qu'on pouvait jouir de leur vue d'un seul coup d'œil . . . et d'autres arbrisseaux qui se plaisent dans les roches" (114-115). L'histoire de cette esclave qui vient se jeter à ses pieds sert quant à elle d'ossature pour l'histoire de la noire marronne, "décharnée comme un squelette, et n'avait pour vêtement qu'un lambeau de serpillière autour des reins" (*Paul et Virginie* 14) qui se jeta aux pieds de Virginie: "Je fuis mon maître, qui est un riche habitant de la Rivière-noire: il m'a traitée comme vous le voyez"; en même temps elle lui montra son corps sillonné de cicatrices profondes par les coups de fouet qu'elle avait reçus (*Paul et Virginie* 104-105). Quant à la tempête qui, dans *Voyage à l'Isle de France*, donne des sueurs froides aux voyageurs et qui est pressentie pour faire de sérieux dégâts, "Le 23, à minuit et demi, un coup de mer affreux enfonça quatre fenêtres des cinq de la grande chambre, quoique leurs volets fussent fermés par des croix de S.-André" (*Voyage à l'Isle de France* 74), elle opère de manière vraiment destructrice dans *Paul et Virginie* car c'est à cause d'elle que Virginie meurt, ce qui, dans le sillage de sa mort, entraînera celles de tous les autres personnages du roman.

Ce que nous pouvons déduire du récit de voyage à l'Isle de France de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, c'est qu'il laisse des impressions fortes aux lecteurs. Non seulement l'auteur chante-t-il les merveilles de la Nature, mais il revêt également un caractère particulier dans sa capacité à faire réfléchir et s'infléchir vers les

cultures autres que la sienne. C'est probablement cette caractéristique de plaire et d'être inspiré par un ailleurs exotique qui fait de ce récit de voyage un genre littéraire à part entière. La valorisation de la nature cadre avec le contexte de l'époque où la curiosité liée et les découvertes prenaient de l'ampleur dans la société. Cette découverte de l'île lui permet de situer l'homme à l'intérieur de son exploration. Cependant, l'image de la société où l'esclavage semble le maître-mot reste comme une marque indélébile de la représentation de la déshumanisation du monde. Ces différentes perspectives présentées dans une forme chronologique épousent bien les nuances associées au style épistolaire de son œuvre qui ressemble, au final, à un journal de voyage. Comme le précise Alain Guyot: "Tout est en place pour créer une impression référentielle par le recours à l'hypotypose, destinée à susciter chez le lecteur le sentiment que le spectacle se déroule sous ses yeux".

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The Island as a Space of Otherness: A Study of Non-Fictional Travel Writing on Mauritius (1830-1909) Under British Rule

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The first volume of *La géographie*, which appeared in 2008, refers to islands as strange objects of desire (Bernardie). James Hamilton-Paterson also posits that “this unit of land which fits within the retina of the approaching eye is a token of desire” (qtd. in Edmond and Smith). The island, as a remote space, seems to have always fascinated Western travellers, who during their voyages created new myths and even invented new islands and new stories about strange creatures living in these places. Writing with islands as the main setting abounds: Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (around 1610), Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travel* (1726), Lord Byron’s “The Island” (1823), William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954), and Dennis Lehane’s *Shutter Island* (2003) are just a few examples. In this study, we will analyse the representation of the island of Mauritius as a space of otherness in some Europeans’ non-fictional travel writing under British rule.

Brief Overview of Travel Writing on Mauritius and the Concept of Otherness

Percy G. Adams in *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* evokes the rise of travel writing through the centuries (38). Travel writing dates from the 2nd century AD onward, and includes works of many authors from different cultures. With scientific and technological advances, travelling became more comfortable, and the discovery of new lands and spaces also encouraged travel writing (Adams 41).

Situated in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius is “a small volcanic island of 1865 square kilometres” (Tang 1). Uninhabited during the Middle Ages, it was discovered by Arabs, who named the island Dina Arabi. In the 16th century, the Portuguese used the island as a stopover, but they had no intention of settling on the land. In 1598, the Dutch tried to settle on the island for many years, until they left definitely in 1710. The island was later colonised by the French from 1715 to 1810 and by the British from 1810 to 1968 (Moutou).

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, maritime traffic was reduced in the Indian Ocean, and Mauritius was no longer a stopover to India, the Middle East, or Asia (Moutou 259). But many travellers, in quest of adventure, sailed round the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa and ventured to the Mascarene Islands (Mauritius, Seychelles, and Rodrigues). Colonisation also meant lots of voyages and travellers from different socio-economic backgrounds—explorers, officers, migrants, slaves—crossing “personal and cultural boundaries” (Galani-Moutafi 203-224), thus generating different responses from the travellers and the “travellees”⁴² (qtd. in Fowler et al. 185). However, some of these voyages have stayed in oral form, or, even if written, have been forgotten. It can be noted that travel writing was not considered a genre until recently, and it was indeed regarded as “as a minor, somewhat middle-brow form” (Thompson 2). Interest in travel writing rose sharply in the latter part of the 20th century, as “scholars and students working in several different disciplines found the genre relevant to a broad range of cultural, political and historical debates” (Thompson 2).

Furthermore, the scope and definition of travel writing inherently leads us to the question of Otherness. Preconceived ideas that travellers had could have led to different interpersonal and intercultural reactions (Narain). Moreover, travel writing, according to Carl Thompson, is a particularly significant group of texts in which authors “encounter difference and Otherness” and are required “to negotiate a complex and sometimes unsettling interplay between alterity *and* identity, difference *and* similarity” (Thompson 9). This suggests and “relates to notions of boundary, inside and outside, distance and difference, all of which enter into

⁴² A term coined by Mary Louise Pratt, “travellee” refers to the inhabitants of the lands which are visited and described. Pratt associates this term with “addressee,” and intends it to mean the “receptors of travel.”

the construction and renegotiation of the Self” (Galani-Moutafi). Mary Louise Pratt, in her seminal book, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, develops the concept of “contact zones,” which refer to social spaces where “cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other”, often in contexts of conflicts and power relations such as colonialism and slavery (Pratt 4). In this context, a postcolonial study of travel writing helps to break away from cultural imperialism (Siga and Parekh 306), which consolidates an unfair relationship between nations; and this approach critiques those powerful civilisations that impose their culture on less powerful societies (Said).

Travel writing on Mauritius is available, but only a few travel texts by European or non-European travellers have been studied, and very little research on Mauritian travel writing from a postcolonial perspective has been undertaken. The most famous traveller cited is Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who travelled to Mauritius between 1768 and 1770. Structured as a series of letters, his *Journey to Mauritius* depicts colonial society and its daily life. This text has been violently criticised since the 18th century.⁴³

Travel writing consists of the impressions of one culture viewing another, and in this study archival research methods will be used to investigate the representation of the island as a space of Otherness by forgotten travel writers, such as Ida Pfeiffer, Nicolas Pike, Lady Bartram, Mark Twain, and Lady Broome.⁴⁴

⁴³ See, for instance, Pitot, Thomi, “Réfutation du *Voyage à l’île de France* de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre”, *Bulletin de la Société d’Émulation de l’île de France*, 1886. Edited again in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre/ Thomi Pitot/ L’abbé Ducrocq, *Île de France. Voyage et controverses*, Éditions Aïma, 1996, p. 137-178.

⁴⁴ Below is a brief biography of the authors whose work will be studied: Lady Bartram and Lady Broome were aristocrats who accompanied their husbands in their political missions. Lady Bartram published her *Recollections of Seven years of Residence at the Mauritius or Isle of France by a Lady* in 1830; and Lady Broome published *Colonial Memories* in 1904. Ida Pfeiffer was the daughter of a rich merchant, who, after having lost some advantages of a luxurious life after her marriage, decided to take to the sea and travelled the world alone. Her work, *The Last Travels of Ida Pfeiffer – inclusive of a visit to Madagascar*, was translated and published in 1861 after her death. Mark Twain, the pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, was a well-known American novelist of the 19th century who wrote, among other titles, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. It is in *Following the equator – a journey around the world* (1897) that he mentions stopping in Mauritius. Nicolas Pike, a US Consul diplomat, spent some years in Mauritius, from 1867 to 1874. He wrote detailed descriptions of the island in his travel narrative as he could not find

The Exotic Island Paradise

Islands give a sense of being elsewhere, of being an ‘Other.’ The pronunciation of island as “I land” can also make one interpret the personal pronoun “I” as being the most important subject, landing and conquering the space. Island is considered an “ailleurs”: new lands were being sought due to various upheavals in western society, and travellers aspired to unseen territories, or, to use the term of Alain Corbin, “le territoire du vide” (*the territory of emptiness*; cited in Bernardie).

This desire to discover another land is found in most travel writing. The ocean becomes a bridge to Otherness: the first time Ida Pfeiffer sees the sea, her main desire is to discover the untamed lands:

[T]he impression made upon her by the sea was overpowering. The dreams of her youth came back, with visions of distant unexplored climes, teeming with strange, luxuriant vegetation; an almost irresistible impulse for travel arose in her, and she would gladly have embarked in the first ship to sail away into the great, mysterious, boundless ocean. (Pfeiffer xxiii)

While defining the island, terms such as “boundaries” or “water” become recurrent and raise questions. How can the island as a space represent Otherness? Does the lack of a rigid boundary make the island in a limitless ocean a space of Otherness? Boundedness seems to make “islands graspable, able to be held in the mind’s eye and imaged as places of possibility and promise” (Edmond and Smith 2). The island’s “simultaneous boundedness and limitlessness” only adds to the paradox. In other terms, the island is a closed space where escape is difficult, as it is surrounded by the sea; but at the same time it is not fixed, and

any “information on the island.” His research took him to “Baron Grant’s work, written more than a hundred years ago, notes by an old French officer, quite as ancient,” whose name he did not mention, “and a few scattered magazine articles.” See Grant, Charles. *The History of Mauritius or the Isle de France and the neighbouring islands from their first discovery to the present time – composed principally from the papers and memoirs of Baron Grant, who resided twenty years on the island*. London: C. And W. Nicol, Booksellers to his Majesty, 1801. Online. Google Books. Accessed 10 November 2017.

with its “contiguity of island and sea, of blurred margins,” the island is far from being isolated (Edmond and Smith 5).

The study of islands as a space is indeed directly linked with postcolonial studies on Otherness. Jon Hegglund in “Hard Facts and Fluid Spaces” argues that “one of the recurring motifs in the study of European imperialism has been a concern with the interrelationships between geography, knowledge, and power” (Hegglund 60). In other words, as Hegglund discusses, the island “bordered by the sea” must be controlled, because “it becomes not only desirable, but vitally necessary” for the colonial powers (Hegglund 68). This desire to conquer its otherness is further depicted when the island’s species are collected or dissected. Nicolas Pike, for instance, does not hesitate to kill one bat to be used as “a specimen,” and throughout his narration he collects most of the insects and plants that do not exist in his country (38).

Furthermore, imperial competition incited the Empire to conquer not only the island but also the waters or seas that surrounded it, since the domination of the sea had been recognised as an important component of national strength (Hegglund 69). The sea, “conceptually and metaphorically an *extension* of land,” is not seen as “blank space” (Hegglund). Looking to the past, we see that the island of Mauritius was a strategic space for the British Empire, for it was on the sea route from England to British India. According to the *Encyclopaedia-Mauritania*, the presence of the French, especially the corsairs, was a threat to British vessels, and the island was viewed as a “military imperative” and “the key to the control of the Indian Ocean.”

Moreover, these quests for new lands and seas also produced new images to the Empire—a primitive, exotic world that had to be civilised:

Parallèlement, l’imaginaire géographique secrété par les îles se déploie dans une Europe coloniale où les explorateurs, après avoir écumé et traversé mers et océans, reviennent parfois en évoquant l’image de mondes originels, à la nature généreuse et aux peuples heureux. L’île, comme territoire de l’autre, du primitif (Staszak, 2004) ou du “bon sauvage” certes touchant, mais qu’il convient néanmoins de civiliser, s’est donc exotisée à mesure que la colonisation en faisait un lieu définitivement

différent, lointain et implicitement tropical (Staszak, 2003). On le voit, l'imaginaire insulaire ne ressortit pas à un sentiment universel, mais correspond plutôt, à l'instar de l'Orient et de l'orientalisme (Saïd, 2005), à une construction mentale profondément ancrée dans l'histoire et la culture occidentales, voire plus spécifiquement européennes et continentales. (Bernardie)⁴⁵

This is further discussed by the Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. According to Tuan, “the island seems to have a tenacious hold on the human imagination . . . But it is in the imagination of the Western world that the island has taken the strongest hold” (Luo and Grydehøj). John Gillis also notes the Western fascination with islands:

The chimerical character of islands is not just a product of physical conditions. It is equally a result of culture—Western mainland culture, to be specific—which has attributed to islands certain wondrous features that it rarely bestows on other landforms. (Luo and Grydehøj)

The detailed descriptions of Mauritius with emphasis on the flora and fauna tend to suggest a quest of the unknown, a desire to possess this perfection, or this space of utopia. In his “Preface,” Nicolas Pike refers to Mauritius as a fertile and productive land, and gives it more value by characterising it as “the Gem of the Ocean.” He describes the island as a land which “is, in reality, but little known to the world at large. Small as it is, only a dot in a vast ocean” (Pike v). While describing the sky on leaving the Cape towards Mauritius, Lady Bartram insists that the sky “cannot be

⁴⁵ Translation: “At the same time, the geographical imagery secreted by the islands unfolds in a colonial Europe where explorers, having scoured and crossed seas and oceans, sometimes return by evoking the image of original worlds, generous nature and happy peoples. The island, as a territory of the Other, the primitive (Staszak, 2004) or the “good savage,” certainly touching but nevertheless necessary to civilise, was exoticized as colonisation made it a place definitely different, distant and implicitly tropical (Staszak, 2003). As we can see, the insular imagery does not emerge from a universal feeling, but rather corresponds, like the Orient and Orientalism (Saïd, 2005), to a mental construct deeply rooted in history and Western culture, even more specifically European and continental.”

adequately imagined by those who have never seen any but an English sky” (31). Ida Pfeiffer mentions that the island, when “seen from the sea, presents a similar aspect to Bourbon, only that the mountains are higher and are piled up in successive chains” (105). While describing the island, Mark Twain exclaims the desire to spend one’s life in such a tranquil and idyllic place:

May 5th – Captain Lloyd took us to the Riviere Noire, which is several miles to the southward, that I might examine some rocks of elevated coral. We passed through pleasant gardens, and fine fields of sugar-cane growing amidst huge blocks of lava. The roads were bordered by hedges of Mimosa, and near many of the houses there were avenues of the mango. Some of the views, where the peaked hills and the cultivated farms were seen together, were exceedingly picturesque; and we were constantly tempted to exclaim, How pleasant it would be to pass one’s life in such quiet abodes! (Twain, Chapter XXI)

The first impression of the island not only sets the mood but also shows the island as a space of desire. The first time Twain saw the island, he remembered “the well-known descriptions” he had read before. The warm colours in the descriptions add to this harmonious feeling:

April 29th – In the morning we passed round the northern end of Mauritius, or the Isle of France. From this point of view the aspect of the island equalled the expectations raised by the many well-known descriptions of its beautiful scenery. The sloping plain of the Pamplemousses, interspersed with houses, and coloured by the large fields of sugar-cane of a bright green, composed the foreground. The brilliancy of the green was the more remarkable because it is a colour which generally is conspicuous only from a very short distance. Towards the centre of the island groups of wooded mountains rose out of this highly cultivated plain; their summits, as so commonly happens with ancient volcanic rocks, being jagged into the

sharpest points. Masses of white clouds were collected around these pinnacles, as if for the sake of pleasing the stranger's eye. The whole island, with its sloping border and central mountains, was adorned with an air of perfect elegance: the scenery, if I may use such an expression, appeared to the sight harmonious. (Twain)

As for Nicolas Pike, he admits that he can't find words to describe the island. Indeed, the personification of the canes, which seem to be "waving" to the travellers, tends to show that the island is welcoming them. The island, which could only be attained by navigation, seems to become a refuge:

Day dawned on January 12, 1867, bright and clear, and the sun rose brilliantly in a cloudless sky, as we move in sight of Mauritius. On nearing the land, the fields of waving canes, topes of cocoas, and groves of Casuarinas, gave a pleasing impression of the place; but when approaching Port Louis harbour the beauty of the view is unsurpassed, and no easy task to describe. (Pike 55)

Moreover, Lady Broome characterises the island as a "fairy island", bringing to mind a land of magic (95). Travelling throughout the island, whether on foot or by any other mode of transport, Broome describes small details, especially the fertile land, the sugarcane plantations, the "glorious scenes," and the tropical fruits, such as breadfruit trees, and this further reinforces the idea of exoticism and Otherness (Pike 78). Lady Bartram refers to a place on the island as "bold, wild and romantic":

Reduit is situated in that district of the Island which is called Meka; the features of the country there are bold, wild, and romantic, and the temperature is considerably cooler in the neighbourhood of the town; amidst these mountains, the sun seemed to have lost a great part of his scorching power, and to shine with milder, paler beams. (Lady Bartram 39-40)

The natural romantic setting of the island also captivates Nicolas Pike:

Then what a view opened out to us! The Dya-Mamou Falls, in all their magnificence, were before us. What a lovely romantic spot! I was fascinated, spell-bound! We crossed the river by jumping from rock to rock, till we reached an elevated position among huge boulders and rocks that lay in the wildest confusion, some in heaps just as they were tumbled headlong from the heights above. (Pike 240)

Lots of drawings are found in the travel writing of Nicolas Pike. Further research can be done on the question of iconography, “the study of themes, objects and subjects in the visual arts,” and the concept of otherness (Straten 1). Drawings as research data can seem simple, especially within a collection, but “there is complexity in the interpretive process” (Mitchell, Theron and Smith 2).

The old saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words,” or that “a picture tells a story,” gives power to drawings (Mitchell, Theron and Stuart 26). Sketches⁴⁶ from Pike’s *Sub-tropical rambles* graphically identify the territory while adding to the effect of exoticism.

Upon conquest of Mauritius, the small islands surrounding the mainland also became territories of the colonial powers. While the mainland was being remodelled, the smaller islands remained untouched. Nicolas Pike not only gives a detailed analysis of each area he visited, but he also produces some sketches of these islands surrounded by the “brilliant blue ocean”:

Westward lay Serpent's Island with its wintry appearance, white over with guano as with snow, which, though half a mile or more distant, seemed but a step from this elevated position. Flat Island and the Quoin appeared close by. The atmosphere was so clear that the coast-line of Mauritius, as far as Grand River, SE., was mapped out distinctly, and

⁴⁶ See Pike: “Tropical Lake scene” (76), “Tropical scene” (192), “Deer in the Jungle” (215), “The Ocean” (280), “The Chamarel Falls” (308), “Baie du Cap” (310)

everywhere glistened the heavy billows of the brilliant blue ocean, and the white spray tossed up from every reef added beauty to the scene. (Pike 147)

Some of these islands are hard to reach, and staying on the island resembles the difficulties of an initiation ritual. Apart from the awkward places to sleep, one wrong movement can lead the traveller into the sea of “monsters.” Even if Pike uses the term in a figurative sense, the imagery behind the term reminds us of sailors’ tales of faraway lands and adds to the myth of their strangeness and otherness:

[Round Island] is a very ticklish place for a somnambulist or a nervous person to sleep in. A roll—a turn over—and down you must go into the surging billows at the foot of the rock, with the pleasant anticipation of the immense sharks, and other monsters of the deep that swarm round the place, ready to take you in at a mouthful or two the moment you touch the water. (Pike 148)

Owing to their isolation and the fact they are uninhabited, the islands surrounding Mauritius thus become a space of retreat from the mainland for Nicolas Pike on 6th December, 1868:

From the many accounts that had been given me of the remarkable geological formation of Round Island (which lies about twenty-five miles from Port Louis), and its peculiar Flora, differing in so many particulars from that of Mauritius and the neighbouring islands, I determined to avail myself of the first opportunity that offered and visit it. (Pike 142)

Interest in these small islands also seems to rise due to their ephemeral nature, since they are said to disappear quickly:

Islands thus formed by upheaval are likely to disappear as suddenly. Most of them do so after a longer or shorter period, either by being abraded by the constant wash of the waves, or disintegrated by the elements, especially by the chemical action of

light, or by their mass sinking into an abyss formed beneath them. (Pike 150)

Sketches⁴⁷ by Nicolas Pike show small stretches of land, resembling mostly a mountain or a rock, surrounded by the sea, with no habitation. Seeing them from the shore further adds to its otherness. As stated in the Editor's Introduction to *Islands in History and Representation*, the island, at first sight, seems "to promise something greater . . . which has been often talked of, but never before seen by any Europeans" (Edmond and Smith 1). The notion of otherness is further developed, as there is "the desire to possess" the island not only because it looks "paradisaical or utopian," but mostly because, unlike continents, islands "look like property" (Edmond and Smith 1).

Apart from pictures, detailed descriptions of these islands and seas are given. Pike uses a poetic style in the personification of the "bold" cliffs. Despite words such as "thunder," "threatening violence," or "booming roar," which portray the ruthlessness and otherness of the sea and the difficulty in approaching the land, the sight is "glorious":

Though tolerably calm with us, we could see the white foam breaking over the Quoin as the waves beat against its bold cliffs. The gentleness of heaven is on the sea. Listen! The mighty being is awake, and doth with his eternal motion make a sound like thunder—everlastingly. But the sunrise! Those who have never seen a sunrise at sea have reserved for them a glorious sight. This morning the orb of day rose in all his grandeur: from out the wilderness of waters; so placid and tranquil was the scene that I was involuntarily struck by its contrast with the fearful heavy swell rolling in over the shoal water between the Quoin and Cannonier's Point, breaking on the rocks with a booming roar, threatening destruction to any craft that ventured near them, and warning us to bear away and keep a good distance from the land. For the first time on this coast I saw a little stormy petrel, *Thalassidroma*

⁴⁷ See Pike: "Lighthouse Rock, Flat Island" (206), "The Gunner's Quoin" (207), "The Morne" (304), "Sketch of island" (350).

milanogaster. One solitary bird was following in our wake, swiftly and gracefully sweeping over the waves. This interesting creature is aptly revered by seamen; for, diminutive as it is, it braves the fiercest storms, and 'skims o'er ocean's angriest flood.' (Pike 142-143)

Though Pike describes the island as “glorious,” the word “small,” often mentioned by the travellers, seems to be linked to the feeling of otherness:

[N]o other type of territory has been so affected by the colonial endeavour as islands. Islands, especially the smaller entities, were the first territories to be colonized in the European Age of Discovery, suffered the colonial burden most intimately and thoroughly, and have been the last to seek and obtain independence. (Baldacchino and Royle)

Mauritius had to wait until 1968 to obtain its independence. This seems due to the fact that islands tend to hold to a colonial relationship for a longer period of time, and therefore “become more thoroughly Westernized than other places” (Baldacchino and Royle). The reason seems to be “partly because the bounded nature of the island negates the possibility of escape to an area—a cultural and psychological hinterland, as much as an economic one—free from the colonizer’s ubiquitous influence” (Baldacchino and Royle):

The country on this side appears pretty well cultivated, being divided into fields and studded with farm-houses. I was, however, assured that of the whole land, not more than half is yet in a productive state; if such be the case, considering the present large export of sugar, this island, at some future period when thickly peopled, will be of great value. (Twain)

In the travel writing in this study, we can note the mention of the island’s lack of autonomy and the notion that only the Empire can protect the island from total loss. Mark Twain, for instance, puts emphasis on the geographical situation of Mauritius, insisting

that it has nothing to offer, indirectly insinuating that the colonial power is the saviour:

[W]here do they get matter to fill up a page [of the daily newspaper] in this little island lost in the wastes of the Indian Ocean? [...] This is the only place in the world where no breed of matches can stand the damp. Only one match in 16 will light. (Twain)

In addition to this, the island is often compared to other places visited, and the danger is that the island remains the Other and loses its own distinct characteristics. Nicolas Pike compares the “varied character of the ranges of basaltic hills [to] the far-famed Organ Mountains in South America” (55). Twain, for instance, asserts that Mauritius is a “pleasant country”; however, he immediately compares the island to Tahiti and Brazil, making it lose its own singularity:

May 1st—Sunday. I took a quiet walk along the sea-coast to the north of the town. The plain in this part is quite uncultivated; it consists of a field of black lava, smoothed over with coarse grass and bushes, the latter being chiefly Mimosas. The scenery may be described as intermediate in character between that of the Galapagos and of Tahiti; but this will convey a definite idea to very few persons. It is a very pleasant country, but it has not the charms of Tahiti, or the grandeur of Brazil. (Twain)

Mauritius: The Prison Island

The introduction of an elephant by Captain Lloyd, “the only one at present on the island,” so that one “might enjoy a ride in true Indian fashion,” speaks to the desire to be elsewhere even when we are in a specific space. There seems to be a need to escape the island. Islands seem to be paradoxical places, both safe havens as well as sites of great upheaval. Lady Bartram narrates how “the sea breeze is considered highly injurious by the inhabitants of Port-Louis,” and she insists that “this is a fanciful notion.” However, she suddenly contradicts her words by saying that “she had head ache” (40-41). Negativity toward the island is further felt

in the harsh consonant sounds evoked by words like “craggy” and “broken,” among others:

The island presents to the eyes of a spectator from a ship, a bold and imposing view of lofty mountains of every possible variety of form and outline; some craggy, and broken into wild irregular shapes, as if by some violent elemental commotion they have been split asunder; some bare, brown, and rugged; others clothed with wood to the summit. (Lady Bartram 35)

She focuses mainly on the weather, considered “oppressively warm,” and the diseases, such as cholera, which was prevalent on the island (36). The repetition of “oppressive” a few pages before, when she referred to the “oppressive atmosphere,” adds to the claustrophobic attitude of being on a small island (17). “Ennui” seems to settle in the “dull, dead calm” environment, the “same spell-bound ocean,” the “same cloudless heavens,” “the dreary expanse of water,” and “the intolerable heat” (15, 17). The island remains the other, since the “English summer morning” is longed for:

[H]ow vainly, yet how ardently, did we sigh for the luxury of the green shade; the soft balmy airs of an English summer morning”. (Lady Bartram 15-16)

The stuffy atmosphere described in Lady Bartram’s travel writing is, however, not corroborated in Ida Pfeiffer’s work, where the weather of Mauritius is said to be pleasant as compared to India:

The government officials are exceedingly well paid, but not nearly so well as in British India, though the expenses of living are much greater here. The reason is, that the climate of India is considered very unhealthy for Europeans, while that of the Mauritius is salubrious enough. The governor has a house, and £6000 a year salary. (107)

Despite her “pleasant experiences,” Ida Pfeiffer “looked forward with longing expectation to the moment when [she] might leave

this little island, with its still more little-minded inhabitants” (127).

The island is not only a personal prison; it is also a convict island. The colonial powers used to send their prisoners to different islands. For most travellers, the non-European other is ugly, even dangerous. At no time did Lady Bartram ever wonder about the crimes of the Indians, prisoners of British India, who were sent to Mauritius, an island which seems to have become a penal colony. The verb “struck” unveils that she has noticed their appearance first. Indeed, their fierce faces and their “wild picturesque appearance,” which remind her of a Baroque painter’s work, were the first elements of difference she encountered:

I remember being struck with the appearance of the Hindoo convicts, at work on the roads; these are men who have committed various offences in India, and have been sent to the Mauritius (at the request, I believe, of Governor Farquhar) to be employed in this way; they were dispersed about the country in parties, under the command of an English serjeant, and had each a small ring round an ankle, merely as a mark, for it is too slight to be a punishment; they had mostly a ferocious scowling aspect, and some particularly seemed to me suited to be the study of a painter in Salvator Rosa's style: the dark malignant glance, the bent brow, the turban of dirty white, or dusty red; the loose drapery, only half clothing the body, gave them a wild, picturesque appearance, to which mountain scenery added still greater effect. (Lady Bartram 123)

Yet, this frightening image is not seen in Charles Darwin, who visited Mauritius in 1836. Despite the fact that many of the Indians were said to be murderers and had committed the “worst crimes,” Darwin was impressed by the cleanliness, the rigour, and the “imposing” and “noble-looking figures” of the exiled Indian prisoners working there. The “fire of their expression,” however, seems to add an element of mystery to them and adds to their strangeness. Comparing them to the criminals of New South Wales seems flattering, but at the same time adds to their otherness:

Convicts from India are banished here for life; at present there are about 800, and they are employed in various public works. Before seeing these people, I had no idea that the inhabitants of India were such noble-looking figures. Their skin is extremely dark, and many of the older men had large mustaches and beards of a snow-white colour; this, together with the fire of their expression, gave them quite an imposing aspect. The greater number had been banished for murder and the worst crimes; others for causes which can scarcely be considered as moral faults, such as for not obeying, from superstitious motives, the English laws. These men are generally quiet and well-conducted; from their outward conduct, their cleanliness, and faithful observance of their strange religious rites, it was impossible to look at them with the same eyes as on our wretched convicts in New South Wales. (Darwin, Chapter XXI)

Darwin's narration also contradicts James Holman⁴⁸, who was told they were lazy (Stephen 32). James Holman was a traveller, and even if his work is not analysed in this study, he stopped in Mauritius from October 1829 to 19 January 1830, and saw the Indian convicts. The extract below reveals that he was told they were thieves, "idle" and "industrious for their own advantage" only:

Tuesday, 24 [October]. – I took leave of Captain and Mrs Southam to visit Mr Madge, at Long Field, three miles nearer to Port Louis. On my way thither, I passed a party of Indian convicts, employed in repairing the roads, having their temporary huts near the locality of their work. They were under the charge of a private belonging to the Staff Corps. These people are brought from Bombay, and are rendered very useful in this Colony; but they are

⁴⁸ James Holman is known as the blind traveller, and was an inspiration to Charles Darwin. See: *The Guardian*, "A sense of the world by Jason Roberts," 23 August 2006. Online. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/aug/23/guardianfirstbookaward2006.gurardianfirstbookaward1>. Accessed 10 November 2017.

most determined thieves, and may be considered to have a fish-hook attached to the end of every finger, stealing anything that can either be converted into money, or turned to any use. They breed poultry about their huts, and trade, or work for themselves in various ways; and, I understand, that some of them are not long in the Colony before they contrive to gain a little fortune; but, although thus industrious for their own advantage, they are very idle when employed upon the public works; and the soldier in charge told me, that the only way to manage them was to give them task-work, and when that was finished, to allow them to work for themselves; however, this is common to human nature, and does not require further observation. (Holman 129-130)

However, Holman immediately asserts that this attitude of wishing a little personal profit is common “human nature.” And he suddenly decides that these people do not deserve “any other observation.”

Thus, from a postcolonial point of view, the island is a space of alterity or otherness due to its physical location. Lost in the middle of the ocean, it is an object of desire and is conceptualised as a space of utopian longing, exploited by the colonial powers as a place that had to be conquered. Clichés of European representations of the island have circulated through space and time with the praises of the flora and fauna. Nevertheless, the smallness of the island makes it claustrophobic and isolated, and the only desire for some was to leave the island. What also seems to make the island a space of otherness is the presence of the inhabitants, who were not indigenous to the land, but came from all over the world. Among them were also prisoners, thus making Mauritius a convict island under British rule.

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**Réalité coloniale et stratégies intellectuelles
dans *Voyage au Maroc* de l'Américaine
Édith Wharton**

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Pendant l'hiver de 1918, Édith Wharton voyage au Maroc sur invitation du général Lyautey, résident général et administrateur de l'autorité française au pays. Elle écrit *In Morocco*, version américaine et originale du *Voyage au Maroc* (Wharton). Loin de composer une activité de loisir, ce voyage marque un moment d'arrêt à l'intérieur d'une continuité historique, celle du Maroc séculaire et du Maroc colonisé. Le projet est une contribution dans la gestion d'un ensemble de conflits inhérents à la conjoncture coloniale.⁴⁹ Le premier conflit est relatif à la présence de la nouvelle autorité, à peine installée dans le pays, et qui s'arrange tant bien que mal à justifier son intervention. L'autre conflit, qui nous paraît aussi important que le précédent, est celui de convertir la différence en facteur d'altériorité. Notons au passage que cette différence est jugée plutôt comme un héritage de l'atavisme barbaresque d'un pays qui s'accroche à son authenticité millénaire.

De manière probable, Wharton envisage ces positions contradictoires pour répondre à la vision stratégique qui fait le bonheur de ses hôtes, sans entamer la facture de l'intellectuelle qu'elle est. Son travail consiste à formuler un témoignage vivant, sans ornements pittoresques, tout en embellissant l'image de l'intervention coloniale, désignée par l'euphémisme "protectorat."

⁴⁹ Faudra-t-il rappeler que Wharton reçut la Légion d'honneur en 1916, deux années avant son voyage au Maroc?

La tâche s'avère difficile pour une dame, romancière de surcroît, qui tente tant bien que mal à démêler l'écheveau d'un composé de sensations immédiates, prises sur des moments furtifs, sans consistance historique, pour en faire le produit d'une vision aux allures objectives. En se produisant dans de tels enjeux, la mission se prête plus à une manœuvre épistémique où la vision personnelle reproduit des modèles de représentation communs. Pour répondre à ce programme complexe, la réalité est magnifiée, voire manipulée, suivant les situations et les objectifs instantanés du voyage. Expliquer les écarts entre la réalité désintéressée, formée autour des représentations immédiates et directes, et la réalité retravaillée revient à décortiquer la complexité du regard qui cherche à renforcer les liens de crédibilité. Ayant cet objectif en priorité, le savoir à propos du Maroc de Wharton est formulé pour correspondre à une réalité qui préexiste à son objet. Cela consiste à soumettre un ensemble d'idées reçues à l'exercice de l'observable et du mesurable, pour en faire des données de vérité absolue. Qualifiée ainsi, la vérité est une construction d'ordre cognitif.

La vérité cognitive est à opposer à la vérité morale qui ne peut composer un cas de discussion ici, du moment que l'intention de mentir est écartée. La vérité cognitive est interprétative. Elle marque la distance entre les faits dans leur état brut et le travail d'élaboration intellectuelle qui les modifie. Notre objectif ici est d'exposer le récit de voyage de Wharton à ses cadrages réalistes pour les qualifier, puis pour en déterminer la part de l'inventif et du subjectif. Il s'agit d'étudier les écarts entre le récit des faits et les altérations qu'il subit du fait de l'interprétation personnalisée d'une pensée qui invente son objet. Pour ce faire, il faudra considérer les opérations intellectuelles qui sont à la source de ces modifications.

Film factuel et donnée coloniale

Dans *Voyage au Maroc*, Wharton exprime sa propre conception des habitudes, des paysages, de l'histoire et des systèmes de gouvernement, entre autres. Les faits sont rapportés de manière à ne laisser transparaître qu'un pan de vérité à propos de ces entrées en matière. Une sorte de vérité légère (the "soft truth," Arac 1085),⁵⁰ malléable à volonté, est composée pour

⁵⁰ "We recognize 'hard' truth in logic and a softer truth in life" (Arac 1085).

répondre aux objectifs institutionnels de l'administration coloniale. Les faits et les événements sont peints selon un discours qui convient aux stratégies d'implantation et de réorganisation qui accompagnent d'habitude les conquêtes impérialistes. La prise de partie idéologique fait en sorte que le propos dissimule plus qu'il révèle. Ce qui est caché, mis à distance, c'est l'authenticité de ce coin du monde qui se découvre dans une visite de caractère conventionnel. Le regard résiste à la particularité du représenté, parce que ce qui compte, c'est la vérité circonstancielle du projet du colonisateur, celui auquel la romancière s'identifie en lui prêtant l'importance d'acte de civilisation.

De nombreuses stratégies intellectuelles sont adoptées pour venir à bout des résistances naturelles à la pénétration. Elles participent de ce que nous appelons le film factuel, cette vérité de seconde main, composée de faits illusoires, qui vient envelopper la vérité première. Le film factuel est trompeur. Il modifie l'apparence des contenus de l'observation directe et immédiate, prend en otage la réalité expérimentale, subvertit la raison de l'originalité dans le but de servir l'ensemble des programmes précités. Lorsque Wharton se comporte en photographe, elle se sert de cette enveloppe fallacieuse. La sensibilité photographique dont elle fait preuve engage les descriptions du paysage marocain dans le faux détail. Les abords de Tanger, première ville rencontrée sur son parcours, sont représentés dans cet esprit. La "ville bleu pâle," dit-elle, "[est] adossée à l'intérieur de remparts ocre contre les jardins touffus de la 'Montagne'" (Wharton 22). Dans un autre passage, la ville d'El-Ksar s'annonce par "des ornières de la piste," puis des "haies de cactus" et des "figuiers croulant sous le poids de la poussière au-dessus de murs de terre en ruine" (25).

Les extraits reproduits ici mettent en évidence l'importance des paliers visuels. Le paysage est hiérarchisé grâce au regard qui avance par degrés. Les éléments du zoom sont soumis à des ensembles qui se succèdent, allant du premier plan au suivant, jusqu'à l'épuisement de l'image. Le décor ne se donne jamais d'une seule traite. Il se reproduit dans la succession, selon la technique du photogramme. Progressif et successif, le contenu "obturé" (Barthes 58) est capturé dans une réalité parcellisée. Grâce à sa technicité, qui rappelle la mosaïque, l'observation photographique morcelle les tableaux de manière à ce que leur continuité intégrale soit rompue. Dans une prise de vue qui manque d'exhaustivité, la vérité biaisée, composée par des

commandes visuelles, celles-là mêmes qui composent un “troisième sens” (Barthe) est introduite dans le paysage. L’observation photographique entraîne dans l’inventif. Elle invente ses propres arguments pour faire accepter la création comme un résultat naturel de l’observation. La fausse fidélité à la réalité induit en erreur sans que le récepteur s’en aperçoive. Celui-ci est manipulé par cette authenticité simulée. Le sens truffé d’illusions est accepté d’un commun accord et ne peut faire objet de doute ni de suspicion. La gageure de véracité est là. Le récit gagne en crédibilité.

Le film factuel s’inspire également d’une certaine vision artistique qui mime la réalité au plus haut degré, sans que son objet soit vraiment réel. En cause, cet écart qui s’introduit entre le moment de constatation, propre à Wharton et peut-être aussi à ses compagnons de voyage, et le produit de la représentation, comme c’est le cas à la suite de cette contemplation:

Si l’on veut comprendre Marrakech, il faut commencer par monter au soleil couchant sur le toit de la Bahia. En contrebas s’étale la ville-oasis du Sud, plate et vaste comme un grand camp de nomades qu’elle est en réalité, avec ses toits bas qui s’étendent de tous côtés jusqu’à une ceinture de palmiers bleus, elle-même encerclée par le désert. . . (Wharton 112)

L’illusion visuelle est une illusion de réel. Le “soleil couchant,” la “ville-oasis,” le paysage vaste et plat, les “toits bas” et les “palmiers” composent un tableau aux couleurs romantiques. Cette composition, où la perspective est plongée dans un paysage conventionnel,⁵¹ insiste sur le contexte. L’organisation du paysage aussi bien que le ton pictural qui lui est prêté, transforment la réalité observable en quelque chose d’autre, qui n’est tout autre que les circonstances qui entourent sa perception et son cadrage. Des études ont montré l’importance des schémas de contextualisation dans l’émergence et la consolidation de nouvelles réalités (Tylka & Calogero 462). Dans le récit de Wharton, la réalité n’est pas seulement contextualisée. Elle est transfigurée en contexte. Son contenu est calqué sur les

⁵¹ Martinet parle de “conventions picturales” à propos des représentations de la montagne dans l’expérience des voyageurs (Martinet).

conditions de sa production (Chabrolle-Cerretini 90), à savoir le présupposé idéologique et la finalité du projet. Pour le dire autrement, la réalité sert de contexte à la donnée coloniale qui est au centre de cet avant et de cet après supposés au voyage. L'intérêt stratégique qui entoure le voyage de Wharton nous autorise à penser la véracité en termes nuancés. Les transmetteurs de l'information révèlent que le contenu apparent, celui qui correspond à la réalité expérimentale, compterait peu au sujet des stratégies de narration lorsque ces dernières sont intellectualisées en faveur d'une idée plus large, transcendant l'événementiel. La connaissance véridique dépend dans ce cas des modèles normatifs de la pensée. La circonstance coloniale compose un noyau normatif autour de la domination. En posant ce postulat, le rapport au réel est à déterminer par l'acceptation de l'autorité en présence. La domination présente dès lors des justifications auxquelles il faudra adhérer pour un univers de valeurs cohérent et acceptable. Pour ce faire, deux réactions marquent le passage de l'anarchie vers un état de modernité.

La première est la conviction selon laquelle la stabilité économique et militaire dépend de l'habileté de l'administration coloniale et des vœux de pacification qu'elle formule pour le bien de tous. Wharton affirme que "Sous le général Lyautey, de telles attitudes ne sont plus admises," en désignant de manière générale le "colon européen moderne [qui] a sans doute pensé qu'établir ses commerces, ses cafés et ses salles de cinéma à l'intérieur de murs dont, pendant si longtemps, on lui avait résolument refusé l'accès était la manière la plus spectaculaire d'assurer sa domination" (34).⁵² Cet aveu peut être mis sur le compte d'une reconnaissance réactive. Mais ce qui est évident, c'est que la mise en avant de l'œuvre coloniale passe à travers la personne-symbole du résident général de l'autorité coloniale au Maroc. Dans d'autres extraits, l'éloge prend une identité non pas nominative, mais plutôt institutionnelle comme dans ce qui suit: "Cette charmante ruine [en désignant une médersa de la ville de Salé]⁵³ se trouve désormais en sûreté dans les mains de l'administration française des Beaux-Arts" (36). Ces positions fonctionnent dans la permutation des symboles du dominé opprimé et du dominant

⁵² Voir à ce propos la partie intitulée "L'œuvre du général Lyautey au Maroc," avec un chapitre de recensement "L'œuvre du protectorat français, 1912-1918" (Wharton 169-85).

⁵³ La médersa est un établissement d'enseignement d'essence traditionnelle, qui dépend de l'autorité religieuse du pays.

pacificateur. Ce qui présente une certaine homogénéité avec l'esprit de l'impérialisme défini comme une "politique [qui] a besoin de justifications idéologiques." Ces justifications "peuvent être particularistes (ethniques, nationalitaires, nationales, ou religieuses au sens de la religion ethnique) ou universalistes (expansion de la vraie religion, mission civilisatrice, unification du monde), ou les deux à la fois" (Pervillé 326).

Qu'elles soient particularistes, puristes-idéalistes, universalistes ou autres, les explications remettent l'institution impérialiste au centre des projets de conservation du patrimoine et des systèmes de réforme. Toute idée de pérennité est désormais dépendante d'une réalité stratégique et opérationnelle. Cette attitude, avons-nous dit, accompagne une autre pour légitimer l'autorité du colonisateur. La visibilité des gouvernements et des empires qui se sont succédés au Maroc est une affaire d'échec continu. À l'intérieur d'un état où les désintégrations sont monnaie courante, la découverte directe des phénomènes est un moment de mise en scène de défaites. Pour tirer un exemple de ces développements, les Saadiens, dynastie qui a gouverné au début du XVe siècle, sont un exemple à retenir. Deux pages et plusieurs paragraphes sont conçus pour reproduire une histoire d'invasisseurs apportant une religion islamique puriste "aux populations berbères polythéistes et indifférentes" (Wharton 129). D'autres récits sont les résumés purs et simples de l'histoire des dynasties; des versions simplistes des origines du règne au Maroc contemporain.⁵⁴

Le récit de Wharton cible les phases de passages d'un royaume à l'autre et d'un gouvernement à l'autre pour en extraire une vérité phénoménale. Cette stratégie reproduit les faits de gouvernance dans une essence coloniale, dans l'insistance d'un phénomène continu et incontournable. La vérité partielle prête la qualité de fait avéré à une intervention que les Marocains n'ont pas choisie. De même, la succession dynastique, peinte comme incontournable et cyclique, propulse dans une condition de nécessité qui justifie le concept politique et géostratégique de "protectorat." Le protectionnisme est normalisé à son tour pour impliquer dans le fait inexorable. Sachant également que dans ces segments narratifs, la connaissance immédiate est différée et la distance entre le fait et sa mémoire est abolie pour une

⁵⁴ Les Mérinides de Rabat (Wharton 37), les Almohades et Almoravides (39, 120).

concentration autour du référent historique. La réalité prend alors ouvertement les allures du mythe du grand sauveur.

Récit de voyage, récit d'histoire(s)

Le récit de voyage de Wharton au Maroc pose le problème de l'interférence avec le récit historique. En effet, l'expérience marocaine est ponctuée de digressions où l'anecdotique côtoie l'historique. Récit de voyage ou récit d'histoire(s), la confrontation semble inévitable pour cerner le réel. Des chroniques plus ou moins récentes accompagnent les panoramas descriptifs. Nous rendons ici un répertoire de ces stations pour qui l'impression instantanée est indépendante d'une histoire racontée à coup de discours rapportés. Retenons pour le cas le propos développé autour des Oudayas, "une tribu gênante" de Rabat (Wharton 29 & infra).⁵⁵ Le passage par la médersa est l'occasion de répertorier les institutions du même genre à travers le Maroc d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, centrant le récit autour de la présence des Mérinides, une dynastie qui s'est vouée à l'inauguration d'un nombre considérable de ces institutions (31). De même, un mot autour des Phéniciens et Portugais rappelle à la mémoire les préjugés accomplis contre les villes méditerranéennes (34). Prisonniers chrétiens, Robinson Crusoé (34)⁵⁶ et sultans almohades (39 & infra) sont des profils autour desquels des épisodes historiques sont développés. Les chroniques s'incrument dans le récit. Elles modifient la qualité du réel.

En effet, les histoires appartenant à des temps différents sont alignées aux occurrences du présent, faisant en sorte que le Maroc soit la survivance d'une idée enracinée dans le multiséculaire. Il en découle une réalité anachronique, de nature historiographique. Le traitement historique du fait marocain opère le détachement du sensible immédiat pour se ressourcer dans des documents qui perpétuent et consolident certains clichés. Les rapports historiques dans le récit du présent font échos à des sentiments comme la crainte, le mystère, l'hostilité, la sauvagerie, la réclusion et le fanatisme. Ils composent un contenu commun sur lequel le récit factuel et le récit historique semblent s'entendre parfaitement. Les exemples ne manquent pas pour

⁵⁵ Même constat à propos de Meknès et de ses environs, de la ville romaine Volubilis et de la ville de Moulay-Idriss, de la ville de Fès et de Marrakech.

⁵⁶ "Salé, cette ancienne cité de pirates, où Robinson Crusoé fut si longtemps retenu en esclavage, s'étendait devant nous ..." (28, mais aussi 34 et 35).

suivre les modulations de ces résurgences. Non loin de Meknès, en visite à la ville de Moulay-Idriss, le primitivisme est reproduit dans un cliché criard à propos de la danse de la confrérie des Hamadchas: “Aussi peut-on estimer qu’en se mutilant, la fraternité reproduit le suicide de l’esclave, et cela même si l’origine de cette cérémonie remonte sans aucun doute aux profondeurs de ce bosquet ensanglanté d’où M. Frazer a coupé le Rameau d’Or” (59).

L’anthropologue James George Frazer est présent dans le texte de Wharton en autorité scientifique. L’anthropologie est dépêchée dans l’objectif de produire le modèle cérémonial dans sa scientificité. Aussi, l’apologie du primitivisme à propos du Maroc et du Marocain passe-t-elle du phénomène proprement culturel pour être introduite dans une structure mythique. L’allusion au “Rameau d’Or,” ouvrage où les mythes et les rites sont recensés, opère dans le même sens. La référence historique et scientifique fait en sorte que la réalité mystique soit transformée en une pratique mythologique. Dans la synchronisation des opinions, le “mythos,” connu comme une “parole chargée d’un pouvoir d’illusion,” est introduit dans le “logos,” “discours attaché à la conquête de la vérité” (Hubner). Le réel hétéroréférentiel brouille les pistes. Il gagne en vérité.

Dans le récit de Wharton, les parenthèses sont ouvertes pour admettre le discours de voyageurs et de biographes. Leurs récits sont incorporés à son texte pour modifier son orientation critique. L’imbrication intertextuelle est largement répartie entre les étrangers et les locaux. La citation et la reformulation sont des alliés dans la transmission du contenu absent. Pour comprendre cette idée, considérons les extraits suivants:

La chronique d’Ezziani remonte à la première moitié du XIXe siècle, et est un panégyrique arabe sans nuance d’un grand monarque.⁵⁷ Mais John Windus,

⁵⁷ D’autres passages plus conséquents en termes de prépondérance quantitative sont à retenir à propos de Moulay-Ismaël: “Le sultan – écrit son chroniqueur Aboul Kasim-ibn-Ahmad, dit ‘Ezziani’ – aimait Meknès, dont le climat l’avait enchanté, et aurait voulu ne jamais la quitter.’ Il la quitta, en réalité, très souvent, sans cesse même, pour combattre les tribus révoltées de l’Atlas, défaire les armées berbères les unes après les autres, transporter son armement du Haut Atlas jusqu’au Sous, décorer Fès avec les têtes de sept cents chefs vaincus, pour faire mordre la poussière à ses trois frères rebelles, pour vider de ses Noirs toutes les villes de son empire et les déposer à Meknès (de sorte qu’il

l'Anglais qui accompagna l'ambassade du commodore Stewart à Meknès en 1712, vit les palais impériaux et leur architecture de ses propres yeux et les décrivit avec l'enthousiasme d'un étranger saisi par tous les contrastes. (69)

Wharton a préparé le terrain en rapportant précédemment que "M. Augustin Bernard, dans son livre admirable sur le Maroc, dit que le XVII^e siècle fut 'l'âge d'or de la piraterie' au Maroc; et [qu']il ne fait aucun doute que le grand Ismaël fut un de ses principaux promoteurs" (68).

Les récits se superposent pour soumettre le réel référentiel aux impératifs d'une structure restreinte, celle qui convient aux règles de confrontation choisies par la romancière. Sachant que "la structure narrative peut transformer le réel référentiel," en le formalisant et en l'organisant (Audin 3), les témoignages provoquent la confusion à propos du jugement extérieur et du regard intérieur. À l'issue de ces parallèles où l'opinion diffère d'un partisan à l'autre, historicité et véracité s'arrachent la priorité pour finalement s'éteindre dans de faux consensus. En installant la hiérarchie avec le modèle occidental, révélé et soutenu par des témoignages à qui on voudrait volontiers prêter la crédibilité, l'idée triomphale de la civilisation occidentale est privilégiée. Le raisonnement concessif met en jeu des dialectiques où les objections à l'opinion locale sont anticipées. L'exhaustivité du raconté dépend non pas de la valeur du fait immédiat, reproduction spontanée d'une observation directe et autonome, mais de la capacité "rhétorique" à engager le réel dans des chaînes de sens bien méditées. Les systèmes de compréhension concernent des sujets de rhétorique classique dont nous nous inspirons pour révéler l'enchaînement des idées.

ne reste pas un Noir, homme, femme ou enfant, esclave ou libre, ailleurs dans le pays"), pour combattre et vaincre les chrétiens (1683), pour prendre Tanger, conduire la campagne de la Moulouya, mener la guerre sainte contre les Espagnols (1689), prendre Larache, le poste commercial espagnol de la côte ouest (qui fournit dix-huit cents prisonniers pour Meknès), pour faire le siège de Ceuta, conduire une campagne contre les Turcs d'Alger, réprimer le pillage au sein de son armée, soumettre encore des tribus et construire des forts pour ses légionnaires noirs d'Oujda à l'oued Noun. Le récit sanglant de chaque année se termine cependant presque toujours par l'expression placide suivante: 'Alors le sultan retourna à Meknès.'" (61-62). Voir aussi les pages 65 et 67.

Le discours est soucieux de sa crédibilité. Pour introduire dans l'évident et le certain, la vérité "historique" est sélective. Elle se produit dans la justification de l'acte de belligérance qui survient aux échanges entre le Maroc et la France du XVIIe siècle:

Puisque le gouverneur de Tétouan, qui avait été envoyé à Paris en 1680, avait apporté comme présents au roi de France un lion, une lionne, une tigresse et quatre autruches, Louis XIV dépêcha M. de Saint-Amand au Maroc avec deux douzaines de montres, douze pièces de brocart d'or, un canon de six pieds de long et autres armes à feu. Après cela, les relations entre les deux cours restèrent amicales jusqu'en 1693, date à laquelle elles se tendirent, à cause du refus français de rendre les prisonniers maures que le roi employait dans ses galères, et où ils étaient sans doute aussi utiles que les esclaves chrétiens du sultan pour la construction de palais mauresques". (61)

Dans la citation, la vérité historique est construite autour de deux topiques. La topique de l'échange dans les relations diplomatiques entre le Maroc et la France et la topique des hostilités. Pour trouver un moyen terme à cette explosion thématique, la démonstration s'inspire du lieu commun (Aristote 30) selon lequel l'acte barbare chez l'Occidental est subséquent à des vicissitudes chez l'ennemi. L'ironie dans les propos de Wharton finit par élaborer une raison universelle de cause à effet pour admettre et accepter l'accusation (43). Tout au long du récit, la synthèse,⁵⁸ l'interprétation⁵⁹ et le développement⁶⁰ composent une rhétorique en faveur d'une réalité amusée de sa mêmeté.

⁵⁸ "Il y a encore trois ans, des chrétiens se faisaient massacrer dans les rues de Salé, cette ville de pirates qu'une rivière sépare de Rabat, et il y a deux ans la ville sacrée de Moulay-Idriss – lieu de sépulture de l'authentique descendant d'Ali, fondateur de la dynastie des Idrissides – était interdite aux Européens" (Wharton 20).

⁵⁹ "On n'a pas l'impression d'être réellement en Afrique, mais dans une Afrique à laquelle les croisés nordiques auraient pu rêver dans leurs châteaux enneigés, sur les rives plus froides encore du même océan. C'est ainsi que le Maghreb devait être imaginé par les esprits troublés du Moyen Âge, les chevaliers normands qui pillaient et rançonnaient les lieux saints ou les marchands de la Hanse qui devisaient, dans leurs cités aux toits pentus, de la Barbarie et de ces longues caravanes qui ramenaient du Sud des singes et de la poudre d'or" (31).

Dans un article au titre révélateur, “The Factual,” Marvin explique que la prise de conscience immédiate de ce qui nous entoure nécessite un terme neutre pour être qualifié. Ce terme n’est tout autre que le “fait,” traduction du mot anglais “the fact” (281). Le “factuel”,⁶¹ ou le fait, sont expliqués en relation avec la question du jugement. Celui-ci est susceptible de corrections, avec des degrés variés (282). Cela est d’autant plus vrai lorsque la donnée réelle est soumise à l’esthétisation du propos. Le jugement esthétique module la réalité pour convenir à des présupposés culturels et idéologiques à propos de l’autre, de la civilisation et de l’occupation des territoires. À l’occasion de la visite de la ville de Fès, Wharton affirme:

Il suffirait de transformer le conteur en un jeune Vénitien extatique pour avoir tous les personnages et le premier plan de *La Vie de saint Étienne* du Carpaccio, avec même les chameaux qui tendent leur cou inquisiteur au-dessus des turbans. Chaque nouveau pas en Afrique du Nord permet de confirmer l’observation des premiers voyageurs, peintres ou écrivains, et de constater que la vie orientale peinte par les Vénitiens et décrite par Léon l’Africain, Windus et Charles Cochelet n’a pas changé de caractère. (76)

L’esthétisation cible le réel pour renforcer l’idée d’atavisme. Rien ne semble changer dans un tableau séculier, répétitif et inépuisable. L’héritage est engagé dans une tradition artistique connue et largement diffusée dans la culture occidentale.

Réalité idéalisée, dépaysement et exotisme

La référence coloniale dans le voyage de Wharton nous a servi d’arrière-plan pour présenter un aspect important de la réalité

⁶⁰ “Meknès fut construite par le sultan Moulay-Ismaël, autour d’une petite ville dont le site lui plut, au même moment où Louis XIV construisait Versailles. Que deux souverains autocratiques fissent jaillir en même temps deux cités du néant ont amené ceux qui ont le goût de l’analogie à décrire Meknès comme le Versailles marocain: ce qui n’a guère plus de sens que d’appeler Phidias le Benvenuto Cellini de la Grèce” (60).

⁶¹ C’est sciemment que le terme “factuel” est nominalisé. La transformation lexicale réalise une autonome syntaxique considérable qui profite au sens.

marocaine telle qu'elle est perçue et organisée par la romancière. Mais à l'évidence, cette référence agit avec une autre, plus personnelle et ouvertement plus subjective, celle du triomphalisme (Ricard). Les biographies de Wharton soulignent son engagement pour les grandes questions de son époque (fin du XIXe et début du XXe siècles). Ses projets intellectuels sont largement orientés par le souci de préserver l'héritage commun et protéger les valeurs des origines. Ces positions demeurent problématiques du contact avec les autres, dans un monde que l'on voudrait ouvert aux voyages, à la recherche des ingrédients qui pourraient combler le vide émotionnel.

De même, la visibilité de Wharton dans les sphères lettrées de son temps attire l'attention sur des prises de position qui demeurent étrangères au comportement vis-à-vis du fait marocain. En effet, le caractère subversif des écrits de Wharton (Ginfray) pose un problème d'interprétation dans le cas du Maroc. La subversion est noyée dans la constance des valeurs établies, propres au système de pensée occidentale. Elle modifie "la singularité irréductible" du natif (Finkielkraut 22). Sur le terrain, cette action se concrétise dans la sélection de tableaux où le dépaysement est conservé dans ses couleurs préférées. Le sentiment d'être ailleurs, dans un terrain autre que celui considéré sien, semble égayer la journée et distraire de l'évidence du vide. Il expulse vers l'exo, un espace qui sert de relai aux interrogations et frustrations d'ordre social, esthétique et idéologique qui traversent les écrits de la romancière.

Le voyage au Maroc est conditionné par la transplantation dans un univers de contrastes, où l'idéal est mieux senti. La description en carte postale recompose la réalité de manière à approfondir l'écart entre l'élément de la représentation et son image idéalisée comme dans le passage suivant:

Tout autour de nous s'étend à l'infini un paysage désertique de palmiers nains. À quelques mètres se dressent l'inévitable *koubba* et son figuier: à l'ombre de son mur effrité, le bourdonnement des mouches fait l'effet d'un bruit de friture. Plus loin, nous distinguons un groupe de huttes d'où viennent, en la circonstance, un groupe de petits Arabes et un grand berger pensif. (Wharton 26)

Le regard semble incapable d'adopter l'attitude critique qui assure, à la fois, le détachement des fonds interprétatifs communs et l'autonomie du représenté. Dans de telles descriptions, la transmission des idées est à mettre sur le compte d'une réalité qui se constitue à l'ombre d'une autre réalité, plus évoluée. Ce n'est pas un hasard que la représentation passe par des substantifs comme "l'infini" et "l'inévitable," formés avec le préfixe privatif "-in". Les radicaux pénètrent de leur négation l'imagination qui s'occupe du paysage marocain. Ils propulsent dans un ailleurs prédestiné à l'épuisement, condamné à l'extinction. L'action de minorisation, dans le sens de rendre "moindre" en qualité, est accomplie dans la référence aux "petits".⁶² Elle participe du processus d'effacement de tout ce qui est autre. Des termes comme "l'ombre" ou "l'effet" sont les expressions indirectes de la volonté de mise à mort et d'anéantissement de ce qui pose un écart vis-à-vis de la norme universalisante, portée en soi.

Les implications "paléontologiques" d'une interprétation pareille grignotent la consistance de l'objet décrit. Elles réduisent la longévité de la cible. Nous sommes en présence de l'avatar éloigné de la loi de la sélection par extermination. Nous revenons à reculons sur cette loi naturelle, la loi de la jungle, tuer pour se nourrir, pour vivre. Étrange retour à propos d'une mission qui se présente dans l'horizon comme une action pour civiliser le barbare.⁶³ La métaphore du désert fonctionne dans le même sens d'idée. Elle résume la transmission du savoir à l'intérieur d'une fausse idée reçue. Après une panne de voiture, Wharton s'exprime ainsi:

Il est bon de commencer par une telle mésaventure, non seulement parce qu'elle développe le fatalisme nécessaire pour apprécier l'Afrique, mais aussi parce qu'elle propulse d'un seul coup au centre mystérieux du pays: un pays si profondément modelé par ses kilomètres et ses kilomètres de désert que l'on ne peut parvenir à comprendre les villes qu'après avoir connu ce désert. (27)

⁶² C'est le cas de "petites créatures" pour désigner les concubines au harem, "petite oasis" et "petits Chleuhs" entre autres (Wharton 156, 110, 126).

⁶³ Dans le récit d'Édith Wharton, le barbare est la concentration générique de l'entité qui représente l'Afrique sombre, mystérieuse, hostile, sauvage, etc.

La réalité idéalisée est relative à la mésaventure. Elle est incrustée dans la connaissance par la reproduction des impressions du fatalisme et du mystère. Et l'on peut juger de l'imprécision de ces sensations forcées pour introduire une marge d'immatérialité et de dogmatisme dans la consistance de la réalité. Une telle lecture corrobore l'idée suivant laquelle "notre description du monde est toujours fausse, mais ce que l'on voit, ce que l'on mesure, ce que l'on éprouve et ce que l'on expérimente est vrai" (Dortier 612). Nous nous arrêtons sur ce dernier point de la chaîne pour expliquer que le vrai est un présupposé de la question suivante: comment appréhender un coin d'Afrique sans faire appel au désert, compris comme un paradigme essentiel et incontournable de l'imaginaire saharien?⁶⁴ Derrière l'apriori se défilent les images des dromadaires, des dunes et des hommes bleus qui peuplent de leurs références culturelles les territoires de l'exotisme.⁶⁵ Mais également l'horreur du manque d'eau, de la prolifération des reptiles venimeux et des contagions meurtrières, des contenus qui composent un savoir implicite et qui vient se superposer à la réalité idéalisée.

Wharton ne pouvait concevoir son voyage au Maroc sans la présence de ce paradigme, connotation de la rareté, voire de l'absence et de la morbidité. Sans l'idée du désert, la reconnaissance marocaine est privée de son référent. Nous sommes en présence d'un réalisme de composition, un réalisme eidétique où de nombreux contenants sont alignés, comme l'eunuque pour la compréhension du harem ou le bronze pour les négresses. Les exemples ne manquent pas pour étayer le propos d'une réalité idéalisée qui crée son contenu à partir d'un fond idéologique et culturel qui survient au voyage.

Au terme de cette étude, il convient de remarquer que le récit de voyage de Wharton nous apprend que le désir de réalité peut être vécu de plusieurs manières, suivant les positions

⁶⁴ Voir également "L'Afrique inconnue semble plus proche du Maroc que des villes blanches de Tunisie et des oasis souriantes du sud de l'Algérie" (Wharton 86-87).

⁶⁵ Voir aussi la description de Marrakech: "Marrakech est le grand marché du Sud, et le Sud ne veut pas seulement dire l'Atlas avec ses chefs féodaux et leurs terribles guerriers, mais aussi cette chaleur et ce monde sauvage que l'on trouve au-delà: le Sahara des Touaregs voilés, Dakka (sic), Tombouctou, le Sénégal et le Soudan. C'est ici qu'arrivent les caravanes de chameaux de Demnat et de Tameslout, de la Moulouya et du Sous, ou celles qui viennent des ports de l'Atlantique et des confins de l'Algérie" (117).

critiques que la romancière enchaîne, d'un espace à un autre et d'une rencontre à l'autre. *In fine*, le concept de réalité, défini par les dictionnaires comme étant le contraire de l'illusion et de l'invention, est en fait une donnée étroitement dépendante de la question de représentation. L'expérience vécue, le privilège des relations diplomatiques et les positions intellectuelles orientent fondamentalement le contenu mis sur le compte de la réalité. La dimension personnelle engage dans le subterfuge de l'invention des modèles pour satisfaire une volonté envahie de subjectivité.

Le discours de Wharton provoque à l'occasion de chaque nouvelle station une considération historique, interpelle une autorité morale et/ou scientifique pour couvrir la part inventive de son récit, du voile de l'objectivité. En cause, la méfiance de faire de son projet ce qu'il est en réalité, un acte de justification de l'intervention française. L'opinion partielle, en faveur du même, est ouverte sur l'horizon des grandes actions que Wharton et ses hôtes veulent présenter comme civilisatrices. Derrière les faux fuyants, la réalité court à deux vitesses. L'une est relative au Maroc traditionnel, fier de son historicité, qui s'accroche à ses traditions, et une autre porteuse d'une intelligence superficielle, qui peine à saisir la spécificité individuelle et locale.

En conclusion, il faut signaler que l'ensemble des phénomènes intellectuels étudiés ici font partie d'un système. Toutes les considérations critiques formulées à propos d'une ville ou d'un phénomène sont applicables à l'intégralité du récit. De la répétition des points de vue et des partis pris, il est une imagination cyclique qui s'occupe de la réalité marocaine pour la rendre plus insistante, plus fatidique. L'échelle de valeurs instaurée ainsi satisfait le besoin en dépaysement. Elle présente un cadre favorable à la reproduction des clichés et des préjugés à propos de l'altérité.

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PART THREE

**TRAVEL LITERATURE AND THE IMPOSSIBLE
ESCAPE**

**“Whichever Way the Road”:
Travel and Agency in August Wilson’s
*Pittsburgh Plays***

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African Americans who traveled North during the Great Migration faced enormous challenges—poverty, discrimination, emotional dislocation. Literary scholars have examined the extent to which migrants were portrayed in novels as vulnerable victims or instead as subjects who could determine their own destinies. This essay addresses a neglected topic: the relationship between agency and travel in Wilson’s Pittsburgh plays.⁶⁶ Through decisions to undertake physical and spiritual journeys, the protagonists claim their rights as citizens, gain redemption after wrongdoing, and reconstruct troubled, even traumatized lives. However, the portrayal of agency is complex, and some of the migrants’ decisions have dire consequences. I examine the topic of travel and agency in two plays set in the early decades of the 20th Century, *Gem of the Ocean* and *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*. Among Wilson’s plays, these are the ones that most centrally address travel and agency and reflect Wilson’s creative vision that the migrants’ journeys should be spiritual as well as physical.

During the Great Migration, African Americans journeyed to Northern cities both to escape the violence in the South and to take advantage of economic opportunities such as factory and mill work in the North. Between 1910-1930, the numbers of black migrants entering Pittsburgh increased by 93% (Darden 6). These migrants may be compared to foreign immigrants today who flee

⁶⁶ The Pittsburgh Plays represent nine out of ten plays in Wilson’s Century Cycle that relate the post-migration experience of African Americans during the twentieth century.

their home countries as refugees from war, violence, or persecution, or for the sake of economic opportunity or family reunification. Both groups may experience the pain of family separation, discrimination, low wages, unemployment, and oppressive law enforcement. Apart from these tangible barriers, immigrants and migrants may experience emotional dislocation, fragmented identity, and severe trauma.

The trope of the American Dream promises that America is a land of “limitless opportunity.” As Ruth Hsu comments, under this myth,

. . . this is the Promised Land in which anyone who is willing to work hard can see his dreams come true....America is open to all, because it is an inclusive and generous country founded upon the principles of equality, democracy and freedom. What matters in this land are hard work and belief in the fundamental principles that make this country unique in the world. (38)

However, far from being a haven of social mobility and equality, America remains a nation of income inequality. On the Gini Index which measures the extent of income inequality, the United States ranks 51st among countries based on 2016 data (World Bank).

Wilson’s preface to *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* conveys the dilemma of the migrant as he confronts Northern cities so very different from the rural South:

From the deep and the near South the sons and daughters of newly freed African slaves wander into the city. Isolated, cut off from memory, having forgotten the name of the gods and only guessing at their faces, they arrive dazed and stunned, their heart kicking in their chest with a song worth singing. They arrive carrying Bibles and guitars, their pockets lined with dust and fresh hope, marked men and women seeking to scrape from the narrow, crooked cobbles and the fiery blasts of the coke furnace a way of bludgeoning and shaping the malleable parts of themselves into a new identity as free men of definite and sincere worth (n.pag).

Wilson himself referred to the Great Migration “as a great mistake.” African Americans were “a land-based people” from Africa who “attempted to transplant their culture to the pavements of the industrialized North. It was a transplant that did not take. I think if we had stayed in the South we would have been a stronger people” (Shannon, “Transplant” 979).

Steven Reich, in his essay on literary representations of the Great Migration, observes that authors writing in the 1930s and 1940s adopted the approach of “social realism” and largely portrayed the extent to which migrants were trapped by the conditions that they faced. “Poverty, unemployment, racial violence, legal injustice, political corruption, and world war restricted the ability of migrants to build new lives in the North” (89). The protagonists are portrayed in a negative light, squandering money, committing heinous crimes, abandoning their families (89). After the 1980s, depiction of black migrants as helpless victims began to fall out of favor, in part out of concern that such portrayals stereotype African Americans as unlikely to succeed, and confirm behaviorist explanations of urban poverty (97). Later fiction emphasized “the agency and resistance of ordinary people” as they struggle to resist and overcome oppression, poverty, and racism (89).

In her seminal work on Great Migration fiction, Farah Jasmine Griffin explains that the migrants “actively created spaces and cultures” which represented “pockets of resistance” to modern power (108). These alternatives ranged from “parties, dance halls, pool halls, and barber shops to kitchens, churches, families, and friendships. Some of these were sites of the ancestor” (108). Griffin defines the “site of the ancestor” as a space where the ancestor is invoked or banished, a site which is “a site of negotiation for the construction of a new self” (18).

Below I address the extent to which the travelers in Wilson’s plays can successfully direct their destinies. The migrants come to Pittsburgh having worn out their shoe leather in lengthy and circuitous journeys. Pittsburgh is not the destination, the refuge from oppression that they had hoped for. Wilson’s protagonists cope by fighting for their freedom and reclaiming elements of African Tribal Religion. Wilson’s characters travel spiritually to make this connection; they voyage in imaginary ships back to their roots.

Gem of the Ocean: Voyages of redemption

Gem of the Ocean is set in 1904. In Pittsburgh, the migrants confront brutal conditions, wages insufficient to survive and oppressive enforcement of criminal laws. The main characters address these challenges in different ways: two fight to claim full citizenship and reclaim the promise of freedom (Solly and Citizen Barlow). Aunt Ester, a 285-year-old conjurer, takes upon herself the mission of guiding troubled souls on voyages of spiritual redemption. As I show below, these protagonists actively resist oppression; Solly and Citizen physically travel to pursue freedom for others; Aunt Ester leads Citizen on a spiritual journey to redeem his soul. On the other hand, there is a strong negative portrayal of agency. One of the most successful African Americans in Pittsburgh is a villain who uses criminal enforcement to tyrannize his fellow blacks, a constable appropriately named Caesar.

Early in the play a young protagonist, ironically named Citizen Barlow, knocks at the door of “a peaceful house” (*passim*). There he seeks the aid of Aunt Ester, known throughout the community for her healing of troubled souls. Citizen, a migrant from Alabama, has recently arrived in Pittsburgh. Citizen and his co-workers are badly underpaid by the local mill. The few dollars a week that he receives are insufficient to buy bread.⁶⁷ While working, Citizen steals a bucket of nails. The local constable, a black man named Caesar Wilks, wrongly accuses one of Citizen’s co-workers, Garrett Brown. Brown’s mother had migrated north to escape racism but her young son dies a victim of racial injustice. Asserting his innocence, Brown “escapes” the constable’s tyranny by drowning himself in a river. Aunt Ester praises Brown’s self-assertion: he’d “rather die in truth than to live a lie. That way he can say that his life is worth more than a bucket of nails” (45). To Aunt Ester, who embraces both African and Christian traditions, Brown is a Christ figure.

The constable Caesar is a self-made man who has risen through hard work, cunning, and complicity to become wealthy and powerful. But we do not admire his initiative; to the contrary,

⁶⁷ Citizen Barlow’s trajectory is typical of those migrants who found on their arrival in Pittsburgh that conditions in the mills were oppressive: “hot, dangerous, and dead end work,” discriminatory job assignments, and low wages eroded by debts incurred to travel North or secure lodging and food (Gottlieb 124-25).

he is an execrable figure, a toady to the white man's law, a tyrant to his fellow blacks. He has no regrets over Brown's suicide. To maintain order, Caesar once shot a young thief who stole a loaf of bread (36). He goes so far as to say "It's Abraham Lincoln's fault . . . Some of these niggers were better off in slavery. They don't know how to act otherwise" (34). Griffin writes that while most African Americans actively resisted oppression, some became complicit in their own subjugation" (104). Caesar is such an example.

The need for African Americans to fight for citizenship, to actively assert rights that exist *de jure* but not *de facto*, is an important theme in this play. In the Jim Crow south, African Americans were denied basic rights of mobility. Citizen Barlow had to "sneak out" of Alabama because "they had all the roads closed to colored people. Say they didn't want anybody to leave. Say we had to stay there and work" (22). Eliza Jackson writes her brother Solly to tell him

[T]imes are terrible here the most anybody remember since bondage. I can't hold on anymore. The white peoples is gone crazy and won't let anybody leave. They beat one fellow on the road so bad his mama say, "Who is he?" They killed some more and say the colored can't buy any tickets on the train to get away. Say they will sink the ferry if any colored on it. (15).

African Americans in Pittsburgh also lack the rights one expects as a citizen, including the right to a living wage and the right to be free from arbitrary law enforcement. Solly, a runaway slave, finds that the freedom he sought by fleeing the South is illusory. Freedom for him has been "nothing but trouble... Ain't got no seed. Ain't got no mule. What good is freedom if you can't do nothing with it. I seen many a man die for freedom but he didn't know what he was getting. If he had known he might have thought twice about it" (28). It is indicative that a man born in the south uses agricultural images to describe poverty in Pittsburgh.

When Solly receives his sister's letter, he decides that he must travel back to Alabama and bring her to Pittsburgh—despite the oppressive conditions that he has encountered here. Solly re-baptized himself when he escaped the South, and claimed a new identity in freedom. "My name is Two Kings. Used to be Uncle

Alfred. The government looking for me for being a runaway so I changed it” (26). Solly became a conductor on the Underground Railroad; like Harriet Tubman, he returned to the South after he achieved freedom to rescue others. Solly carried sixty-two people to freedom (57). The play presents a shocking return to Antebellum days; it is sad commentary that in 1904 a former Underground Railroad conductor must return to the South to rescue his sister from intolerable conditions. Now Solly is ill and old; it is 800 miles each way and he will have to walk. He hopes that Citizen, a strong young man, whom he meets at Aunt Ester’s home, will accompany him.⁶⁸

Gem of the Ocean can be read as a *Bildungsroman*, because Citizen Barlow is educated as to what it means to take responsibility for one’s life—both for one’s conscience and as a citizen. Following his arrival in Pittsburgh, Citizen undertakes two further journeys—one spiritual, to come to terms with his conscience, and the second physical, to rescue Solly’s sister. The guide for his spiritual journey is Aunt Ester, a miracle-worker in the Pittsburgh community; indeed, she is a living miracle as she is 285 years old.

Aunt Ester has taken upon herself a heavy burden, an emotional load of kindling her people’s historic memory. As Riley Temple observes, Aunt Ester seeks to free her people through memory, enabling them to fight against oppression (17). Aunt Ester guides those who come to her to cleanse their souls if and only if they want to undertake the journey to redemption. She is not only herself a personification of agency but a teacher of others that they must be responsible for their own actions if they are to heal their conscience. Aunt Ester’s home is “a peaceful house” (passim), a “sanctuary” (79). One seeks admission through Eli, the gate keeper, as if one were seeking a manger, safe haven, or legal asylum. On a more abstract level, Citizen’s urgent knocking on

⁶⁸ *Gem of the Ocean* is not the only play in which a character wants to return to the South. In *Piano Lesson*, Boy Willie, who has come to Pittsburgh in hopes of persuading his sister to sell a piano that would enable him to buy land, specifically wishes to return home to buy the land of James Sutter, upon which his family had worked as slaves. In *Two Trains Running*, Memphis, owner of a restaurant has a dream to return to Jackson Mississippi. He had purchased land believed to be dry and virtually worthless; when water is discovered on the site the former had the sale invalidated. The landowner has not merely robbed Memphis, but also brutalized his mule.

Aunt Ester's door seeking personal salvation calls to mind Bob Dylan's well-known lyrics, "knocking on heaven's door."

Aunt Ester fashions for Citizen Barlow a magical and powerful boat wrought from her documents of slave indenture. The boat, called the Gem of the Ocean, will carry Citizen to a City of Bones via an imaginary vessel. There he can be redeemed if and only if he seeks forgiveness and atones for his crime to Brown. She cautions him that life is "a mystery" and "an adventure" (42); now Citizen's life is consumed by a bucket of nails; he has "only one life" and he must act to "claim it" (44).

Ester makes clear to Citizen Barlow that she can only redeem him if he wants to redeem himself: "I can take you to that city, but you got to want to go" (54). The City of Bones is a memorial to the Middle Passage; these are the bones of the slaves who did not make it across the water. A terrified Citizen finds himself "chained to the boat"; gradually he perceives that there are other people chained in the boat and that "they all look like me" (66). When Citizen arrives at the City of Bones he discovers that Garrett Brown is the gatekeeper. Aunt Ester tells him there is no turning back; to wash his soul, Citizen must confess; and indeed, Citizen admits to Brown, "I done it...I stole the bucket of nails." (69)

Citizen undertakes a voyage by ship to a specific destination anchored in the history of the African American people. Harry Elam writes: "The City of Bones functions not simply as memorial to the Middle Passage but as a vibrant place, a destination even, where Citizen Barlow, and the other travelers in need of redemption go to visit (*Past as Present*, 236). The Middle Passage has traditionally been conceived as a fixed moment in time, but here it is presented as a locality, which the characters and we the spectators can experience. Citizen is redeemed by connecting with his people's history. As Elam observes "the battle to remove the shackles of slavery is not simply an external one but an internal one" (238).

Solly serves as a guide to Citizen in two important ways. He accompanies the young man on the voyage to the City of Bones and thereby helps Citizen come to terms with the wrong he has committed. For the journey Solly gives Citizen a chain from his shackles of slavery both as a material reminder of slavery and a good-luck piece. Solly has also taught Citizen the need to proactively fight for freedom—"You got to fight to be a citizen" (27). Act One, however, ends with a surprise; the mill is on fire.

On his way South to retrieve his sister, Solly burns down the exploitive mill.

What are we to make of Solly's violent resistance, his decision to burn down the mill? As he is dying, Solly claims responsibility. "Yea, I burned it down! The people might get mad but freedom got a high price. You got to pay. No matter what it cost. You got to pay" (75). We can see Solly's action as a constructive act of agency in response to oppressive power structures that exploit the black workers. On the other hand, Solly's arson is a crime that is destructive of property, as well as self-destructive, in that he is captured and killed by Caesar. Moreover, Solly's action in and of itself is insufficient. "I see where I'm gonna die and everything gonna be the same" (75). Like Garrett Brown, he dies in dignity.

In his seminal work *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon defends the exercise of revolutionary violence by those who have been oppressed for decades and even centuries. Violence allows the colonized to recoup their personhood and their nationhood:

But it so happens that for the colonized people this violence . . . invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upward in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning . . . The mobilization of the masses, when it arises out of the war of liberation, introduces into each man's consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny, and of a collective history. (92)

It is left to the reader to evaluate the morality of Solly's arson but, like other instances of revolutionary violence, it is the result of oppression and desperation.

Aunt Ester's home is a "sanctuary," defined in the Bible as a "place of refuge . . . above the law" (79). Caesar does not recognize this higher law. Caesar has come too late to find Citizen, who has fled south to rescue Eliza. Aunt Ester's home is filled with blood. Solly, who has been shot by Caesar, dies in Esther's home. Solly is a courageous warrior, who, as Eli comments, died on "the battlefield," fighting for freedom (83). The final journey will be to the "burying ground" (84).

Citizen literally takes up Solly's mantle, his coat and his walking stick. Citizen replaces Solly as an Underground Railroad conductor, embarking on the journey to save Solly's sister. Note the complex trajectory of Citizen's physical and spiritual journeys, his exercise of agency. Citizen pro-actively fled the South overcoming, Jim Crow's literal road blocks. However, he made the wrong decision to steal and allowed another man to die for his crime. Citizen achieves redemption by traveling to the City of Bones and connecting with his African past. Citizen has yet one more decision to make, one more journey to take, as he goes South to rescue Solly's sister.

We do not know the outcome, but the undertaking of this mission shows that Citizen has completed his process of maturation. He has taken responsibility for his life both in terms of personal redemption and as a freedom fighter. The last words of the play, spoken by Eli, "[s]o live" (85), not only eulogize Solly but call for Citizen and others to continue the struggle.

Joe Turner's Come and Gone: Searching for Someone/Becoming Oneself

In *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, migrants gather at a boarding house located in Pittsburgh's Hill District. These travelers believe that they are searching for a specific someone but come to appreciate that in fact they are searching for their own identities. Seth Holly, the owner of the boarding house in *Gem* and a native of Pittsburgh, complains about the large number of blacks coming to the North: "These niggers keep on coming. Walking ... riding..." (6). They are coming "looking for freedom," but they don't appreciate that they are ill-adapted to city living and that there are too many men looking for too few jobs (6).

The travelers who arrive at the boarding house have differing objectives: a cure for trauma, recovery of a lost loved one, or simply the desire to travel. Moving on requires letting go, and the travelers learn that to continue their journey they must move past failed relationships. In addition, they must connect with African Tribal Religion, given the insufficiency of white man's Christianity. The conjurer Bynum is a pivotal figure, who, like Aunt Ester in *Gem of the Ocean*, connects travelers to their heritage. Bynum aids the protagonists in finding their "own song" and their own identity; like Aunt Ester they need to help themselves before they can be healed.

In *Joe Turner*, Herald Loomis arrives at the boarding house in a condition so anxious he cannot stand on his own feet. A boarding house is by its nature a temporary shelter, where a traveler rests until he or she resumes the road (Pereira 60). The migrants' travel in *Joe Turner* reflects the continuing trauma of family separation and their desire to reunite with their loved ones. Loomis's inability to stand at the beginning of the play marks him as a trauma victim—the result of his imprisonment on the chain gang, aggravated by the loss of his wife who has left him, and the hardship of unending travel.

Loomis had been imprisoned for seven years by a sheriff, Joe Turner, who captured black men and put them to work in chain gangs. Joe Turner was based on a historical figure, Joe Turney, a notorious sheriff and brother of the Tennessee governor, whose terrorizing actions were recalled in legend and song (Elam, "Teaching Joe Tuner" 587). Since his release, Loomis and his daughter have spent four years on the road searching for Loomis's wife, Martha. Loomis asks Bynum "Where you coming from?" Loomis replies: "Come from all over. Whichever way the road" (15). Loomis is accompanied by his seven-year-old daughter Zonia, who is too young to understand their constant wanderings. She tells Reuben, the young boy who lives next door to the boarding house that they are always on the move:

Zonia: We going to find my mother.

Reuben: Where she at?

Zonia: I don't know. We got to find her. We just go all over. (28)

At Holley's boarding house, Loomis meets a conjure man, Bynum, who will connect him to his African past and allow him to recover physically and spiritually, similar to Ester's healing of Citizen Barlow. Bynum recounts his personal story of self-discovery early in the play. While walking down a road Bynum met "the Shiny Man," a man who "had this light coming out of him. I had to cover up my eyes from being blinded. He shining like new money with that light. He shined until all the light seemed like it seeped out of him and then he was gone" (9). As the Shiny Man disappeared, Bynum saw his father. "I had the Binding Song. I chose that song because that's what I seen most when I was traveling . . . people walking away and leaving one another. So

I takes the power of my song and binds them together” (10). His father tells Bynum that the shiny man is “the One Who Goes Before and Shows the Way . . . [I]f I ever saw one again before I died then I would know that my song had been accepted and worked its full power in the world and I could lay down and die a happy man” (10). Bynum is a wandering man who wore out “many a pair of shoes . . . you’d have thought I was a missionary spreading the gospel” (42). Loomis is intertwined with Bynum because both men have been traveling and searching; neither can realize his destiny without binding to the other. The Shiny Man has been interpreted as one of the Yoruba gods, and clearly belongs to African Traditional Religion (Rudolph 567). Ogun is identified as the first toolmaker, who made a shiny iron sword, and as the god of the road (Elam, (“Teaching Joe Tuner” 594).

At first Loomis resists Bynum’s “binding song,” because Loomis associates binding with Joe Turner, with capture and punitive enslavement. But Bynum explains to him that the song of the Shiny Man is liberating, and a song of self-discovery. Accepting Bynum’s help, Loomis undergoes a life-changing vision. “I done seen bones rise up out of the water. Rise up and walk on top of it across the water” (53). With Bynum’s guidance, Loomis rises to stand and walk. As in *Gem of the Ocean*, this vision of bones refers to those who died during the Middle Passage. Loomis is now able to walk, to travel physically and metaphorically, in the company of his people.

To find his wife, Loomis engages the aid of Rutherford Selig, a white man who serves as a “people finder” for migrants seeking lost loved ones. Selig’s grandfather was involved in the slave trade, and his father was the best there was at locating slaves who had run away from their masters (41). After the Emancipation Proclamation, when blacks took to the road, Selig saw his opportunity to “begin finding Nigras for Nigras. Of course it don’t pay as much. But the people finding business ain’t bad” (41). Bertha Holley, the wife of the owner of the boarding house believes that Selig exploits black people by kidnapping their loved ones and then charging a fee to bring them back: “This old People Finding business is for the birds. He ain’t never found nobody he ain’t took away” (4). Even if Selig did not literally take away the individuals whom he purports to find, he certainly profits from the separation, like coyotes today who bring immigrants across the Mexican border.

Late in the play Selig returns to the boarding house with Loomis's lost wife, Martha Pentecost, whom Selig located in nearby Rankin. Martha's last name reflects that Martha prioritized marriage to the church over marriage to Loomis. She left her home when her pastor moved their church up North to escape "all of the trouble the colored folks were having down there" in the South (89). In Loomis's eyes Martha did wrong by leaving him while he was on the chain gang. Yet the separation hurt Martha as much as it hurt Loomis: she suffered terribly when Loomis was imprisoned. We may be surprised that once Loomis finds his wife, he is prepared to let her go, to surrender their daughter to her, and to acknowledge that Martha is "a good woman" (90).

Before Loomis and Martha part, Martha seeks to reconcile Loomis to Christianity by persistently reciting the 23rd Psalm. Loomis deprecates Martha's God as a "great big old white man... your Mr. Jesus Christ. Standing there with a whip in one hand and tote board in another, and them niggers swimming in a sea of cotton" (92). Loomis rejects the white man's vision of Jesus which would allow slave oppression. Elam writes that "Loomis does not reject Christianity but rather the Christian tenets and imagery that would promote whiteness" ("Teaching Joe Tuner" 595). Sandra Shannon similarly characterizes the Shiny Man "as the African alternative to what August Wilson calls 'the white man's God'" (Dramatic Vision 137). The perception that Christianity is a white man's religion in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* differs from Aunt Ester's close and trusting relationship with Jesus in *Gem of the Ocean*.

Loomis resists this binding to Christianity and slashes his chest, identifying with African Tribal Religion. Loomis is spiritually cleansed by blood: "You want blood? Blood make you clean? You clean with blood? [Slashes himself] I'm standing! I'm standing! My legs stood up! I'm standing now" (93). Herald Loomis's discovery shows that he is "heralding" a new day of African-American awareness (Elam, "Teaching Joe Turner" 596). The play concludes with Bynum's exclamation that Loomis is "shining like new money" (94).

Bynum and Loomis emerge as the strongest examples of agency in the play; Bynum teaches Loomis the need for self-determination. When Loomis scars himself in kinship with his African past, he has healed himself and can lead others. This is

clear from Wilson's stage direction commenting on Loomis's resurrection:

Having found the song of self-sufficiency, fully resurrected, cleansed and given breath . . . having accepted the responsibility for his own presence in the world, he is free to soar above the environs that weighed and pushed his spirit into terrifying contractions (93-94).

In addition to Loomis, three travelers come to the boarding house looking for lost loved ones and seeking to pursue various personal life goals.⁶⁹ These travelers are more universal types—men and women who could belong to any time and place. Jeremy has arrived from North Carolina looking for work. He is arrested after four weeks in Pittsburgh for no real crime, merely for loitering on the streets. He is looking not only for work but also for a woman. It appears almost any good-looking female will do, as he seeks to seduce two young women who enter the boarding house. Jeremy resists Bynum's urging that he "bind himself" to a woman in a permanent fashion; he is a wanderer who will flit from woman to woman and place to place.

Like Loomis who arrives at the boarding house looking for his wife, Mattie Campbell arrives at the boarding house seeking a lost loved one. Mattie seeks to find and bind a man who has left her, Jack Cooper. "Ain't said nothing. Just started walking" (23). Bynum refuses to bind Mattie to the unworthy Jack telling Mattie that were he to bring Jack back he would only walk out on her again. Instead, Bynum cures her of her obsession by placing magical herbs under her pillow. At the end of the play Mattie leaves with Loomis, who sees in her the "full woman" that Martha was not (77). It is unclear how Mattie qualifies as a "full woman" but it may be that Loomis prizes Mattie because her goal is to be a wife, in contrast to Martha's prioritization of her church.

Molly is a more independent woman, who directs her own travels. While she has also been abandoned by a man, she is

⁶⁹ *Fences* provides another example of characters searching. Bono, one of the most sympathetic characters in the play describes his father, so rarely at home that the son barely knew him, as Bono's father was always "moving on through. Searching out the New Land. I can't say if he ever found it" (50).

determined to set her own course without permanent entanglement:

Molly: Mister, you got any rooms? I see that sign say you got rooms.

Seth: How long you plan to stay?

Molly: I ain't gonna be here long. I ain't looking for no home or nothing. I'd be in Cincinnati if I hadn't missed my train. (47)

Late in the play Molly leaves the boarding house with Jeremy, but only on her own terms. She tells him that Molly “don’t work,” that Molly’s “not up for sale,” and that “Molly ain’t going South” (66). Molly wants to travel, not to be hitched. While Mattie must be taught to exercise agency, for Molly and Jeremy who do not wish to be tied down, autonomy and agency come more readily.

Conclusion

Immigrants to our shores typically construct a new identity that toggles between the culture of their home country and that of an American identity, gradually assimilating. Wilson’s plays suggest that the African American must not only forge a new identity between the Southern rural past and the migrant’s Northern urban present but also draw from African ancestral religion.

The protagonists must exercise agency to meet the challenges faced by African Americans in Pittsburgh. In *Gem of the Ocean*, Citizen learns, with the help of Aunt Ester and Solly, that he must fight for freedom and connect with his African heritage. In *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, there is an emphasis on the need for self-discovery. The search for someone to fulfill one’s life is not a solution; Herald Loomis learns that he must discover his own song. He must also bind with Ancestral Tribal Religion because the white man’s God does not seem to be looking out for African Americans.

Evaluating the consequences of the exercise of agency is complex. While Citizen Barlow and Herald Loomis have cleansed troubled souls and begin their life anew, Brown and Solly have died. Perhaps the most heroic figure, Solly, committed a serious criminal act when he burns down a mill that gave work, albeit at abusively low wages, to many other migrants. While the plays suggest a path forward, it appears that the barriers to success are

formidable. We do not know what happens to the protagonists after the curtain falls, whether they will find fulfillment.

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**‘The ocean is always rough, but we are good
sailors’:⁷⁰ The Travel Experience of Italian
Immigrants in Arthur Miller’s
*A View from the Bridge***

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An Introduction to Travel Literature and *A View from the Bridge*

Before starting with the Italian characters’ long journey from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic shores, it is pertinent to define travel literature and to highlight the intersection between postcolonial studies and travel narratives. In her study of the development of travel writing from the Middle Ages to the postcolonial era, professor Barbara Korte argues that the common point between classical and contemporary writers is that

They claim and their readers believe that the journey recorded actually took place, and that it is presented by the traveler him or herself. Within this basic frame of definition, accounts of travel manifest themselves in a broad formal spectrum, giving expression to a great variety of travel experience. (qtd. in Youngs 5)

⁷⁰ “The ocean is always rough, but we are good sailors.” This quote is uttered by Marco when he reaches the land of opportunities. He informs his cousins about the hardships of their sea travel and he shows off his competence at going beyond the barriers (Miller Act 1, 190).

Blurring the boundaries between the fictional and the real adds certain authenticity to travel writings. Miller uses realism in the context of blurring boundaries to convince the audience of the hardships that Marco and his brother face after reaching the American soil and their failed attempts at crossing the Brooklyn Bridge or at erasing the boundaries of ethnic minimization.

Korte expounds the importance of realism using the following terms: “the actual experience of a journey is reconstructed, and therefore fictionalized, in the moment of being told” (qtd. in Youngs 5). Miller reconstitutes the story of the two illegal Italian immigrants by the Brooklyn tale which contributes to the development of *A View from the Bridge*'s plot. In fact,

Miller explains that when he first heard the tale in Brooklyn neighborhood he thought he had heard of it before as some reenactment of a Greek myth. To Miller, it seemed the two illegal immigrants set out from Italy as if it were two thousand years ago. (Ackerman 168)

Miller blurs the boundaries between the past and the present when he introduces the story of the Italian immigrants in Brooklyn as an ancient story. It is noticeable that storytelling is an essential component of travel literature because it reflects the spontaneity of the adventure. This idea will be explored in the text under examination by referring to the intersection between drama and fiction, allowing us to re-examine *A View from the Bridge* from a new perspective.

Rediscovering the self and the other is another essential component of travel literature. What is specific about the travelogue is the critical voice against the social flaws in the native country and the newly formed view about the traveled country. Kristi Siegel further elaborates on the issues of travel literature by claiming: “travel writing also contains the rhetoric of investigation. For travel writers, accounts of foreign countries provide a forum for addressing domestic issues of the traveled regions, their homeland or combination of both” (Siegel 124). Put differently, the investigative techniques help the traveler compare the two different regions, create a new zone of cultural richness, and call for a positive change within the mainstream culture and the minority groups. Siegel cites the example of an eighteenth-century satirist, Jonathan Swift, who deploys humor to deliver

didactic messages about good and evil, political justice and social egalitarianism. She writes, “Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, for instance, illuminates the social ills of England through its protagonist’s metaphorical journey to others’ lands” (Siegel 124). Gulliver is roaming from one place to another and each region he reaches teaches him a specific lesson and helps him recognize the nefarious effects of corruption in England. In one of his vibrant revelations Gulliver divulges to the readers: “ I had no occasion of bribing, flattering or pimping....No scoundrels raised from the dust upon the merit of their vices or nobility thrown into it on account of their virtues, no lords, judges or dancing masters” (Swift 180). Gulliver is clearly impressed by the virtuous side of the newly discovered land which is inhabited by the Houynhnms. He considers this tribe as the paragon of moral perfection as its rulers are virtuous and ethical. This utopian society is meant to criticize the eighteenth-century English and European societies where corruption reign supreme. In the same context of cultural exchange and vacillation between self-glorification and self-denigration, the Italian American legal and illegal immigrants in *A View* are impressed and disillusioned by the American dream. They are also torn between being ashamed of their Italian origins and celebrating the richness of their Italian culture. This identity crisis is generated by the machine of imperialism which instills in them feelings of estrangement and otherness. To better understand the dilemma of the Italian newcomers to the American soil, it is important to examine the intersection between travel literature and postcolonialism.

Postcolonial Italy

Italy can be classified as a postcolonial region because it went through a colonial past which made it a distinguished empire. What is specific about Italy is the regional strife between the developed North and the developing South. In reality, “the notion of postcolonial is grounded in the assumption that the economic and cultural effects of colonialism are still present in many countries, including Italy” (Lombardi and Romeo 2). Postcolonialism is applicable to the Italian context because Italy is still divided into an affluent North and an agrarian South with its long history of denigration. It is claimed that northerners define “Southern culture as vulgar, chaotic, devious and to a degree criminal . . . The South remains Mediterranean in its manners and

mentality whereas the North very much resembles the rest of Northern Europe.” (Bailey 135). The negative connotations related to South Italy are fine examples of the postcolonial discourse on racial, ethnic and regional inferiority. Indeed, there are many areas of convergence between Southern Italy and the postcolonial nations.

One of the stereotypes inflicted upon Southern Italy is the connections between the Southern region and the African continent. In fact, “Africa begins South of Rome is an aphorism frequently heard in the North, defensively countered by residents of Rome and the province of Lazio with the regionally biased equivalent, Africa begins South of Naples” (Bailey 135). The common point between the African continent and South Italy is the history of marginalization, as well as the struggle for belonging and equality. Like mother Africa that has been exploited for its natural resources, South Italy has been invaded because of its strategic position. The intersection between the two marginalized groups can be traced through some literary works. For example, Rosette Capotorto’s poem “We Begin with Food,” delineated the affinities between blacks and Southern Italians: “We are able to talk\ black Italian brothermothersister” (Capotorto 257). The special spelling of “brothermothersister” shows the kinship between the Black and the Italian and the common search for identity. Indeed, “Black\Italian floats in the page with the signified attached” (Lombardi 90). It is clear that the common point between the two regions is their peripheral positions and their impoverishment by the colonial powers.

Internal colonialism in Italy encouraged members of the agrarian South to emigrate. In his memoir *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, the Italian writer Carlo Levi reports that “the peasants were quieter, sadder and more dour than usual. They had no faith in a promised land which had first to be taken away from those to whom it belonged” (132). Levi is clearly exposing regional divisions and the stark inequality between the South and the North. He denounces the twentieth century fascist system for widening the regional gap and for its failure to maintain certain unifications. Despite Italy’s call for nationalism during the First and Second World Wars, the country’s regional gap was still developing. During the twentieth century, Southern Italian peasants felt “betrayed by the imperialist dream of empire in a way that mirrors their betrayal by the earlier dream of national inclusion” (Derobertis 158). The North and the South are

geographically unified, but they are culturally, economically and ideologically different. The myth of unification and notion of nationalism had previously been provoked by the Italian philosopher Gramsci who deeply criticized the hegemonic agenda in the North. In his fierce attack against the remarkable regional inequality, Antonio Gramsci declares: “In Italy, the term national has an ideologically restricted meaning, and does not in any case coincide with popular because the intellectuals are distant from the people, i.e. from the nation. They are tied instead to caste tradition that has never been broken by a strong popular or national political movement” (qtd. in Ahmad 146). He clarifies the differences between national and popular orientations and he argues that the national movement has deviated from its main purpose of caring about the proletariat in South Italy. Gramsci rendered the political regime responsible for regional disparity and he indicated the devastating effects of political hegemony in the South. Gramsci has a positive impact on postcolonial theoreticians who have been inspired by his ideas on political and ideological hegemony. For instance, in one of his interviews, Edward Said affirms that he is impressed by “the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci [because he] calls for a critical consciousness\ secular criticism” (Said, “Secular Criticism 218). Accordingly, the present paper will use a postcolonial perspective about cultural hegemony to better understand the otherness of the illegal immigrants in the play.

The Echoes of Travel Literature in *A View*:

The echoes of travel literature are manifested through the characterization of Marco whose name recalls the famous Italian traveler Marco Polo. “Marco Polo is a founding voice in Western travel writing, and his route through the Middle East and China represents a historic ground-zero for footsteps narratives” (Clarcke 141). It is not a coincidence that Miller’s illegal immigrant is named Marco. He shares with Polo the same qualities of loyalty to the native land and to the family, patience, and the spirit of adventure. In *A View*, Marco is lured by the American dream of material success and of improving his family’s financial situation. In his first appearance on stage, he talks to Eddie about the possibility of owning a house “I see it’s a small house, but soon, maybe, we can have our own house” (Act 1, 27). His utterance is punctuated with the use of dramatic irony

because the audience is aware of the difficulty of achieving dreams. Unlike Eddie who has been settled in the United States for years and who is unable to own a decent home, Marco is ironically entrapped by the myth of the American dream. He is obviously influenced by the success stories of some American businessmen during the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, the Italian American repertoire is characterized by the presence of prosperous icons. For instance, the Sbarro family is a famous Italian American family that started from scratch and became rich in a short period:

In 1956, [they] arrived in Brooklyn and soon they opened their first salumeria (Italian grocery store) . . . [Their] early success led to the opening up of a restaurant in a shopping mall, an enterprise that was so successful, that shortly afterwards, Sbarro's restaurants would be found in numerous malls and food courts. (Lagumina 60)

This success story indicates the possibility of achieving dreams in the United States. However, unlike the Sbarro family whose members were known for being skilled at preparing fresh food, Marco is an unskilled jobless immigrant who makes a living by serving people.

In his sarcastic utterance about the financial instability of Marco, his brother reveals: "sometimes they build a house, or if they fix the bridge-Marco is a Mason and I bring him the cement. In harvest time we work in the fields . . . If there is work, anything." (Act 1, 28). Marco is clearly leading a miserable life. He decides to cross the Mediterranean shores for the sake of improving his appalling conditions. Accordingly, Marco goes through moments of self-hatred as he often criticizes his Sicilian atmosphere which has made him a life-weary citizen. In reality, "self-denigration is inseparable from Italian national identity" (Capussolti et al. 208). Self-denigration crystallizes through the use of animal imagery: "the horses in our town are skinnier than goats. So if there are too many passengers we help to push the carriages up to the hotel. In our town horses are only for show . . . Everything in our town, you gotta push!" (Act 1, 28). The horses and the goats have a symbolic dimension as they stand for social inequality and the gap between the ruling aristocratic class and the working-class society whose members are treated as

scapegoats of the system. Within the Italian traditions and history, horses stand for “status and property” (Landgon 188). They are symbols of the upper class whose members become richer by exploiting the land and the labor of the proletariat. Like the horses, goats have negative connotations in the play for “the [Italian] Renaissance, the goat was usually shown in order to distinguish the sinners from the righteous” (Ferguson 19). The presence of sins shows that Marco denounces the Italian government for creating regional disparities and for investing in fields like tourism while ignoring the needs of agrarian regions. The fact of addressing domestic issues is another common point between Marco and other heroes of travel literature, like Swift’s Gulliver.

Despite the fact of being overwhelmed with feelings of self-loathing, Marco is also ambivalently proud of his Italian origins. His attachment to the mother land is made conspicuous through his commitment to his family. In an emotional utterance he informs his cousins about his wife: “She feeds them from her own mouth. I tell you the truth. If I stay there they will never grow up. They eat the sunshine” (Act 1, 29). The sunshine stands for the inner light of Marco’s wife who strives to protect her sons in the absence of the father. The image of the warm mother and her devotion to her own children can be associated with mother Italy that has long suffered to protect her own citizens. In his *Fascism and Theater*, Gurther Berghaus cites famous lines about mother Italy:

I believe in Eternal Rome, Mother of my Fatherland,
and in Italy, her first son who was begotten from her
virtual womb by the grace of God, [and] who
suffered under the Barbarian invaders was crucified
. . . And who sits in the right hand of Mother Rome
from whence it shall come in glory to judge the
quick and dead . . . I believe in the resurrection of
the Empire. (qtd. in Berghaus 55)

Loyalty to the land and to the family is one major quality of the Italian citizen. It is the case of Marco who is obsessed with providing his children with material, emotional and psychological care.

The good aspects of the Italian family are also traced through the characterization of Beatrice and the fact of receiving

her Italian cousins in her small apartment. Her apartment is described in the opening stage directions in a realistic way: “It is a worker’s flat, clean, sparse homely. There is a worker’s a rocker down front; a round dining table at center, with chairs; and a portable phonograph. At back are a bedroom door and an opening to the kitchen” (Act 1, 11). Despite the fact of residing in a tight space, the working-class family is ready to welcome the Italian cousins. Beatrice lives in a small space, but she is warm hearted and she respects family ties. Her self-abnegation appears from the very beginning of the play when she convinces her husband about accommodating Marco and Rodolpho. Her husband criticizes her as she is preoccupied with cleaning the house and trying to provide her guests with comfort. He addresses her: “They’ll think it’s a millionaire’s house compared to the way they live. Don’t worry about the walls. They’ll be thankful” (Act 1, 16). Unlike the husband who is ashamed of his Italian relatives because they were brought up in a poor region, Catherine has not forgotten the fact that she crossed the Mediterranean borders and was given the chance to lead a decent life in the United States.

Beatrice accuses her husband of being ungrateful and of being oblivious to his modest beginnings, but he responds reminding her of his support of her family at their dramatic moments: “when your father’s house burned down I didn’t end up on the floor?” (Act 1, 16). The fact of burning the house suggests Beatrice’s loss of her parental ties and her nostalgia for mother Italy. She convinces her husband to accept the cousins. The husband refuses at the beginning, but he thinks twice

“I was just thinkin” before, comin’ home, suppose my father didn’t come to this country, and I was starvin’ like them over there and I had people in America could keep me a couple of months? The man would be honored to lend me a place to sleep. (Act 1, 17)

The pathetic tone reflects the appalling conditions of Southern Italian citizens while the changing attitude of Eddie from rejecting to accepting the Italian cousins shows an inner recognition of his Italian origins. In short,

The Italian American family have been characterized by a pattern of family relations in which family loyalty, affiliation and cooperation are valued over

pursuit of individual rights and feelings, confrontation and competition. (Langumina and Frank 688)

Rodolpho is another character who decides to travel in order to move from misery to wealth. From the very beginning of the play, “the playwright details the generous spirit of the blond Italian” (Ackerman IVII). Rodolpho is impressed by the small apartment of his Italian American relatives. He confesses in a voice tinged with astonishment: “this will be the first house I ever walked into in America. Imagine! She said they were poor” (Act 1,26). The use of the term house instead of home implies the obsession with the materialistic side. In the same context of Americanization, he adds “I want to be an American And then I want to go back to Italy when I am rich, and I will buy a motorcycle” (Act 1, 30). The desire to return helps us classify Rodolpho as a traveler who immigrated for a financial purpose.

Rodolpho shares with the travel literature heroes the same feelings of otherness and the constant conflicts between the self and the other. Indeed, “one definition that we can give of travel, is that it is the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space” (Thompson 9). The idea of cultural exchange is conveyed through the way Rodolpho instructs his Americanized cousins about Italy. Eddie and Beatrice are ironically experiencing otherness through the effects of globalization and cultural conformity. The ignorance about Italy emerges when Eddie asks about piers and Rodolpho replies: “In our town, there are no piers, only the beach and the little fishing boats . . . We stand around all day in the piazza listening to the fountain like birds” (Act 1, 28). The fact of singing like birds and standing in the piazza shows that Rodolpho is a cold tempered person who uses music as a survival strategy. The piazza is a cultural Italian pillar which stands for the “docility and conservatism of Italian society by those who wished to overturn it” (Canniffe 237). In the same way, Rodolpho is implicitly giving a national message to Eddie about Italian pride and cultural richness.

The Italian cultural richness is further unveiled when Rodolpho introduces the American audience to the Italian opera:

Italian opera is different because “Italians look upon opera as a necessity, and also strictly as an

amusement, and they want it strong and good artistically and musically. They care little for the scenery—they want the acting and upon this and the music everything depends. (Burgess 23).

Rodolpho is skilled at using opera to the point of being nicknamed “the opera boy.” He sings “paper doll” in a romantic voice:

I'll tell you guys it's tough to be alone,
 And it's tough to love a doll that's not your own.
 I am through with all of them,
 I'll never fall again,
 Hey, boy, what you gonna do?
 I'm gonna buy a paper doll that I can call my own.
 (Act 1, 32)

The melodramatic tone translates Rodolpho's yearning for getting married to the Americanized cousin, Catherine. The image of the doll can be a reference to Catherine and also to mother America. He is keen about loving a doll, constructing a family and integrating into the land of opportunities. The doll can be about his travel to mother America and his optimism about integration. The light cadence and the spontaneity attract Catherine who falls in love with Rodolpho. Her love for the Italian cousin can be interpreted as an admiration of the Italian way of life. Her admiration appears when she overturns Eddie's patriarchal rules and she invites Rodolpho to dance (Act 1, 54). Her daring attempt reflects her revolutionary side and her desire to learn about Italy. Rodolpho responds in a positive way: “*He takes her hand; they go to phonograph and start it. It plays ‘Paper Doll’*” (Act 1, 58). The harmonious Italian dance reinforces the couple's longing for belonging. This smoothness is one of the major features of the Italian opera which continues to attract the American audience. Indeed, “in the 1950's and 1960's, Saint fin bar's theater groups and singers were top voted for their entertainment according to the Brooklyn Eagle, Italian themed entertainment was the most popular of all immigrants groups” (Randazzo 30). Rodolpho is an amateur who is easily accepted in Brooklyn because of his humorous side. This humor has a dramatic effect as it is used as a way of escaping the bitter reality of poverty, alienation and the absence of achievement.

Catherine goes through moments of otherness and she is keen to travel to Italy to discover her roots. She is impressed by the natural Italian views which are different from the complex, industrialized American way of life. She informs her auntie: “In Italy he says, every town’s got fountains, and they meet there. And you know what? They got oranges on the trees where he comes from and lemons. Imagine on the trees, I mean it’s interesting” (Act 1, 39). The use of the pronoun “they” suggests Catherine’s detachment and it indicates the alienation of her Italian self which has been erased because of the domination of the mainstream culture. Catherine does not know much about Italy because she was born and raised in the United States. She belongs to a new generation characterized by “the rejection of Italian ways, which were felt vital to the family code. They resisted learning higher Italian culture” (Serrentino 37). The Italian self comes to the surface when she meets Rodolpho and she shows her readiness to go back to Italy: “I could live there without being Italian. Americans live there . . . I think we would be happier there” (Act 2, 60). She can be criticized for her ambivalent behavior and for the oscillation between two contradictory poles. She is ready to travel to Italy, and she associates Italy with happiness, but she wants to be identified as an American and not as an Italian citizen. This ambivalence deepens the internal otherness of the Italian self.

Internal otherness is further reinforced by Rodolpho who links southern Italy to misery, suffering and backwardness. He reacts to Catherine’s romanticized view of Italy using the following terms: “Happier! What would you eat? You can’t cook the view” (Act 2, 60). He is poking fun at Catherine as she is impressed by the natural side and the strategic position of Southern Italy, but she forgets about the socio-economic hardships. Depicting the dramatic case in his native country, he says: “How can I bring you from a rich country to suffer in a poor country? What are you talking about? I would be a criminal stealing your face. In two years you would have an old, hungry face. When my brother’s babies cry they give them water, water that boiled a bone” (Act 2, 60). The tragic imagery of starvation is set in contradiction to American opulence. This dichotomy echoes the Manichean discourse and the imperial discourse on inferiority. The Manichean thinking is defined as “an approach to culture in which all values and concepts are split into binary opposites, one that is positive and one that is negative” (Kiguwa

129). Rodolpho internalizes this type of discourse as, for him, Southern Italy has negative connotations and he considers his existence in Brooklyn a golden chance.

Rodolpho is enthusiastic about roaming into the luxurious Brooklyn streets. He confesses to Eddie: “I would like to walk with her once where the theaters are and the opera. Since I was a boy I see pictures of those lights” (Act 1, 39). He is obviously impressed by the bright side of the American dream and he continues to compare the superiority of the mainstream culture to the inferiority of his native land. The discourse of power, along with the unequal distribution of wealth in Italy, stimulates his desire to be identified as an American citizen: “I want to be an American so that I can work” (Act 2, 61). In this context, he informs Catherine in a tone loaded with dejection: “I will not marry you to live in Italy. I want you to be my wife, and I want to be a citizen. Tell him that, or I will . . . I AM NOT a beggar, and you are not a horse, a gift, a favor of a poor immigrant” (Act 2, 61). Rodolpho rejects Eddie’s accusations and he shows his genuine love for Catherine by convincing her of his good intentions. His dramatic situation stems from being handicapped by his financial status. The description of ugly reality proves Miller’s use of naturalism to dramatize the situation of the illegal immigrant. His feelings of internal otherness are heightened by the external otherness exercised by the Italian American cousin.

Internal otherness has thus been traced through the characterization of Marco, Rodolpho and Catherine. The Italian characters are classified into two categories: the legal immigrants who came during the first half of the twentieth century and the illegal immigrants who have just crossed the ocean and are seeking employment. The common point between the Italian and the Italian American characters is self-fragmentation. The split originates from the oscillation between self-glorification and self-hatred. From a postcolonial perspective, the ambivalence between sharing good memories about Italy and criticizing the domestic issues is an outcome of Manichean discourse. The intersection between travel studies and a Saidian postcolonial reading of ethnic ambivalence has shown that geography plays a fundamental role in reshaping the mindscape of the traveler or the immigrant.

The movement in terms of place and space has changed Rodolpho and Marco’s way of thinking about America and Italy. They have discovered that Italy has not provided them with

material comfort, but it is a place to which they yearn to return. In this respect, Marco often thinks about his little family and he keeps repeating: “We have many families in our town, the children never saw the father. But I will go home. Three, four years, I think” (Act 1, 52). The desire to go back to Italy implies a desire to preserve one’s roots. On the other hand, Rodolpho used to be impressed by the American way of life at the beginning of the play, but he has adopted a more realistic view by the final scene. He is convinced that the American society is one in which ethnic minimization reigns supreme. The changing attitude about the natives and the newly discovered regions remains one of the major features of a traveler.

Rodolpho and Marco are different from Eddie and Alfieri because they landed in the United States in a critical period. It is a period of restrictions in terms of accepting immigrants. The brothers are dramatically resented by Eddie who is ashamed of them. The next part will delve into the gap between civil and natural laws, the idea of external otherness and the disillusionment with the American dream of ethnic integration. The aim is to better understand the effects of the postcolonial discourse on inferiority and the intersection between the postcolonial studies and travel writings.

The Accultured Eddie and the Betrayal of Italian Roots

The divided house can be best exemplified through the characterization of Eddie and his rejection of the newly arrived Italian cousins. Eddie has a fragmented self because he vacillates between accepting Rodolpho and Marco and reporting them to the immigration bureau. From a postcolonial perspective, his contradictory attitudes can be considered an effect of the stereotypes engendered by the dominant mainstream culture. In his definition of travel theories, the postcolonial theoretician Edward Said writes: “Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity” (115). Eddie’s unconscious side is influenced by American stereotypes of Italian immigrants, which shaped his denial of his native roots. One of the stereotypes inflicted upon Italian

immigrants during the twentieth century in America was the association of Italians with mafia groups and violence. A journalist named Helene Stapinski wrote in *The New York Times* during the First World War era: “Certain kinds of criminality are inherent in the Italian race. In the popular mind, crimes of personal violence, robbery and blackmail and extortion are peculiar to people of Italy” (qtd. in Gale 7). We infer through this statement that Italian immigrants are stereotyped as being criminals in the United States and the American government reacted by restricting the number of Italian immigrants. Indeed, “the immigration act of 1924 . . . cut immigration from Italy by some 90 percent” (Gale 8). In *A View*, the restriction of immigration is represented by the immigration Bureau. Eddie defines the Bureau to his wife:

This is the United States government you’re playing with now, this is the immigration Bureau . . . They got stool pigeons over this neighborhood, they’re paying them every week for information. Vinny Bolzano . . . They spit him in the street, his own father and his brothers. The whole neighborhood was cryin. (Act 1, 23)

The Immigration Bureau is introduced as an organized association which aims at punishing the illegal immigrants. The example of Bolanzo who is treated violently way shows Miller’s criticism of the American system. Italian immigrants are stereotyped for being violent, but they are also subjected to violence.

Miller’s criticism of the Immigration Bureau and his reaction against restricting immigration can be traced through the confrontation between Eddie and the illegal immigrants in the play. Eddie resorts to the Immigration Bureau because he wants to put an end to the relationship between Catherine and Rodolpho. He tries to convince her: “He’s only bowin’ o his passport . . . He marries he’s got the right to be an American citizen. That’s what’s going on here” (Act 1, 41). He argues that Rodolpho wants to take advantage and he wants to get married to Catherine in order to be treated as an American citizen. Eddie does not believe in the natural love and the deep attachment between Rodolpho and Catherine. When she talks to him about love, he pokes fun at her and he answers “They been pullin’ this

since the Immigration Law was put in! They grab a green kid that don't know nothin' and they—" (Act 1, 42). The use of pejorative terms like "grab," and "pulling" casts doubt about the true intentions of Rodolpho and the belief that illegal immigrants can use legal and illegal means to fulfill their goals. Accordingly, Eddie uses the law to defy the natural relationship of the couple. Richards explains:

Eddie's alienation from Italian culture reflects the moral vacuum that leads to the betrayal of the best values of both Italian and American culture. The betrayal deforms the humane character and the values of Italian American family life. (Richards 207)

The inhuman act of betraying the cousins marks the climactic scene of the play. It occurs when the officers threaten Marco and Rodolpho and when Marco accuses Eddie of destroying his family: "That one! He killed my children! That one stole the food from my children" (Act 2, 77). Eddie can be criticized for being selfish as he does not show any loyalty to his Italian roots.

The exclusion of the fresh Italian immigrants is furthered through the theme of the gap between natural and civil law. The civil law is represented by the Italian American lawyer Alfieri who has an objective view about the Italian rivals in the play. The lawyer explains the differences between natural law and civil law:

A lawyer means the law, and in Sicily, from where their fathers came, the law has not been a friendly idea since the Greeks were beaten. I am inclined to notice the ruins of things, perhaps because I was born in Italy. (Act 1, 12)

Alfieri notices that the civil law is an alien notion in Italy where natural law reigns supreme. The natural law is exemplified through the romantic relationship between Catherine and Rodolpho. In this respect, the Italian lawyer questions the notion of justice in the United States. "When the law is wrong it's because it's unnatural, but in this case it is natural and a river will drown you if you buck it now" (Act 2, 66). He is obviously giving priority to the natural law over the illegal laws of social discrimination. The voice of Alfieri can be a reflection of the voice of Miller who has partially succeeded in celebrating Italian culture and

defending the rights of illegal immigrants. He gives voice to the voiceless when Rodolpho, at the end of the play, has the opportunity to become an American. Alfieri declares, “When she marries him he can start to become an American. They permit that if the wife is an American” (Act 2, 78). Pure love functions as a source of redemption for Rodolpho who is endowed with the chance of being an American citizen.

Unlike Rodolpho who is morally victorious and morphs from a traveler to a legal immigrant and an American citizen, Eddie is ruined by his own deeds. In the last scene, the illegal immigrant is endowed with the chance of being a decent member of American society, but the legal immigrant is killed by his own knife. His flaw is his arrogance and his obliviousness to the traumatic past of his Italian parents who went through the same trajectory as Rodolpho and Marco. However, the difference between the first generation of Italian immigrants and the fresh travelers in the play lies in the passage of time and the change of conditions. Unlike Eddie’s parents who landed in the United States during the agrarian era when America was depicted as an earthly paradise, the fresh travelers have come in a critical period of capitalistic dominance. On the other hand, Eddie’s main flaw is his obsession with preserving his family, his pride, his honor and his work, which leads him to forgetting about his origins. This denial of his Italian roots can be explained from a postcolonial perspective as the effect of acculturation and geography in heightening his feelings of ethnic alienation. Edward Said insists on the role of geography in monitoring the way of thinking. He writes “that everything, including civil society, but really the whole world is organized according to geography” (qtd. in Hussein 13). In the same way, Eddie’s upbringing in Brooklyn has influenced his way of thinking and has distanced him from his native culture. Before leaving the stage, Alfieri highlights the pure side of Eddie:

The truth is holy, and even as I know how wrong he was, and his death useless, I tremble, for I confess that something pervasively pure calls to me from his memory. . . I think I will love him more than all my sensible clients. (Act 2, 85)

Eddie is condemned as being faulty for his intolerant attitudes throughout the play and for being responsible for his own tragic

fall. Yet, he is one of the memorable characters for Alfieri and also for the audience because he is a committed person who is devoted to his job and his family. His otherness remains one of the devastating effects of postcolonial discourse. The play closes with the death of Eddie and the rebirth of Rodolpho. The process of decolonization occurs at the end of the play when the illegal immigrant gets integrated within the mainstream culture. The main quality of the illegal immigrant lies in being faithful to his roots and what is specific about Rodolpho is his desire to return to Italy.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Miller invites the audience to travel into Italian culture, discern its positive and negative aspects and grasp the plight of Southern Italian American immigrants. Rodolpho and Marco started their journey as mere travelers who landed on the American shores to improve their economic conditions. The brothers introduce their Americanized cousins to Italian culture, music, opera, maxims of family sanctity, natural love and spiritual union. They have to go through moments of otherness because of Eddie's repulsion. A closer look from the Brooklyn Bridge changes their attitudes towards America as they become disillusioned with the American dream and they embrace a less romantic view of this country and a more nostalgic view regarding Italy. They also raised some Italian domestic issues. The common point between the modern travelers of the play and the classical travelers resides in raising these domestic issues and in comparing the social and economic flaws at home to affluence abroad. The travelers therefore undergo bitter moments of otherness. The play is teeming with examples of external and internal otherness.

The intersection between travel literature and Edward Said's postcolonial reading of ethnic identity has helped us reach the conclusion that otherness is incurred by the myth of superiority. This paper shows that "the postcolonial discourse may emerge not only as an emanation of the postcolonial periphery but as an expression of subalternity from within the nation state, and therefore away from traditional geographies of power" (Lombardi 4). The inner strife has been analyzed through a deep insight into the characterization of the illegal immigrants and the reaction of the acculturated Eddie. At the end of the play, Miller blurs the boundaries of marginalization when he sets

Rodolpho free and gives him the chance to move from being a traveler, an illegal immigrant and an alienated character to being an American citizen. On the other hand, the death of the accultured Eddie stands for the failure of cleansing ethnic roots. The merit of Miller remains his sympathy with the downtrodden Italian immigrants, his revival of Italian culture and his resistance to the different forms of ethnic denigration.

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L'opposition nature-civilisation entre les récits de voyage et les abstractions philosophiques du siècle des Lumières en France

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Les réflexions et les débats autour du couple nature-civilisation occupent le devant de la scène philosophique et littéraire des Lumières en France. L'indigène, perçu comme 'homme naturel' est au centre de l'attention tant des lecteurs des récits de voyages qui inondent le XVIII^e siècle que des philosophes qui s'insurgent contre les défauts des systèmes politiques européens. En effet, le XVIII^e siècle voit non seulement la focalisation de l'attention sur l'opposition entre les deux mondes, mais on observe la première occurrence du terme civilisation dans *L'Ami des hommes* de Mirabeau (1757). L'emploi du verbe civiliser est plus ancien et renvoie à la conversion religieuse des indigènes américains qui entraînait une transformation de leur mode de vie et pratiques sociales. Dès le début du XVII^e siècle les jésuites se servent fréquemment du verbe civiliser dans leurs récits sur le continent américain. Pierre du Jarric désigne ainsi la transition du mode de vie nomade des 'sauvages' à la vie sédentaire des 'civilisés' dans son *Histoire des choses plus mémorables advenues tant ez Indes Orientales, qu'autres païs de la descouverte des Portugais, en l'establisement et progrez de la foy Chrétienne et Catholique* (1608-1614). Un autre exemple est l'œuvre d'un missionnaire capucin, Yves d'Evreux, *Voyage dans le nord du Brésil fait durant les années 1613 et 1614*, de 1615, où l'auteur déclare qu' "il est aisé de civiliser les sauvages à la façon des Français". De surcroît, il avance: "ils sont beaucoup plus aisés à civiliser que le commun de nos paysans en France" (D'Evreux 64).

Aux yeux des Européens, les indigènes américains ou sud-africains, de même que les habitants des îles pacifiques vivaient dans un état aussi primitif qu'on les percevait comme 'hommes naturels' dépourvus de culture. Qu'il s'agisse de la figure du 'noble sauvage' ou du 'féroce cannibale,' ils étaient relégués en dehors de culture, privés des acquis de civilisation et libres de ses contraintes. Ce type d'imaginaire collectif nourri par des récits de voyage des missionnaires, mais aussi des marins et des militaires, offrait le climat particulier dans lequel les philosophes ont élaboré leurs abstractions utilisées dans leur attaque contre la monarchie absolutiste. Sous leur plume, le terme civilisation subit des modifications de sa signification, l'accent se plaçant sur les aspects de contrainte, d'hypocrisie, et de corruption. Si la conversion des indigènes par les jésuites représentait au XVIII^e siècle le modèle de 'civilisation' le plus répandu, avec les philosophes des Lumières, cette notion subit un renversement décisif. Néanmoins, les philosophes ne sont pas les seuls à noter les abus du 'processus de civilisation'. Les voyageurs le dénoncent parfois, eux aussi, et louent la simplicité et la noblesse des 'sauvages'. L'un d'eux est le célèbre navigateur Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, premier français à effectuer une circumnavigation, décrite dans son *Voyage autour du monde* publié en 1771. En effet, son passage dédié à l'Amérique du Sud commence par rendre hommage à l'effort des missionnaires:

Les obstacles furent infinis, les difficultés renaissant à chaque pas; le zèle triompha de tout, et la douceur des missionnaires amena enfin à leurs pieds ces farouches habitants des bois. En effet, ils les réunirent dans les habitations, leur donnèrent des lois, introduisirent chez eux les arts utiles et agréables; enfin, d'une nation barbare, sans mœurs et sans religion, ils en firent un peuple doux, policé, exact observateur des cérémonies chrétiennes. (Bougainville 29-30)

L'image des 'sauvages' de Paraguay offerte ici se rapproche de celle de l'abstraction de Rousseau dans son fameux *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755). Les indigènes sont imaginés comme nomades dispersés dans les bois et dépourvus de tout type de culture matérielle ou intellectuelle, de tout type d'organisation sociale ou politique.

Nous voyons, donc que cette sorte d'imagination du 'degré zéro' de culture n'est pas un trait exclusif de l'abstraction philosophique. Si elle représente le point de départ de la critique de la civilisation européenne menée par Rousseau, on note cette tendance déjà dans la perception générale de l'époque. L'image du 'bon sauvage' doit beaucoup à l'idéologie coloniale, c'est son mythe justificateur, dont les tenants ont été exploités et renversés ensuite dans la réflexion de Rousseau.

Mais, l'assimilation de la civilisation à la corruption n'est entièrement étrangère à l'imaginaire collectif de l'époque. Ainsi, Bougainville parle de "la crainte que les vices des Européens ne diminuassent la ferveur des néophytes, ne les éloignassent même du christianisme, et que la hauteur espagnole ne leur rendit odieux un joug trop appesanti" (Bougainville 29). Enfin, la vie quotidienne des indigènes 'civilisés' offre au navigateur l'occasion de reconnaître les vrais résultats de la mission, qu'il dénonce vivement. Privés de liberté, ils languissaient assujettis à l'uniformité d'un travail rigoureusement surveillé:

Cet ennui, qu'avec raison on dit mortel, suffit pour expliquer ce qu'on nous a dit: qu'ils quittaient la vie sans la regretter, et qu'ils mouraient sans avoir vécu. Quand une fois ils tombaient malades, il était rare qu'ils guérissent; et lorsqu'on leur demandait alors si de mourir les affligeait, ils répondaient que non . . . Au reste, les jésuites nous représentaient ces Indiens comme une espèce d'hommes qui ne pouvait jamais atteindre qu'à l'intelligence des enfants; la vie qu'ils menaient empêchait ces grands enfants d'avoir la gaieté des petits. (Bougainville 34)

Ce témoignage perturbant offre un fort contraste par rapport à l'image qu'on trouve dans les récits de certains des missionnaires eux-mêmes. En effet, c'est leur esprit empreint par Virgile et Plutarque qui les disposait à reconnaître aux sauvages des vertus qui jetaient une ombre sur celles de civilisés. Le titre du récit du père Lafitau, *Des Mœurs des sauvages américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724) dit beaucoup sur son estime des peuples américains. Bons, affables et hospitaliers, ce sont "des hommes tels que si le monde ne faisait naître que pour eux" (Lafitau 107). Cette image renvoie à celle donnée par Rousseau, qui considère l'homme "tel qu'il a dû sortir des mains

de la nature ” (Rousseau 18), ou par Diderot, qui parle du Tahitien qui “touche à l'origine du monde” (Diderot 7). L'imaginaire de Lafitau, nourri par Homère et Hérodote fait une grille de lecture des paysages et des habitants de l'Amérique assez déformante, ce qui jette une lumière sur les sources classiques de la théorie de Rousseau. On pense au procédé habituel des moralistes classiques, à l'âge d'or dépeint par Virgile, à l'image des Germains primitifs, “farouches mais vertueux”, de Tacite. Ces écrivains montraient à leurs compatriotes la simplicité de l'homme de la nature, et l'innocence des temps passés en contraste avec les vices contemporains. À la fin du XV^e siècle, la découverte de l'Amérique ébranla les esprits, et l'image de la vie pastorale et idyllique, reçue de l'antiquité subit une exotisation:

Reprise et appuyée sur des faits plus ou moins exacts par des voyageurs épris d'antiquité, la théorie de la bonté de l'homme sauvage est devenue un lieu commun dans les récits de voyage du XVIII^e siècle. Elle reste cependant confinée dans cette littérature un peu spéciale, noyée sous un fatras de détails oiseux jusqu'au jour où Rousseau croira la découvrir et la présentera toute simple et toute nue au grand public. (Chinard 492)

Mais, l'esprit de tous les voyageurs n'était pas empreint de l'âge d'or classique: les soldats, les marchands et les marins regardaient les peuples indigènes à travers un prisme tout autre. Pour eux, les ‘sauvages’ représentaient avant tout un obstacle dans leur poursuite de gain. Leur perspective nous offre l'image opposée du noble sauvage de Rousseau, celle du cannibale. Dans son essai *Colonial Encounters Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (1986), Peter Hulme présente une étude de la construction de l'opposition entre Caraïbes et Arawaks dans le discours colonial. Dès l'arrivée de Christophe Colomb, les premiers étaient construits comme des féroces cannibales et les seconds comme des nobles sauvages, disposés à aider les arrivants de l'autre côté de l'océan. Les missionnaires de l'ordre des Récollets étaient engagés dans la conversion de Caraïbes et les considéraient comme des bêtes abruties. P. Hennepin les décrit ainsi:

Il n'y a plus qu'un petit nombre de cette nation; et outre qu'ils se détruisent tous les jours eux-mêmes, les Anglais travaillent à les exterminer entièrement. Dieu, je crois, le permet ainsi, parce qu'ils font une trop grande injure au Créateur par leur vie de bêtes, et qu'ils ne veulent point le reconnaître: quoi qu'on leur ait pu dire depuis vingt ans, ils s'en moquent: et s'il y avait lieu d'espérer de les faire chrétiens il faudrait premièrement les civiliser et les faire hommes. (Hennepin 503-504)

Cet extrait si affligeant du récit *Voyages curieux et nouveaux de M.M. Hennepin et de La Borde* montre que l'extermination des indigènes ne décontenance pas trop le missionnaire. De surcroît, à sa conviction que seule la conversion religieuse puisse leur offrir une voie de sortie de leur 'dépravation' se rajoute l'improbabilité de sa réussite, et leur animalité paraît inaltérable. C'est un regard essentialisant qui fige à jamais les Caraïbes dans la condition de bêtes qu'il leur attribue.

De l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, la monarchie absolutiste suscitant toujours davantage de critiques, ses aberrations et injustices ressortaient le mieux sur un fond qui lui était diamétralement opposé. La vie des indigènes offrait un fort contraste à son luxe excessif, à son hypocrisie et à ses contraintes. Elle s'incorporait ainsi à différentes constructions utopiques qui offraient le lieu propice d'où lancer les flèches contre l'absolutisme européen. Gilbert Chinard affirme à ce propos:

Rien de plus dangereux et, au fond, de plus redoutable dans ses conséquences pour une monarchie absolue, que tous ces récits de voyages qui vont inonder le XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Ils vont habituer le public à cette idée que les hommes peuvent vivre heureux et vertueux sans lois, sans rois et sans droit écrit; quand Rousseau publiera le *Discours sur l'Inégalité* il trouvera un terrain préparé de longue main. (Chinard 485)

Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ou la suite des Voyages de M. le baron de la Hontane ou Voyages de Lahontan, est le récit d'un homme militaire, un colon de surcroît, mais qui était capable d'écrire qu'il envie le sort du pauvre sauvage ou

encore qu'il souhaiterait passer le reste de sa vie dans sa cabane. Lahontan affirme également que les sauvages se moquent des sciences et des arts et trouvent les européens misérables puisqu'ils se réduisent à la servitude d'un seul homme qui peut tout et qui n'a d'autre loi que sa volonté (*Voyages de Lahontan*, tome III). Dans les yeux du voyageur, la corruption des Européens vient de la distinction du tien et du mien, de leurs lois, juges et prêtres. Cette dénonciation de la propriété des biens anticipe les affirmations de Rousseau dans le *Contrat Social*.

Néanmoins, Rousseau affirme que les témoignages des voyageurs sont peu fiables: "Depuis trois ou quatre cents ans que les habitants de l'Europe inondent les autres parties du monde de nouveaux recueils de voyages et relations, je suis persuadé que nous ne connaissons d'hommes que les seuls Européens" (Rousseau 72). Le seul voyageur qui serait capable de la distance nécessaire pour une perception correcte des différences et spécificités de chaque peuple serait le philosophe:

Supposons un Montesquieu, un Buffon, un Diderot, un Duclos, un d'Alembert, un Condillac ou des hommes de cette trempe voyageant pour instruire leurs compatriotes, observant et décrivant comme ils savent faire . . . nous verrions même sortir un monde nouveau de dessous leur plume, et nous apprendrions ainsi à connaître le nôtre. Je dis que quand de pareils observateurs affirmeront d'un tel animal que c'est un homme, et d'un autre que c'est une bête, il faudra les en croire, mais ce serait une grande simplicité de s'en rapporter à des voyageurs grossiers sur lesquels on serait quelquefois tenté de faire la même question qu'ils se mêlent de résoudre sur d'autres animaux. (Rousseau 73)

Cette critique des voyageurs contraste fort avec les affirmations de la note VI concernant les sources de ses exemples et illustrations: "comme il ne faut que des yeux pour observer ces choses, rien n'empêche qu'on n'ajoute foi à ce que certifient là-dessus des témoins oculaires, j'en tire au hasard quelques exemples des premiers livres qui me tombent sous la main" (Rousseau 59). La question de la démarcation entre les hommes et les bêtes que Rousseau évoque est plus déconcertante encore. En effet, dans l'imaginaire collectif de l'époque, la question

(impensable aujourd'hui) si les sauvages étaient hommes ou bêtes, ou s'ils avaient une âme, était habituelle.

Néanmoins, que Rousseau l'eut reconnu ou pas, certains voyageurs étaient capables de se distancier du regard habituel. Entre autres, l'auteur de *l'Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (1609) s'insurge contre le terme 'sauvages' qui désigne généralement les indigènes, "quoy qu'ils soient sans comparaison autant humains que nous". Il est le premier voyageur à se lancer dans une réhabilitation systématique des indigènes et à dire: "pour la cruauté à la guerre, ny Hespagnols, ny Flamens ny Français ne leur devons rien en ce regard" (*Lescarbot* 554). Lescarbot affirme ensuite "qu'ils ont autant d'humanité et plus d'hospitalité que nous . . . ils ne sont point si brutaux, stupides ou lourdaux qu'on pourrait penser . . . quoique nuds ils ne laissent point d'avoir les vertus qui se trouvent es hommes civilisés" (*Lescarbot* 779).

Ce qui est incontestable, c'est que Rousseau utilise les récits d'un grand nombre de voyageurs pour illustrer ses propos dans le *Discours*. Quoiqu' il affirme: "ce n'est pas une légère entreprise de démêler ce qu'il y a d'originaire et d'artificiel dans le caractère actuel de l'homme, et de bien connaître un état qui n'existe plus, qui n'a peut-être point existé, qui probablement n'existera jamais" (Rousseau 16), ses réflexions et conjectures sont étayées par les images venant des récits de voyage décrivant l'homme 'sauvage' tel qu'il était perçu par Kolben, Du Tertre, Gautier, Coreal, Laët, Prevost, Purchass et Dapper. Même la terminologie employée par Rousseau est problématique. Pour dépeindre l'homme dans l'état qui précédait la civilisation, antérieur à toute communication (qui ne sera rendue possible que par la formation de premiers groupements et sociétés), Rousseau utilise le même terme qu'il emploie ensuite dans ses illustrations: homme sauvage. Les activités et les qualités des indigènes sont utilisées comme exemplaires du comportement de l'homme dans l'état de nature, et désignées par le même mot: sauvage. La différence majeure entre l'appartenance à une société (qui caractérise les Caraïbes ou les Hottentotes) et l'isolement (qui caractérise l'homme de l'abstraction) ne représente aucun obstacle pour le philosophe.

Ainsi, dans sa contestation des thèses de Hobbes sur la méchanceté innée de l'être humain, Rousseau affirme que l'agressivité détectée par celui-ci ne serait due qu'à la peur, alors que l'homme naturel, vivant sans rapport avec ses congénères et dispersé parmi les animaux n'a aucune raison de craindre ni les

uns ni les autres. Pour étayer cette hypothèse, il se sert du récit du voyageur espagnol François Coreal:

Les Caraïbes de Venezuela vivent entre eux [bêtes féroces] à cet égard dans la plus profonde sécurité et sans le moindre inconvénient. Quoiqu'ils soient presque nus, dit François Coreal, ils ne laissent pas de s'exposer hardiment dans les bois armés seulement de la flèche et de l'arc; mais on n'a jamais ouï dire qu'aucun d'eux ait été dévoré par les bêtes. (Rousseau 19)

La phrase: "le premier qui se fit des habits ou un logement se donna en cela les choses peu nécessaires"(Rousseau 40), dans l'édition de l'1782 du *Discours*, est précisée par une note en bas de page où le philosophe cite Coreal et le géographe, naturaliste et philologue hollandais Laët, auteur de la compilation *Nouveau Monde ou la Description des Indes Occidentales* (1625), publié en français en 1640.

En parlant des besoins modérés du sauvage, dépourvu de l'imagination qui fournit aux civilisés des besoins superflus les rendant malheureux, Rousseau attribue ce manque au peuple des Caraïbes:

Qui ne voit que tout semble éloigner de l'homme sauvage la tentation et les moyens de cesser de l'être? Son imagination ne lui peint rien; son cœur ne lui demande rien. Ses modiques besoins se trouvent si aisément sous la main, et il est si loin du degré de connaissances nécessaires pour désirer d'en acquérir de plus grandes qu'il ne peut avoir ni prévoyance ni curiosité . . . Son âme, que rien n'agite, se livre au seul sentiment de son existence actuelle, sans aucune idée de l'avenir, quelque prochain qu'il puisse être, et ses projets bornés comme ses vues, s'étendent à peine jusqu'à la fin de la journée. Tel est encore aujourd'hui le degré de prévoyance du Caraïbe: il vend le matin son lit de coton, et vient pleurer le soir pour le racheter, faute d'avoir prévu qu'il en aura besoin pour la nuit prochaine. (Rousseau 23)

À part des Caraïbes, Rousseau parle encore des Hottentots, dont il tire les informations du *Voyage entre les Hottentots* (1713) et de la *Description du Cap de la bonne espoir* (1741). Comme les Caraïbes, les Khosian ou Hottentots entrent dans l’imaginaire littéraire européen dès leur découverte vers la fin du XV^e siècle. Les marins en route pour l’Orient et les colons en transmettent une image qui entre ensuite dans les débats philosophiques concernant l’origine des langues et des peuples. La figure du Hottentot qui s’y dessine représente l’homme ‘premier’ ou ‘liminal’, doté des traits qui l’éloignent des réalités africaines, et le rapprochent des préoccupations des salons parisiens. Dans son *Knowledge and Colonialism: Eighteenth-Century Travellers in South Africa*, Siegfried Huigen souligne:

These representations are also frequently mixed, as in Voltaire’s *Essay sur les mœurs* (1761) and in an article by De Jacourt on the Hottentots in *Encyclopédie* (1765). Kolb’s enlightened Hottentot gained its greatest prominence in Rousseau’s *Discours sur les origines et le fondement de l’inégalité parmi les hommes* . . . Kolb’s work in the form of a summary in the *Histoire Générale des Voyages* (1748), was his main source of information on Hottentots. (Huigen 57)

Rousseau introduit les Hottentots dans la troisième note de son *Discours*, qui a pour but de décider si l’homme est naturellement bipède. À ce propos, il affirme: “Il y a même des nations sauvages, tels que les Hottentots, qui négligent beaucoup les enfants, les laissent marcher sur les mains si longtemps, qu’ils ont ensuite bien de la peine à les redresser; autant en font les enfants des Caraïbes et des Antilles” (Rousseau 55-56). Ensuite, il revient sur le peuple sud-africain dans la note VI qui commence par une distinction des connaissances qui demandent de la réflexion, de celles qui ne relèvent que de l’adresse physique. Les premières “semblent être tout à fait hors de la portée de l’homme sauvage, faute de communication avec ses semblables, c’est-à-dire faute de l’instrument qui sert à cette communication et des besoins qui la rendent nécessaire” (Rousseau 59). Le savoir de l’homme sauvage se limite alors “à sauter, courir, se battre, lancer une pierre, escalader un arbre” (Rousseau 59). Pour récompenser l’absence des qualités intellectuelles chez le sauvage, Rousseau

insiste sur sa supériorité physique, et pour l'illustrer, il se sert de la description des Hottentots. Bien qu'il soit évident que le philosophe ne peut pas les assimiler à cet état caractérisé par l'absence de liens sociaux et du langage, qui est l'outil principal de la réflexion, il est déconcertant de les voir illustrer cet état (quoiqu'il s'agisse d'une louange de leur adresse physique). À part Kolben, Rousseau cite à ce propos également Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, qui "dit à peu près sur les sauvages des Antilles les mêmes choses qu'on vient de lire sur les Hottentots du cap de Bonne-Espérance" (Rousseau 72). L'adresse des Indiens de l'Amérique du Sud est ajoutée aux images précédentes à travers les témoignages de l'*Histoire naturelle* de M. Gautier.

De l'autre côté, le spectacle des 'sauvages' amenés en France n'était pas aussi exceptionnel qu'on pourrait le penser. Ainsi, en 1551 "une véritable colonie d'Indiens venus du Brésil campe sur les rives de la Seine" (Chinard 481). Déjà chez Montaigne (qui s'est entretenu avec eux à l'aide d'un interprète) se forme la pensée que les indigènes vivent selon la loi de la nature et mènent ainsi une vie plus heureuse que nous. Cette vie, pour Rousseau tant que pour Diderot, devient synonyme de liberté et de transparence de l'homme vis-à-vis de soi-même et vis-à-vis de l'autre. Mais, alors que Rousseau prétend douter de la crédibilité des récits, Diderot prétend insister sur la véracité des observations d'un voyageur en particulier: Louis Antoine de Bougainville, dont le *Voyage* il prend comme point de départ de sa construction utopique de l'île de Tahiti. L'attaque du vieux Tahitien contre la civilisation occidentale dans le *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* (1796) est assez proche du sens et même des mots du texte de Bougainville. Néanmoins, Diderot invite le lecteur dans un jeu ironique en introduisant deux interlocuteurs anonymes, A et B qui lisent ensemble le *Supplément*. Connaissant le récit de Bougainville, B est ébloui par la fraîcheur et liberté de la société tahitienne. Quand A pose une question provocante à B: "Est-ce que vous donneriez dans la fable de Tahiti?", B répond: "ce n'est point une fable; et vous n'auriez aucun doute sur la sincérité de Bougainville, si vous connaissiez le supplément de son voyage" (Diderot 7). Comme le souligne Henri Coulet, Diderot "allègue comme preuve de vérité un récit entièrement imaginaire, qui ne peut offrir quelque vérité que si elle lui vient du *Voyage* de Bougainville lui-même: façon plaisante d'avouer que c'est le *Supplément* qui est une fable" (Coulet 124).

Si au début du texte, B affirme que le Tahitien touche à l'origine du monde, et l'Européen à sa vieillesse, l'indigène dépeint par Diderot n'est pas le sauvage dépourvu de langue et de tout lien social. Il existe à Tahiti diverses formes de relations et de rôles sociaux, ainsi qu'une morale particulière qui guide les Tahitiens. En effet, l'opposition nature-civilisation n'est pas exacerbée dans le texte de Diderot. On serait plutôt tenté de voir dans le *Supplément* les ébauches d'un certain relativisme culturel, qui se révélerait être en tension avec l'universalisme de sa pensée. En effet, le philosophe présente dans son *Supplément* la possibilité de deux mondes à l'envers du monde européen: l'île de Tahiti et l'île des Lanciers. Ce sont deux mondes diamétralement opposés: alors que la morale tahitienne est organisée autour du besoin de favoriser la natalité, l'exiguïté de l'île des Lanciers enjoint une limitation sévère de sa croissance démographique. Cela engendre des mœurs atroces: l'anthropophagie, l'infanticide, l'homicide rituel, la castration des mâles, l'infibulation des femelles, qui sont "tant d'usages d'une cruauté nécessaire et bizarre" (Diderot 5). En effet, c'est l'exiguïté de l'île, la nature elle-même qui exige ces pratiques d'extrême cruauté, et ces deux mondes renversés indiquent la conscience que Diderot a des limites de son propre naturalisme. En effet, il se voit obligé à y renoncer, d'où la prudence finale dans le dialogue: "A.[...] Que ferons-nous donc? Reviendrons-nous à la nature? Nous soumettrons-nous aux lois? B. Nous parlerons contre les lois insensées jusqu'à ce qu'on les réforme; et, en attendant, nous nous y soumettrons" (Diderot 42); ou, encore la phrase indiquant le relativisme: "Prendre le froc du pays où l'on va, et garder celui du pays où l'on est" (Diderot 43).

En effet le dialogue de A et B souligne l'aporie de la pensée de Diderot concernant le droit naturel et la transpose sur le plan politique: la décivilisation menant vers l'"anarchie de nature", et celle-ci vers une forme de hobbisme, qui, pour sa part, engendre les régimes autoritaires peu souhaitables. Si certains ont vu en Sade l'héritier de Diderot, Jacques Domenech s'y oppose dans son livre *Éthique des Lumières* (1989), en soulignant que ce dernier ne renonce pas à la justice et au bien commun (Domenech 104-111). Vigiliano précise alors: "Mais si Diderot a tenté de penser la redoutable objection qui devait être celle de Sade, on ne peut pas dire pour autant qu'il y soit parvenu. *Le Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* signe au contraire l'échec de son effort pour

pousser jusqu'au bout sa réflexion politique, et par suite, pour renverser le monde tel qu'il est" (Vigiliano 17).

Si, au début du *Supplément*, la harangue du vieux Tahitien semble remettre en cause la civilisation occidentale de façon radicale, il s'avère évident vers la fin que Diderot ne peut pas partager les positions radicales qui semblent être celles de Rousseau. Tant les dernières lignes de l'ouvrage, "Imitons le bon aumônier, moine en France, sauvage dans Tahiti" (Diderot, 43), que d'autres textes de Diderot de la même période, telle *La réfutation de Helvétius* ou ses contributions à l'*Histoire des deux Indes* de Raynal indiquent une confrontation avec les thèses de son "frère ennemi", qui aboutit à une distanciation assez nette des positions de Rousseau (Goggi 353-354).

Le code naturel s'est révélé problématique pour Diderot, alors que pour l'anthropologie contemporaine, la réduction de l'état sauvage à l'acculturation totale de l'homme, se révèle impossible. Rousseau comme Diderot a cherché à représenter le point de départ de l'humanité et son point de déclin. Comme le formule Diderot, "Le Tahitien touche à l'origine du monde, et l'Européen touche à sa vieillesse" (Diderot 7). Or, comme on sait bien aujourd'hui, ce point de départ, cet 'homme naturel' n'est qu'une fantaisie, la communication et la vie en groupe étant présentes depuis le début (Geertz). Comme le formule Terry Eagleton, la culture est la 'nature' de l'homme. En effet, les philosophes ont été amenés à réfléchir sur l'état liminal entre l'animalité et l'humanité pour "démêler ce qu'il y a d'originaire et d'artificiel dans le caractère actuel de l'homme" selon la formule de Rousseau. Diderot se montre plus ambigu, partant des affirmations sur le sentiment de la liberté du Tahitien qui est "le plus profond des sentiments" (Diderot 7), pour finir par reconnaître diverses conventions de leur société, leurs lois et contraintes sociales. Enfin, il termine son texte par prôner le respect des lois de chaque pays donné jusqu'à leur substitution par des meilleures. Bougainville, lui aussi, rectifie ces premières impressions de la vie tahitienne en harmonie parfaite avec la nature, étrangère à tout artifice, contrainte ou inégalité. Les premières observations du navigateur vont ensuite être complétées par les informations qu'Aotourou, Tahitien amené avec Bougainville à Paris, lui fournit là-bas. Il dit alors à propos des Tahitiens: "Nous les avons crus presque égaux entre eux, ou du moins jouissant d'une liberté qui n'était soumise qu'aux lois établies pour le bonheur de tous. Je me trompais..." (Bougainville

99). Mais, déjà, la description de la langue tahitienne, de leurs techniques et institutions présente des allures d'une étude ethnographique qui reconnaît un certain niveau de civilisation des habitants. Le Tahitien n'est pas l'homme 'liminal', quoiqu'il vive au sein de la nature.

La question que Diderot pose vers la fin du *Supplément* s'il faut revenir à la nature ou se soumettre aux lois et à laquelle sa réponse est prudente, se rapproche en effet à la question posée par Rousseau vers la fin de son *Discours*: "Quoi donc? Faut-il détruire les sociétés, anéantir le tien et le mien, et retourner vivre dans les forêts avec les ours? Conséquence à la manière de mes adversaires, que j'aime autant prévenir que de leur laisser la honte de la tirer" (Rousseau 68). Et lui aussi, se révèle prudent:

Ceux, en un mot, qui sont convaincus que la voix divine appela tout le genre humain aux lumières et au bonheur des célestes intelligences, tous ceux-là tâcheront, par l'exercice des vertus qu'ils s'obligent à pratiquer en apprenant à les connaître, à mériter le prix éternel qu'ils en doivent attendre; ils respecteront les sacrés liens des sociétés dont ils sont les membres; ils aimeront leurs semblables et les serviront de tout leur pouvoir; ils obéiront scrupuleusement aux lois et aux hommes qui en sont les auteurs et les ministres, ils honoreront surtout les bons et sages princes qui sauront prévenir, guérir ou pallier cette foule d'abus et de maux toujours prêts à nous accabler. (Rousseau 68)

L'image du 'bon sauvage' n'a pas été érigée en tant que modèle à suivre. Ce n'est pas le primitivisme que Rousseau prône, de même que ce n'est pas l'anarchie de nature que Diderot souhaite. Les deux philosophes sont partis de l'image du sauvage qui avait sa place dans le discours colonial nourrissant l'imaginaire collectif, pour élaborer les hypothèses qui ont examiné les possibilités et les limites de l'être humain. Plus radical dans son entreprise, Rousseau a cherché à représenter l'homme dépouillé de tous ces attributs et acquis culturels. Chacun à sa manière, ces penseurs ont réussi à aiguïser la perception du monde civilisé de leurs concitoyens, à rendre étranges ses aspects culturellement spécifiques qu'on percevait comme naturels, ou qui passaient inaperçus, vu l'inertie du regard

habituel qu'on pose sur les choses. C'est le procédé employé aussi par Montesquieu dans ses *Lettres Persanes*, mais la radicalité de la démarche de Rousseau l'a rendu davantage incisif, en annonçant de grands changements à venir.

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SUPPLEMENT

MY RETURN TO SPAIN, WITH THE LEXINGTON SINGERS⁷¹

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Overview

The Lexington Singers (LS)⁷² had previously performed in Europe, but this was the choir's first tour of Spain. Having lived and studied in Spain decades ago, I had suggested some of the not-to-be-missed sites to the organizers of the trip, and I was now assuming the role of *ad hoc* interpreter and cultural liaison. The tour, running from July 9th to 19th of 2016, was coordinated by Classical Movements (CM).⁷³ The repertory was in accordance with the reserved performing spaces, thus, three of the concerts were in churches, featuring Mozart's *Regina Coeli*, Fauré's *Requiem*, and American Spirituals and Gospel music. The only concert in a secular venue added selections from Broadway musicals and American patriotic staples. All recitals were filled beyond venue capacity, and all ended with standing ovations and encore selections. We performed for a total audience of about 2500.

Day 1: Lexington-Chicago

Saturday, July 9th. In the dark of morning, our company of about 54 singers boarded the bus at Rosemont Baptist Church for the 7-hour ride to Chicago. That first leg was incident-free, and comfortable, as there were sufficient snacks, water, conversation, scenery, device screens, and naps to keep us distracted. I was fortunate in my travel companion who turned out to be quite the Renaissance Man. During our animated exchanges, we resolved *all* the world's problems.

⁷¹ This is an abridged, revised, and annotated version of the unpublished "My Spain Tour," completed in August 2016. The document is a subjective account, reflecting my own impressions and musings on the trip.

⁷² Founded in 1959, The Lexington Singers is the premier and oldest community choir in Kentucky, and the second oldest in the USA. For more information, see <https://www.lexsing.org>.

⁷³ A company that specializes in mounting musical acts and tours around the world. For more information, see <https://www.classicalmovements.com>.

Days 1-2: Chicago-Madrid

Saturday, July 9th / Sunday, July 10th. Bleary-eyed, but none the worse for wear, we checked in at Chicago O'Hare Airport and doubled down for the 4-hour wait for the flight to Madrid. As if taking a page from a slave ship manifest, and laboring under the misapprehension that the average passenger was 5-feet, 2-inches tall, and weighed 120 pounds, Iberia Airlines adhered to standard industry practice and crammed nearly 300 passengers and crew into an Airbus 330 craft. The other common complaint was flight duration, but if one wishes to make a Spanish *tortilla*, one must break a few eggs (and add potatoes).⁷⁴ We must accept that until the return of the Concord, accompanied by a lottery win, or when we have the technology for Scotty to beam us out,⁷⁵ our travel options will be limited. The airline food was just edible enough, and the entertainment was as good as could be expected in coach. My good fortune continuing, I had another charming seatmate. We watched *My Big Fat Greek Wedding II*, at one time sharing headphones when her screen froze.

Sunday, July 10th. Seven hours from the time of our Chicago departure, we emerged from the "iron bird" at Barajas Airport in Madrid. Now virtual zombies, our body clocks insisted that we were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was, after all, approximately 8:00 AM on Sunday. Our pleasant CM chief host greeted and escorted us to the bus bound for the Atocha train station, providing a running commentary on Madrid's history and outstanding features. I listened along with those of us who were conscious, smiling in reminiscence, but also absorbing new information.

Although we did not realize it at the time, our arrival at the train station introduced two features that were to become standard throughout the tour: the first was the navigating skills of bus drivers who turned very long buses onto the narrowest of streets, without once hitting the curb; the second, introduced at "ATORCHA," saw us converting bottled water into a fashion accessory, reminding me just how hot Spain could be in the summer!

Day 2: Madrid-Seville

Monday, July 11th. We spent a couple of hours at Atocha, awaiting the train to Seville. Raw nerves and alienating cracks in the family dynamic threatened to reveal themselves, but delicious snacks came to the rescue from a strategically placed shop. The 2-hour ride-*siesta* aboard the air-conditioned train poured olive oil on potentially troubled waters, the dominant landscape feature being rows upon rows of olive trees. This came as no surprise, since this area of Spain grows most of the fruit for its largest producer in the world.

Emerging from the Santa Justa train at the warmest city in Europe, barely noticing the signs of President Obama's recent visit to that city, we loaded and boarded the bus with alacrity, setting a time record for those

⁷⁴ Spanish for "omelet," which in Spain, Argentina and Chile includes potato. In most of Latin America, "tortilla" usually refers to the corn- or flour-based soft wrap, or hard chips.

⁷⁵ Fans of science fiction will recognize this reference to Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott aboard the Starship Enterprise, and teleportation technology, from the 1960's television series *Star Trek*.

activities. When we arrived at the Hotel Don Paco, more than 24 hours after beginning the journey in Lexington, we felt transformed from Pilgrims of Sorrow to Finders of the City of Heaven!⁷⁶ I also rejoiced in my roommate, who was one of the most easy-going and funniest members of the choir. Somehow, we found the energy to maintain an animated conversation as we unpacked. But did we crash for the evening, in the welcoming arms of local sandman, Don Paco? We did not. We were, after all, in one of the most historic cities in Spain. So, after revitalizing showers (these facilities were not designed for six-footers either), and *siesta* number 2, we ambled off to a group dinner at the popular San Marcos restaurant. Water and *sangría* flowed like the Guadalquivir,⁷⁷ and we enjoyed a variety of delicious *tapas* before returning to the hotel.

Day 3: San Lucar and Cádiz

Monday, July 12th. Off to a full day's excursion, we trudged faithfully behind our enthusiastic and well-informed guides and hosts, capturing every fascinating moment of the varied cityscape on camera. First, we visited the Bodega La Cigarrera in nearby San Lucar, and enjoyed a winetasting after we had toured the cellars and learned more about the fermenting processes. Although sherry, and the word and city named for it (*Jerez*), is native to Spain, few of us seemed to care for any of the three types that we sampled. A certain group of Philistines in our company decided to combine the samples and we were rewarded with something approaching the elixir of the gods. Said Philistines were late exiting the winery, and almost had to sprint to the bus, but not before paying our respects to a makeshift souvenir shopping area manned by Spanish-speaking African vendors.

We then visited the Andalusian city of Cádiz, one of the oldest continuously inhabited Spanish cities, and from whose port⁷⁸ Columbus sailed for the New World. As the bus hugged the stunning coastline, I tried to imagine the Santa María being prepared by its diverse crew of Old and New Christians.⁷⁹ Our visit coincided with frequent anti-immigrant rhetoric making its way through Europe. But at Cádiz, a banner draped over municipal offices declared support for immigrants: "Por una Europa de Puertas Abiertas: las Fronteras Matan."⁸⁰ I paused for a photo, in recognition of this moment of historical irony.

⁷⁶ Religious text and titles from the group's Negro Spiritual repertoire.

⁷⁷ From the Arabic *Oed al Kabir* = The Great River. This is the fifth longest river in Spain (after the Tajo, Ebro, Duero and Guadiana) and an important geocultural reference.

⁷⁸ It is not generally known that Columbus's original plan was to sail from the more popular Palos port. However, that harbor was crowded by ships of Jews fleeing Spain after the fall of Granada and the end of the Reconquest in 1492.

⁷⁹ Old Christians, or *cristianos viejos*, refer to Spaniards who predated the arrival of Jews and Muslims in Spain. New Christians, or *cristianos nuevos*, were the Jewish or Muslim people who converted (often forcibly) to Christianity and referred to as *Conversos* and *Moriscos*. The distinction was important, especially after 1492, when blood purity became a requirement for those Spaniards aspiring to social, political, and religious advancement.

⁸⁰ "For an Open Europe: Borders Kill."

A small group opted for the beach, while the rest of us shopped and/or lunched in the Old City and visited the famous Cádiz Cathedral overlooking the Plaza Mayor.⁸¹ In the center of the square there was a seductive female dancer in the Plaza, hypnotizing all in her view. When she pulled off a complete, yet discreet, costume change in a matter of seconds, I could almost hear a moan emanating from disapproving ancient Catholic saints buried in the cathedral's crypt. Temperature-wise, this cellar was the coolest part of the building, and it boasted extraordinary acoustics. Something else that caught my attention was the unisex restrooms that seemed to have been part of the confessionals in a previous life.

Once the beach group showed up (late), we returned to the Don Paco for rest, relaxation, and a delicious group dinner. Later, we enjoyed a dazzling flamenco show at El Patio Sevillano, which presented a varied program of Gypsy music and dances. In one performance, the dancer skillfully navigated and manipulated a dress with an endless and complex train. Yet, while they moved as one unit, there were times when the dress seemed to be upstaging the heroine. All the dancers showed off their individual strengths, but the one who caught my attention was the indefatigable lead who took us on a comprehensive journey through the male flamenco dance vocabulary. My favorite piece was the dialogue-for-three presentation based on Bizet's *Carmen*, the opera itself regarded as a Sevillian cultural symbol.⁸² We exited the Patio to a vendor of fans and castanets. In a matter of minutes, his entire inventory was sold, thanks, perhaps to my language and bartering skills!

Day 4: Sevilla

Tuesday, July 13th. Seville is the capital of southern Spain's Andalusia province. The city is known for its ornate Alcázar castle complex, built during the Moorish Almohad dynasty,⁸³ and its 18th-century Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza bullring. The massive Gothic cathedral, boasting the famous minaret turned bell tower, *La Giralda*, is the site of Christopher Columbus's tomb.⁸⁴ We started the official Sevilla tour, with charming local Classical Movements hosts outfitting us with radio packs, and introducing us to landmark moments in Seville's history. We visited the Basílica de la Macarena, named in honor of the Virgin Mary, the famous cathedral, the Cartuja

⁸¹ These plazas, or public squares, are traditional entertainment spaces, markets, and eateries, typically bordered by residential and commercial interests, with large windows overlooking the square. In Spain, these spaces were to become the first public theaters. This Cadiz plaza vividly reminded me of the mosque adjacent *Jemaa al Fnaa*, in Marrakech, Morocco, which has been named a UNESCO World Heritage site. For more, visit https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jemaa_el-Fnaa.

⁸² Another *Carmen* reference was pointed out as we passed the cigar factory where the cigarette scene from the 1984 Plácido Domingo/Julia Migenes-Johnson movie version of the opera was filmed.

⁸³ This Berber dynasty ruled parts of North Africa and southern Spain from late the 12th-century until mid-13th-century, succeeding the Almoravids.

⁸⁴ This is a disputed honor, from the perspective of the Caribbean nation of the Dominican Republic, claiming that the actual remains of the explorer are at the El Faro a Colón tomb in Santo Domingo. However, they have resisted all demands for its DNA testing.

Monastery, and the Plaza de España. The last site was built in 1928 for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, and it turned out to be the perfect site for group photos.

Religious architecture in Sevilla (as well as the others in Ronda, Cádiz, Toledo and Segovia, and throughout much of Europe) was designed to highlight the power of the church-state union, while forcing the eyes heavenward via lighter colors at the top of the structures. But eyes could not avoid a downward glance that contrasted these symbols of piety, power, and riches with the religion's tenets of humility and poverty. Thus, while artistically and mathematically impressive, these structures also reinforced my understanding of some of the motivations for the 16th-century Protestant Reformation. It is worth noting, however, that whatever power the Catholic Church has lost in Spain over the centuries (and especially after Franco in 1975), religion continues to exercise a strong influence over the secular lives of Spaniards. In fact, before a bullfight, the *matador* traditionally prays to the Virgin Mary for protection, and the *olé* ovation, as well as the *hola* greeting, are derived from *Allah*, the Arabic⁸⁵ word for God.

While we were involved in what turned out to be a sort of “pre-lunch workout,” our director had been rehearsing with the talented Orquesta Sinfónica del Aljarafe that would accompany us in our first concert. We all reconvened at a local radio station for a live show, where the director and I were interviewed between renditions of Negro Spiritual and Gospel pieces from the choir. It took all my powers of concentration to keep up with the rapid-fire speech of the radio hosts, and the peculiarities of Sevillian pronunciation.

After a sumptuous lunch back at the hotel, and a free afternoon, we boarded the bus to the Centro Privado de Enseñanza Santa María la Mayor for our first rehearsal. With the first couple of days dedicated mostly to recovery and sightseeing, many of us were itching to sing outside of our showers. Anticipation was the operative mood, and joy threatened to be unconfined. But, according to Santa Teresa de Jesús, “More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones,” and we certainly shed tears through every pore in that infernal rehearsal space.

Dinner was on our own that night, so our guide recommended the Rinconcito restaurant. We ordered a variety of delicious dishes and could not finish them all. Our waiter seemed to regard us as a curiosity, patiently presenting olive oil and vinegar when salad dressing was requested, and repressing a smile when he informed us that the scrumptious *jamón serrano*⁸⁶ was served without sides. Some of us became so addicted to this delicacy that we sought it out on other menus or as a *tapa* choice in other places, and we were not disappointed.

⁸⁵ It is estimated that there are over two thousand Arabic loanwords and three thousand derivatives in the Spanish dictionary, making it 8% of the Spanish language. In the Middle Ages, Spanish was the main route by which Arabic words entered other West European languages. For more information, see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language_influence_on_the_Spanish_language.

⁸⁶ Country-cured ham.

Day 5: Sevilla

Wednesday, July 14th. Before our first concert, our local guides took us on a tour of la Casa de Pilatos,⁸⁷ an Andalusian palace, with a mixture of Renaissance Italian and Spanish *Mudéjar* styles, featuring decorative Marinides tiles.⁸⁸ This was to have been followed by a boat cruise on the Guadalquivir. However, we literally missed the boat, as, apparently for the first time, it departed on time. When it was decided that waiting for its return would clash with lunch plans, there was disappointed murmuring in some quarters. In lieu of boating, the tour organizers arranged a 30-minute shopping window at the famous department store chain *El Corte inglés*.

We walked, costumes in hand, from the hotel to the performance venue, the San Salvador, another magnificent church, about 10 minutes away. The radio program had yielded massive dividends because two hours before the concert, while we were still in warmup and acoustic rehearsal, there were already people waiting to enter. And by the time we had improvised changing spaces for the choir, the pews were fully occupied. As a Mass had been scheduled just before our concert, we assumed that the faithful had come for that reason. But as nobody stirred from their seats when the pious event was over, we realized that these people were our audience. Soon, seats were commandeered from right under the choir as we waited to move to the stage.

I believe that at least 500 people packed themselves into that venue. They enjoyed a pleasant surprise when the director signaled me to the stage, and the audience, expecting a solo, received greetings and an introduction in Spanish. The choir was in excellent voice, the soloists represented themselves well, and the orchestra was flawless, all resulting in repeated ovations from an enthusiastic crowd. At the end of the concert, several people came forward to express their appreciation. Exhausted, but in high spirits, we walked back to the hotel.

Day 6: Seville to Ronda

Thursday, July 15th. The welcome and announcements in Spanish continued to delight audiences at our next show in Ronda, Málaga, about 2 hours from Seville. The bus ride commanded spectacular views, outdone only by Ronda itself, a mountaintop city dating back to Moorish rule, and lying dramatically above the majestic El Tajo gorge separating the city's circa-15th-century new town from its old town. The Puente Nuevo, a stone bridge spanning the gorge, also offered sweeping views of the area. This time, while we hiked to the Hotel Tajo from the bus, our light luggage was transported by van, and the heavier items remained on the bus overnight.

The people of Ronda were friendly, welcoming, and seemed to recognize us. This familiarity was soon explained when we happened upon a

⁸⁷ Pilate's House.

⁸⁸ *Mudéjar*: Muslims living in Christian territories; The Marinides were a Berber Muslim dynasty who ruled parts of North Africa and southern Spain in the 13th century. The unique tiles named for them can be found on the interior walls of many homes in Andalusia and Morocco. The Marinides were preceded by another Berber dynasty: the Almohads.

life-size poster of the choir in the Town Square. Some of us threw caution to the wind and hugged and took pictures with a very engaging policeman.

Although Málaga is politically not part of Andalucía, it shares the cultural and historical influences of the province. The Ronda performance, featuring another over-capacity and appreciative audience, was also in a magnificent church: the Santa Maria la Mayor. Another vestige of Moorish rule, the church was originally the town's main mosque, later redesigned along Gothic, Baroque and Rococo lines. As in Sevilla, the concert was after the Evening Mass, and many of the participants remained for the performance.

Day 7: Ronda –Toledo- Madrid

Friday, July 16th. This leg of the trip was the longest by bus in Spain, but possibly my favorite, being a student of Cervantes. This is because we were in the province of Castilla-La Mancha, a region famous not only for its windmills, but also the fictional and deluded Don Quijote, who attacked them for being his enemy giants. At a strategically themed rest stop, we lunched and shopped.

It was while we were traveling through this province, home to Toledo, (a Medieval example of cultural coexistence, and royally sanctioned translations of documents between Castilian, Hebrew, and Arabic) that we heard about the terrorist attack at Nice, France. Many of us had disengaged data streaming and international roaming on our devices, and had thus successfully blocked out all news, but this item brought us back to reality. We observed a moment of silence, and we repeated this ritual at our remaining recitals.

We did not perform in Toledo, although that would have been the perfect place for the Cervantes tribute, since in the *Quijote* the fictional Arab chronicler, Cide Hamete Benengali, and the translator of said chronicle, were from that city. Also, the outwardly imposing and stoic Gothic cathedral seemed the perfect venue for a concert. One of our soloists and I noticed that there was even a performing space complete with stage and chairs, and we exchanged knowing looks. I wonder what would have happened if we had burst into Fauré's "Agnus Dei" *a la* flash-mob? But our cathedral debut would have to wait for the final performance in Segovia. Instead, we spent the afternoon touring this massive structure. Our local host was a mine of information. She was immensely proud of Toledo, and her anecdotal style provided a fascinating context for our enjoyment of the histories of the Río Tajo and the the cathedral.

Much to my delight, we spent more time in Toledo than was originally scheduled, because (i) there were so many photo ops, and (ii) before departing for Madrid, we made an unscheduled stop for *sangría* and olives at an inn called La Venta el Alma, followed by farewell pictures of the Tajo. We paid for these indulgences when we arrived in Madrid two hours later in the middle of rush-hour traffic.

Due to the traffic and bus-size considerations, we had to park on the legendary Gran Vía thoroughfare and drag our stuff down a couple of streets to the hotel. Not wishing to block traffic for too long, the organizers had arranged for additional unloading assistance in the form of two muscular youths who materialized as soon as the bus stopped. Meanwhile, the Hotel Coloso, of the EXE chain, was not quite ready for us, so we stowed our luggage in a secure part of the waiting area and ambled off to a restaurant. The Coloso did not

improve upon acquaintance. Perhaps one of its redeeming graces was its central location within walking distance of most of the major city sites.

Day 8: Madrid-Boadilla del Monte-Madrid

Saturday, July 17th. The schedule included an optional sightseeing tour of Madrid, featuring the Moorish quarter, the Habsburg⁸⁹ district, the Salamanca *barrio*, and the Royal Palace, followed by lunch on our own, and a free afternoon. I opted to meet with a friend in Madrid, and we spent several hours catching up while we had a late breakfast, visited the Plaza del Sol, a major bookstore (where I went over budget), the Cibeles monument, and the largest and most famous park in Madrid, the Parque del Buen Retiro. I wanted to revisit the celebrated Museo del Prado,⁹⁰ but such an experience would have required at least a full day, and we already had a concert scheduled.

Three hours later, we departed for Boadilla del Monte, located about an hour southeast of Madrid. Apparently, this small town of 40,000 was once a royal property and a legendary hunting reserve. This was an outdoor performance, in the Explanada del Palacio de Boadilla (a Plaza in front of the Palace). While we waited for the setup to be completed, we toured the Boadilla Cultural Palace, taking yet another group photo against a stunning background.

The third concert was a little different from the earlier ones, as it included a secular program of Broadway pieces, featuring selections from *Man of La Mancha*, as a special tribute to Spanish literary genius Miguel de Cervantes.⁹¹ One of our baritone soloists and I performed a bilingual version of the “Impossible Dream” musical number, rounding out another successful recital. The audience celebrated with us after the show, taking photos, and chatting away into the night. An elderly lady pointed my attention to a stork on one of the spires of the palace. Apparently, it had landed just as the concert was beginning and had stayed there motionless throughout. She considered it a good omen, since the bird is native to the area.

Day 9: Madrid –Segovia-Madrid

Sunday, July 18th. Our arrival into Madrid a week earlier now seemed a distant memory, and we were determined to make the best of our last day in Spain. Breakfast was at the Coloso, and we had a free morning and lunch on our own. At 1:00 PM, we boarded the bus for Segovia, a historic city about 90 minutes northwest of Madrid. According to the *Classical Movements Itinerary*, the city “has a rich architectural legacy, including medieval walls, Romanesque

⁸⁹ This German/Austrian dynasty was one of the most influential and distinguished in Europe. Notable Spanish monarchs from this family include Felipe I, Carlos V (both Holy Roman Emperors) and Felipe II.

⁹⁰ “The Prado Museum, officially known as Museo Nacional del Prado, is the main Spanish national art museum, located in central Madrid. It is widely considered to have one of the world’s finest collections of European art, dating from the 12th century to the early 20th century, based on the former Spanish Royal Collection, and the single best collection of Spanish art.” <https://www.museodelprado.es/en>.

⁹¹ The tour coincided with Spanish celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes in 1616. *Man of la Mancha* is the 1965 musical version of *Don Quijote*, with book by Dale Wasserman, lyrics by Joe Darion, and music by Mitch Leigh.

churches, a former royal palace and a Gothic cathedral. Its iconic ancient Roman aqueduct has more than 160 arches, most in the original mortarless granite, and stands above Plaza Azoguejo in the heart of the city . . . In 1985 the old city of Segovia was declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.”

We enjoyed the Alcazar Castle from a distance and took pictures of a church that seemed to have been hewn out of the surrounding rock, apparently a space used by the Knights Templar.⁹² Then it was off to the famous Segovia Aqueduct that has been standing since the Roman occupation of Spain, between the third and seventh centuries! We took pictures from every possible angle, even as we were overawed by this iconic testament to civil engineering and architecture. Down the road behind the aqueduct, narrow, souvenir-lined streets led to the Plaza Mayor, and the Segovia Cathedral, another amazing structure whose acoustics were unmatched by any of the other sacred spaces that we had visited.

The Lexington Singers’ final concert was the opening act of the Annual Segovia Music Festival. A stage was erected in the choir space of the cathedral, and the rehearsal was probably the one we appreciated most. Tourists and early spectators enjoyed the preview and stayed on for the recital. An added attraction for the choir was the large Medieval part-book on display. Our director explained that each part of the choir would have had only one of those in large illuminated text and musical notes. And when he sight-sang the tenor part on display, we were overcome by emotion. The only fly in the proverbial ointment was once again the improvised changing-room situation. The sacristan seemed upset to have his chapel overrun by partially clothed performers. However, after the concert, he was decidedly more welcoming, smiling and pointing us to the changing area that had been *verboden* only a couple hours earlier.

As it was the last concert, neither chorus nor soloists held anything back. I think it was our best performance, even without the enhancement provided of the superlative acoustics in that space. Nor do I believe we have ever sung a more perfect Fauré *Requiem*, which we dedicated to the victims of the Nice terrorist attack. Coincidentally, Gabriel Fauré was French, and while not from Nice, he was from southern France, in a region close to that magnificent natural frontier between France and Spain: the Pyrenees Mountains. We will remember that audience as the only one that remained reverently silent throughout the *Requiem*, after which they erupted into appreciative applause. We were all smiles and exhausted relief, as we walked back to the bus, enjoying the vision that was the aqueduct by night.

Day 10: Madrid-Chicago-Lexington

Monday, July 19th, Departure day. As we bolstered our minds and bodies for a 14-hour trip, I think we were all reflecting on the last 10 days and wondering about readjustment to our usual realities. Airport check-in and security passed without incident, and we spent the pre-flight time divesting ourselves of the

⁹² “A large organization of devout Christians during the medieval era who carried out an important mission: to protect European travelers visiting sites in the Holy Land.” <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/the-knights-templar>.

remaining Euros, especially the coins weighing down our pockets. I acquired some premium sherry and *sangría*, Spanish cookies and Chamomile and Anise tea at a duty-free store and yielded to the anticipation that pervaded the gate-area. The flight departed about an hour late, and was largely uneventful, as sleep was of the essence for most. Neither reading nor the in-flight entertainment appealed to me, so I worked on this journal until my laptop battery died, then I switched to a copy of the *El país* newspaper until I too succumbed to sleep.

Arriving in Chicago at about 3:00 PM, clearing Immigration and Customs, and loading and boarding the bus, it was already 4:00 before we hit the road. Rush-hour traffic added another hour to the trip, and with rest stops, and road constructions, we did not reach Lexington until about 1:00 AM. Our families and friends were waiting for us, as we had been texting them about the delays. I finally crashed at about 3:00 AM and, naturally, dreamt that the Lexington Singers was still in Spain.

HAMLET JOINS A MOTORCYCLE GANG: A CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF THE (ANTI)HERO'S JOURNEY

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*Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt that I love.*
—Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (2.2, 120-23)

After the final episode of *Sons of Anarchy* fades to black, the above quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* adorns the screen, just moments after the fate of the protagonist, Jackson "Jax" Teller, is revealed and the outlaw biker gang's Grim Reaper insignia complete with a scythe affixed to an M16 rifle and an orb emblazoned with the anarchy 'A' is displayed. The Shakespeare quote seals the connection between the antiheroic protagonists of *Sons of Anarchy* and *Hamlet*, although the creator, Kurt Sutter, had from the beginning of the series openly said the narrative was based on the Shakespearean tragedy and many had written about the parallels during the show's run, including accurate predictions of how it would all end (it is a tragedy after all).

If you haven't read *Hamlet* or watched the seven seasons of *Sons of Anarchy*, take a (long) weekend for some mind blowing, binge watching. This article has spoilers, and I want you to have the opportunity to experience the show and Jax's (anti)heroic journey⁹³ for yourself. I'll wait . . .

Are you back? I'll bet you are drained—physically, emotionally, and mentally—from the excesses of violence, drugs, sex, emotion, and mind games that is *Sons of Anarchy*. It's a trip. No one said being an outlaw (or watching an outlaw show) was easy. Jax takes a literal and metaphorical journey as he travels through his world (and the next) on his motorcycle. And understanding the complexities of an antihero on a hero's journey isn't easy either—much like *Hamlet*.

The link between *Sons of Anarchy* and *Hamlet* provides an opportunity to examine the (anti)hero's journey through Jax's relationships with other characters in the series in a similar manner to the contemporary cultural understandings of *Hamlet*. In the book *Murder Most Foul*, which examines the cultural meanings of *Hamlet* throughout history, David

⁹³ An (anti)hero's journey is the typical hero's journey by a character best described an antihero.

Bevington argues that “the play is central to our ever-changing cultural image of ourselves. It contributes to the cultural evolution and is in turn transformed into many images by that ongoing change. Hamlet helps us to understand ourselves and who we are socially” (199). As Paris Barclay, a director and producer on the series, commented about Charlie Hunnam’s performance as Jax, “[he] changed this from a regular cable antihero to this incredibly viral, attractive, sexy murderous antihero” (Bennett). *Sons of Anarchy* understands the limits of the 5 act play, and then boldly blows past them, while still maintaining Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, which postulates a basic structure for the hero’s journey of “*separation-initiation-return*” (Campbell 28) and consists of 17 steps.⁹⁴ The result is an exploration into a cunning, intelligent, man of action, *antihero* who still travels on the hero’s journey. However, the tragic end for Jax is not one of a *tragic* hero, for it is ultimately Jax’s inaction, similar to Hamlet’s plagued indecisiveness, as well as his impulsiveness, another flaw shared with Hamlet, that leads not only to Jax’s demise, but also to the villainous legacy he leaves behind to his progeny. So, the hero’s journey ends with “freedom” but one necessitated by death.

When Jax Teller, followed by a long line of police, rides his father’s motorcycle into an oncoming tractor trailer, while the musical score sings of freedom, the audience is torn between indifference and empathy. Bad people don’t usually receive happy endings (and Jax is a bad person by most social standards—at least 45 murders are attributed to him in the series as well as countless others as an accessory or as an arms dealer), and, historically, audiences don’t root for antiheroes in the same way as they do a clearly *hero* character. But redemption is what many viewers had hoped for Jax in the true sense of a hero’s journey. His call to adventure as the first stage of a hero’s journey comes from his father’s journal and seeks to alter the future of SAMCRO⁹⁵ in order to free his family from the clutches of gang life. Persistent questions throughout the series are only answered in the end: Will he and can he turn the club straight? Will he and can he navigate his family’s way out of the club? The answer to both questions is yes, but Jax is only able to accomplish these feats when he crosses Campbell’s “return threshold” with the realization that he is an impediment to those successes.

Jax sees himself as a part of two families, the motorcycle club and his biological family.⁹⁶ The two families are entangled throughout the series, pulling each other in multiple directions and creating much of the internal strife that affects Jax; in the process of untangling the two, Jax goes so far as to apologize to the club: “I’m sorry that the family I was given has created so much chaos in the family I’ve chosen” (“Suits of Woe”). Once he is resigned not to be a part of the future of his two “families,” he is able to navigate the club out of the gun running business (and to broker racial peace in the local outlaw world); he also arranges for his boys to finally leave Charming, California, with a strategy to ensure they will not follow in their father’s footsteps. But the path to those outcomes and the future of both of Jax’s families is facilitated by the

⁹⁴ Not all 17 steps need to be present to adhere to Campbell’s structure.

⁹⁵ SAMCRO is an abbreviation used as a nickname of the official name of club: Sons of Anarchy Motorcycle Club, Redwood Original.

⁹⁶ Jax’s biological family is comprised of his nuclear family—his wife Tara and their two children—but also his mother who is a quasi-member of SAMCRO.

inevitable fate of the protagonist. Jax is only able to broker the deal for the club if he is not in power after the deal is struck. His suicide is one of self-sacrifice for the greater good and love of his sons. However, Jax does not want to be remembered as a tragic hero in his children's eyes. Rather, he wants them to see their father as a villain, as evil, so the boys will not follow in their father's footsteps: "When the time comes, she needs to tell my sons who I really am. I'm not a good man. I'm a criminal and a killer. I need my sons to grow up hating the thought of me" ("Papa's Goods").

The character of Hamlet has a similar fate to Jax. Hamlet dies after traveling home to seek revenge for his father's murder at the hand Laertes who has conspired with Claudius, King of Denmark—Hamlet's uncle who married Hamlet's mother after murdering Hamlet's father, the previous King of Denmark. Hamlet agrees to a fencing match with Laertes, whose father Hamlet has murdered, but Hamlet is unaware that the tip of Laertes' sword is not dulled and is also poisoned such that even breaking the skin will cause death. However, Horatio warns Hamlet of Laertes' prowess with the foil. Hamlet, who has hinted at suicide throughout the play, is confident in his own abilities and has completed the hero's journey; therefore, he is free from the fear of death. In his soliloquy in 3.1 Hamlet asks, "To be, or not to be?" While he may be debating his own life versus death, he raises philosophical questions of binaries such as flesh/spirit and action/inaction. Later, in 5.2, Hamlet responds to Horatio about the uncertainty of death: "If it be now, 'tis not to come: if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all" (5.2, 173-75). Hamlet's reasoning, as he completes the hero's journey and crosses the return threshold⁹⁷, is that all one can really control is being ready to die. During the duel, the plot by Claudius unravels, leaving Gertrude (Hamlet's mother), Laertes, and Hamlet poisoned. Hamlet, having passed on earlier opportunities but now seeing the King for his treachery, is finally able to act to kill the King by stabbing him with the poisoned sword and forcing the poisoned wine down his throat. The overall death toll of the narrative stands at eight, not counting Hamlet's father before the action of the play began.

Much of the bloodshed is directly or indirectly linked to Hamlet, who is an antihero because of his passivity and ineffectual actions toward the typical hero resolution. He is neither hero nor villain. Tragedies end with disastrous conclusions, such as the death of all the main characters and some minor characters. Revenge tragedies, such as *Hamlet* and *Sons of Anarchy*, feature, as Abrams describes, "murder, revenge, ghosts, mutilation, and carnage" (213). The *tragic hero* is pitied by the audience as the character is neither completely good nor evil, but misfortune within the plot seems greater than deserved. Examples from literature or film include Achilles from Greek mythology or Anakin Skywalker from the *Star Wars* saga. Yoda sums up the tragically heroic case of Anakin Skywalker: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering" (Lucas). Yoda sees Anakin's fear of leaving his mother in Episode I. Eventually, Anakin's flaw creates Darth Vader who dies in Episode VI after he rescues his son, Luke Skywalker, from Emperor Palpatine. Anakin/Vader shows heroism in the face of fate. An antihero differs from the tragic hero in the narrative's conclusion. The antihero

⁹⁷ The return threshold marks the hero's return to home with the knowledge and understanding from the hero's journey.

of Hamlet pales in comparison to the tragic hero so as not to be pitied in the end.

Although there are oppositional characters to Hamlet, such as Claudius, the conflict in the play is internal to Hamlet, as the question in the opening line suggests: "Who's there?" (1.1, 1). The traveling of *Hamlet* is on reflection and thought that trumps the revenge play action or even physical travel. There are still murder, ghosts, and revenge, but the really twisted conflict comes from Hamlet's head. Hamlet, as he engages with the "woman as temptress," plays mind games with the emotions of Ophelia, who becomes mentally unhinged and drowns. Hamlet also edits the "play within the play," which he re-titles "The Mousetrap," to trap Claudius in his guilt. As characters question Hamlet's sanity, Hamlet appears to be walking a sane/insane line, which may be another ruse. It is here that Hamlet achieves the apotheosis of the hero's journey—the point of greater understanding. His cunning, however, does not lead to the hero's outcome. His failure to act throughout the play, even as his suspicions are proven true, place Hamlet in an untenable position.

Abrams defines an antihero as a "person who, instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power, and heroism in the face of fate, is petty, ignominious, ineffectual, or passive" (214). When Hamlet has the opportunity to kill the king and avenge the wishes of his father's ghost, whom "The Mousetrap" has proven to have spoken the truth, Hamlet declines. Rather, Hamlet is concerned with the next life of Claudius, fearing he would go to heaven and escape his just punishment if killed during his prayer of forgiveness. Hamlet's internal debate leads to passivity. In the next scene, 3.4, Hamlet takes spontaneous action that is out of his normally sagacious character. When his mother, Gertrude, refers to Claudius as Hamlet's father, he is enraged. His sharp verbal dexterity leads to a possible reading of an insulting retort: "You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife" (3.4, 18). The use of queen may be a pun on the word "quean" that means whore (Bate and Rasmussen 96). Gertrude fears Hamlet will kill her and calls out. Polonius, father to Ophelia and Laertes, is hiding behind the tapestry and shouts a response to Gertrude alerting Hamlet to his presence. Hamlet stabs his sword through the tapestry, without looking to see who is there, and murders Polonius. This ineffectual action brings no revenge and rather proves to be shameful and contributes to Ophelia's demise. He abandons control and blindly acts on impulse, but this action only leads to guilt, the opposite of the previous encounter with Claudius, when he is reflective, but unable to act. Further, Hamlet has become the perpetrator of the crime he wished to avenge. The victim of a murdered father has murdered a father—setting up Laertes to later enact revenge and seal Hamlet's antiheroic and tragic fate.

Like Hamlet, Jax Teller, for all of his 45 murders, commits an impulsive murder that sets the stage for his demise. He murders a friend of his father and a SONS chapter president, Jury White, when White suggests that Jax's father, JT, committed suicide as opposed to being a victim of sabotage by Clay Morrow, Jax's stepfather. This revelation and murderous act eventually lead to Jax's realization about his failure with the tangled families. The murder is also a violation in the SAMCRO world that leads to Jax's "meeting Mr. Mayhem," a euphemism for death. Jax is willing to accept his fate and may be a tragic hero in the motorcycle gang plot line. He does successfully fulfill his father's wish to change the direction of the motorcycle gang. As a character who

is a hero to outlaws and who also breaks those outlaws' own code, Jax starts to move toward the antihero category. While Jax plays tragic hero as king of SAMCRO, his antihero characteristics are shown through his role as the head of his biological family. His failure to prioritize the needs of his family and continue to live the life of an outlaw, which ultimately claimed his wife's life too and may have a lasting impact on his children, makes him an antihero. His hero's journey brings him to the realization about his position in life, but he is unable to do anything about it: "The lies caught up to all of us, man. I tried to hide from it. Make it legit; run away from it. This is who I am. I can't change." ("Papa's Goods").

The seventh, and final, season of *Sons of Anarchy* is focused on the revenge plot for the murder of Jax's wife, Tara. Jax wrongly believes that the Lin Triad gang, most often referred to by the ethnic label of "Chinese," is sending a message through the brutal murder of Tara with an icepick to the back of the head, partly due to his mother, Gemma (the actual murderer of Tara), fingering a Chinese gang member. While myopically seeking revenge on the Chinese gang, Jax believes that Jury White ratted out the location of SAMCO's gun warehouse to the rival gang. White is incensed by the accusation and is further angered that Jax callously, yet unknowingly, murdered White's son as part of a cover up. White recriminates Jax, saying, "You had the chance to be something good for this club. Something your old man always wanted. But you turned into everything he hated. You became the poison. The reason he checked out" ("The Separation of Crows"). White lays the blame on the club life, specifically gun running, on Jax. He had rationalized that the selling of illegal arms was a monetary means to finally allow the motorcycle club to go straight and allow him to move his family away from the gang life. However, Jax is enraged by the White's accusation of suicide, believing that his father's bike had been sabotaged by Clay (Jax's stepfather, much like the plot of *Hamlet*). The conversation between White and Jax continues with White continuing to raise doubts and questions in Jax's mind:

Jax: You think my old man ran into that semi on purpose?

Jury: I don't know. Maybe it was his sacrifice. A way of letting his club and family survive.

Jax: My old man didn't kill himself.

Jury: It doesn't matter. As long as he ain't here to see what SAMCRO did to you. ("The Separation of Crows")

With that contentious exchange, Jax murders White and lies about their conversation, yet he has violated the motorcycle gang code. Like Hamlet, Jax's rash action seals the fate for his quickly approaching death—a sacrifice that he believes allows his club and family to survive.

Jax's relationship to his father

John Thomas "JT" Teller is the former, and original, king of SAMCRO. His bike and mug shot are on prominent display in the clubhouse, and his last name completes the auto shop business, Teller-Morrow, that serves as a front for the gang. A cloud of suspicion follows his death in an accident with a semi-truck—was it a road accident, a murder via a tampered bike, or a suicide by

purposefully driving into the truck? Although Jax is a teenager when his father dies, the mentoring relationship between king and prince/father and son is developed mostly through a manifesto written by JT that Jax finds in a storage locker while looking for baby toys for his newly born, premature son. The manifesto, *The Life and Death of Sam Crow: How the Sons Lost Their Way*, explains the regret that JT feels regarding the milieu of SAMCRO. His aim was not to sell guns illegally but, as Jax describes it, “social rebellion. He called it a Harley commune. It wasn’t outlaw; it was real hippy shit” (“Pilot”). This narrative differs from the one that Clay has pursued for the club and that represents the current situation, which Jax finds himself as the second in command as the vice president. JT foresaw this nefarious path and presented his intentions in the dedication of his manifesto: “For my sons. Thomas, who is already at peace. And Jackson, may he never know this life of chaos” (“Pilot”). The manifesto is the catalyst for the call to adventure.

Yet, Jax is saturated in chaos, and his mere suggestion that alternatives to violence and gun smuggling may be a beneficial strategy for the club is met with skepticism, creating Jax’s series of trials. This violent strategy is not a surprise for a gang called “The Sons of Anarchy” who adorn themselves in grim reaper symbolism and who buy Russian Ak-47s from the Irish Republican Army to sell to other gangs in Northern California. The symbolic death moniker proved more of a self-fulfilling prophecy than an original intention for the club, according to JT’s manuscript: “The Sons of Anarchy was the name I came up with in 8th grade for me and my best friends” (“Pilot”). Perhaps influenced by their time in Vietnam, as many motorcycle clubs have been an outlet for military veterans, especially the 1%er clubs. The original members of SAMCRO sought to carve out their own niche in the world—one that was dominated by power, masculinity, and their own definition of freedom and individuality within the social order.

JT was influenced by anarchism and the writings of Emma Goldman. His manifesto recounts seeing a quote by the political activist and anarchist philosopher painted on the wall of an underpass in Nevada. Jax finds the same quote, in the third episode of season one, while contemplating his father’s positions:

Anarchism stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion and liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. It stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals. . . . (“Patch Over”)

JT, fulfilling the mentor role in the hero’s journey, goes on to narrate that there is an additional lesson learned in the pursuit of liberation: “that true freedom requires sacrifice and pain. Most human beings only think they want freedom. In truth, they yearn for the bondage of social order, rigid laws, and materialism. The only freedom man really wants is the freedom to be comfortable” (“Patch Over”). This statement proves prophetic as Jax is most comfortable with the club family to which he is hero and struggles with his nuclear family, to which he is ultimately villain.

The social order that SAMCRO creates is the one that Clay upholds as President. The SONS are very dependent on a fixed world where they can hide

behind chaos and need to stem the development of progress. But JT's manuscript presents a moment of clarity:

I never made a conscious decision to have the club become one thing or another. It just happened before my eyes. Each savage event was a catalyst for the next. And by the time the violence reached epic proportion, I couldn't see it. Blood was every color. ("Hell Followed")

The chaotic world that JT was afraid of is the world that Jax inhabits. That world seems to be on the brink of collapsing. But the chaotic motorcycle gang world is always on the brink of collapsing—a paradoxical position of comfort to the gang. However, the complicating factor for JT is his lone surviving son, Jax. At the start of the series, Jax has just become a father, but his newborn son has the same congenital heart defect as himself, his deceased brother, Thomas, and his mother. Gemma hints that the death of Thomas made JT "go soft," and influence the philosophy laid out in *The Life and Death of Sam Crow: How the Sons Lost Their Way*. She fears the influence that the ghost of JT is having on her son, who is poised to take over the club when Clay steps aside. Thus, the issues that JT was contemplating when writing his manifesto are similar issues that Jax is grappling with and become more pronounced as the narrative progresses and Jax remarries and has a second son. Gemma accurately describes Jax's situation: "He's getting chewed up by guilt from both ends of the family tree. Father and son" ("Pilot"). This guilt was also a contributing factor to Hamlet's demise.

Similar to Hamlet's deceased father, the influence of JT from beyond the grave weighs heavily on Jax. JT's manifesto affects Jax as he considers his position in the club as vice president and later as president as well as his reflection on the direction of his life and that of his two families. JT's legacy is similar to Hamlet's antihero status. JT is unable to take action, which at first leads Jax to characterize his father as a coward. JT doesn't stand up to Clay, even when he fears Clay and his wife are plotting to kill him. He also doesn't run from the club, removing his children from the gang life. His inaction leads many to speculate that he allowed the murder to happen—a passive suicide. His death allowed Clay to usurp the power he had steadily been gaining. At the start of the series, the arthritic hands and gray hair are signals to Clay, and the club, that his reign may be ending. Jax, the heir apparent, has the antihero example of his father, the responsibility of his own children, and his dedication to his club all affecting his role in his world and the choices that he makes—or doesn't make.

Jax's relationship to his stepfather

Clarence "Clay" Morrow is the King at the start of the series, in a role similar to Claudius. He rules his kingdom of Charming, California, from his position within SAMCRO. While most members of the club live in apartments or modest houses, he has a descriptively upper-class home, complete with table big enough for the club to enjoy family dinners, which he shares with his wife, Gemma, Jax's mother. The presidency of Clay to Jax's vice presidency (king/prince) is a more prominent relationship than the stepfather/son

relationship they share. Clay's sole focus is remaining in power, widening that power, and increasing his wealth. He does this with little regard for the other club members or people within the community, although he will say that he cares for his brothers in the club and people of Charming. Clay always chooses the path that will increase his influence or gain him power or wealth.

An early example of his conniving takes place in season 1, episode 3, titled "Fun Town." Strapped for cash as they try to rebuild their gun warehouse, their gun supplier threatens to take business elsewhere unless the club can continue to pay for the shipments. Meanwhile, a prominent local businessman approaches Clay and the club to help find the perpetrator who raped his daughter at the county fair. The businessman offers money, but Clay refuses because he says he wants to help the local community in which he is a member. When the perpetrator is found, Clay wants the father to kill him. The man refuses, and Clay kills the rapist with a knife bearing the fingerprints of businessman. He uses this as blackmail on numerous occasions to stop land deals that might bring "progress" and an increase in federal and outside focus to Charming that would interfere with his position of power over the numerous local officials that Clay has under his control, such as the local sheriff.

Although Clay was not a founder of SAMCRO, he was part of the original 9 and gained his throne when JT died—an event that was marred by suspicions that pointed to Clay. He originally pressed the club to enter the gun running business, a decision that JT lamented. The beginning of the end of Clay's presidency rests in his pressuring of the club to enter into the drug trade. As pushback against his decisions mount, his position is questioned as others maneuver Jax to take control. Letters that JT wrote to his lover in Ireland surface, influencing Tara, Jax's wife. Together, Tara and Jax are able to take action to unseat Clay from his throne, despite Jax and Tara contemplating leaving Charming for a different life. Although Jax has vowed to kill Clay, and is prepared to do so with a weapon supplied by Tara, he merely cuts off Clay's SAMCRO patch and states that Clay "is already dead" ("To Be, Act 2"). Jax needs/wants Clay for his connections to the IRA gun supplier to keep SAMCRO operational. And Jax has power over Clay because of information regarding the deaths of JT and Piney. Jax does not take his revenge; his hero's journey founders. Rather, he places club business over personal, family redemption—a choice Jax makes again and again in the series.

The blackmailing of Clay shows how much Jax has learned from Clay's reign as president. Jax can strategize and maneuver with the best. Clay, of course, tries to regain his power by staging a series of break-ins in Charming that have the local community enraged at Jax. The club, taking into consideration all of Clay's actions including the killing of at least two of the original 9 and possibly a third, vote to have Clay meet Mr. Mayhem. He dies by the hand of Jax as he stares at his queen, and now ex-wife, Gemma.

Jax has lived to avenge his father and defeat his stepfather at his own game of power dynamics. Jax has triumphed where Hamlet failed. Yet, Jax's tragic antihero saga is not finished as he has another villain to contend with.

Jax's relationship to his mother

Gemma Teller Morrow proves to be the ultimate antagonist to Jax. Where Jax is struggling with his two families, Gemma is resolute in her position as queen,

a strong woman who holds the family, and the club, together. As a young, aspiring woman in the motorcycle club scene once remarked, “good old ladies, they can make or break a club” (“Patch Over”). Gemma has transcended the “old lady role,” for she gives birth to its leadership. Her family is intertwined with the hierarchy of the club, and so she sees her position as caretaker as well as behind the scenes support and conniving for future generations of kings. While she is not involved in club business, doesn’t attend “chapel,” and doesn’t wear a SAMCRO “cut”⁹⁸, she causes two wars with rival gangs and rules from her office at the Teller-Morrow garage, which bears her surnames by marriage, located on the clubhouse complex surrounded by her royal court—mainly less macho men who pine for Gemma’s heart, such as the town sheriff as well as a chronic masturbator who both do favors for the club. She and her cohort are able to assist the club in many endeavors that allow them to maintain their position of power and tentative hold to wealth.

Gemma’s motivation is to elevate the status of her progeny—both Jax and her grandchildren. She read the tea leaves when JT started to question his role in the club and switched her allegiances to Clay, the next president of SAMCRO. As Clay ages and his arthritic hands weaken his grip on his motorcycle and his presidency, Gemma’s motivation to have Jax become the next president are clear, complete with insincere support of Clay. Once Jax becomes president, she turns her attention her grandchildren, especially Abel, Jax’s oldest son and the heir to the SAMCRO throne.

Gemma also looks to protect her son and grandchildren from the women in their lives. Abel’s mother Wendy, Jax’s first wife, is a junkie. Gemma alternates between taking care of Wendy, shielding the children from her while taking the mother role, and attempting to kill Wendy. Her relationship with Jax’s second wife is more complex. Gemma shifts between friend and foe with Tara. Much like a prospect attempting to join SAMCRO, Gemma needs to test and mentor Tara to ensure she will be a strong partner and queen of SAMCRO. However, Tara is also a threat to Gemma’s power and her strong hold on her son. In addition, Tara is a threat to undermine Gemma’s work to make her son king and remove him from gang life and Charming.

Gemma’s priority is her son’s position within the club, supplanting her loyalty to her husband or Jax’s wives. This is a marked difference from Jax who struggles with his two families. Gemma’s undoing stems from her unrelenting focus on her perception of what is best for her son within her vision for him to rule supreme. In the finale of the penultimate season, Gemma receives imprecise information and believes that Tara is going to rat and turn state’s evidence against the club and her son, an event that will also separate her from her grandsons. She is unaware that Jax has decided to give himself up, an attempt at self-sacrifice to take the fall for the club as well as to shield his family from club life.

A drunk and stoned Gemma confronts Tara in the kitchen of the middle-class home she shares with Jax. In an impulsive act, Gemma attacks Tara first with an iron and then stabs her in the back of the head with an ice pick. Gemma later admits that she took away the woman that Jax loved more than anyone else in this world. She also sets a war in motion when she blames

⁹⁸ A “cut” is the sleeveless jacket motorcycle gang members wear with their earned and identifiable patches.

the Chinese gang, Lin Triad, for the murder, a move that keeps Jax operating as the president of SAMCRO. However, her grandson overhears her confessing to the murder. His erratic behavior shifts Jax's focus from gang to family, and, after again failing to separate his two families, he learns the truth about the murder of his wife at the hand of his mother.

In the end, Gemma meets "Mr. Mayhem" as if she is a member of SAMCRO who has done wrong by the club. First, she flees and leaves her grandson with a token of SAMCRO—a "SONS" ring that Abel is seen holding as he is driven away from Charming, presumably forever. When Jax catches up to her and is ready to assassinate her, he has a temporary moment of sadness as he holds back tears and lowers the gun that had been aimed at the back of his mother's head. Gemma, in a comforting, motherly voice says, "You have to do this. It's who we are, sweetheart" ("Red Rose"). She accepts her fate as part of the outlaw lifestyle. Meeting Mr. Mayhem is confirmation of her role as gang member than the marginalized "old lady."

Jax—the internal journey to antihero

For Jax, who has often used his mother to assist the club as well as to take care of his children, the entanglement of the two families and the persistent problems of such an approach to life is clear. The love of his life, Tara, biological mother to one of his children and surrogate mother to his first-born child, has been murdered by his mother. Jax can no longer achieve the hero's "mastery of two worlds" as his ultimate goal of saving the club and his family is shattered. Jax engages in a revenge quest that ends with the death of his mother and ultimately himself. He failed to keep a promise to Tara to remove her and the boys from the gang lifestyle. His father, who contemplated the same issues, was either murdered by his wife and her new husband or allowed himself to use their assassination plotting as a suicide, abandoning both family and club.

Jax has the same allegiance to both club and family. He had seen JT's manifesto as a sign of weakness and inaction to affect change as a sign of cowardice. Jax's revelation is that he cannot be the leader of both SAMCRO and his family without the two commingling to disastrous ends. His father commented on the predicament in his manifesto:

I found myself lost in my own club. I trusted few, feared most. Nomad offered escape and exile. I didn't know if leaving would cure or kill this thing we created. I didn't know if it was an act of strength or cowardice. I didn't know, so I stayed. I stayed because, in the end, the only way I could hold this up was to suffer under the weight of it. ("Pilot")

Jax finally understands his father's dilemma and actions as he explains in his final soliloquy at the site of his father's accident before leading police on his final ride to meet Mr. Mayhem:

I think the struggle I understand best, even more than all the things you wanted for SAMCRO and what we eventually became, the one I feel the most is the war of the mind.

Happens when you try to get right with both family and patch. That fear and guilt crippled me. I realized, as I think you did, a good father and a good outlaw can't settle inside the same man. I'm sorry, JT. It was too late for me. I was already inside it. And Gemma, she had plans. It's not too late for my boys. I promise they will never know this life of chaos. I know who you are now. And what you did. I love you, Dad. ("Papa's Goods")

Jax takes a more actively heroic role than his father in freeing the club from their nefarious ways. He successfully overcomes his father's closest enemies. He settles scores with other gangs and negotiates a way out of arms dealing that satisfies the supplier and clients to not take revenge. To SAMCRO, Jax may be a tragic hero. But to his family, his dead wife and orphaned children, Jax is an antihero, choosing his legacy to be that of a villain in an attempt to keep them from the gang life. Time and again he had the opportunity to leave the club. But he allowed his allegiance to SAMCRO, his macho desire to be king of his family castle, and his revenge quest to cloud his judgement and actively be the father and husband his family so desperately needed.

To return to Bevington's *Murder Most Foul* and the cultural meanings of *Hamlet* as "the play is central to our ever-changing cultural image of ourselves," the latest pop culture foray of the (anti)hero's journey mirrors our greatest fears. Jax is a modern day, everyman, antihero Hamlet. He is both hero to his SAMCRO brothers and villain to his children. Strip away the ultraviolence and illegal activities and Jax is just a widowed middle-class father of two trying to make ends meet by climbing the workplace ladder towards the American dream. His inaction and passivity toward his family makes him the antihero failure that scares so many in our modern society. Jax does not come away from the hero's journey with the freedom and revelation many seek to implement in their lives. He is unable to travel with his family safely out of Charming, California. Yet his internal travels are allegory for the ultimate end of Campbell's hero's journey: the "freedom to live" manifests itself by living in the moment.

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ABSTRACTS

MINA APIC, L'opposition nature-civilisation entre les récits de voyage et les abstractions philosophiques du siècle des Lumières en France

Diderot, with his *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage* (1796) and Rousseau with his *Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality Among Mankind* (1755), are two representatives of French Enlightenment whose critique of European civilization could seem as a praise of primitivism. However, if Rousseau is known as the inventor of the myth of the noble savage, whose influence on future literary creation was strong, Diderot's naturalism and his conception of the notion of civilization seem slightly more complex. The object of this essay is to compare the function of the utopian vision of the savage man in the work of the two philosophers, and to examine the relationship of their utopian constructions with descriptions of primitive societies in the travel accounts of the time. To European eyes, indigenous populations were 'natural men' deprived of culture. This type of collective imagination, sustained by travelogues, offered a specific atmosphere in which the philosophers developed their abstractions used against the absolutist monarchy. However, the figure of 'noble savage' was not set as a model to be imitated. Rousseau does not advocate primitivism neither does Diderot extol the anarchy of nature. The two philosophers started from the figure of savage that occupied an important place in the colonial discourse of their time, in order to sharpen their fellow citizens' perception of a civilized world and bring to the fore its culturally specific aspects. In this way, they have stirred the public opinion and prepared the great political changes that followed.

ABDERRAHMAN BEGGAR, De l'invention du Maure et de l'Amérindien dans *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios* (1555) d'Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca

This paper is a study of the process of invention of both Moors and Native Americans in a travel account by the Spanish conquistador, Levar Cabeza de Vaca. This work is grounded in the idea that history is made of normative formations around a set of fundamental ideas that accompany human destiny while dialoguing with consecutive historical contexts. The reality of these ideas in their interaction with historical dynamics is what allows us to examine the reproductive force behind an order that persists since the fall of the Moors in Spain and the Conquest of America. Its power resides in the way it is internalized, sometimes by translators while engaging in a mission to exonerate history while representing the conquistadors as innocent victims. It all goes

back to the ideology of the Spanish *Reconquista* and how, the expansionist mind defines such concepts as territory, empire and other.

L'article est une étude du processus d'invention du Maure et de l'Amérindien dans un récit de voyage du conquistador espagnol, Álvar Cabeza de Vaca. Ce travail part du principe que l'histoire est constituée de formations normatives autour d'un ensemble d'idées fondamentales qui marquent la destinée humaine et persistent en dialoguant avec les contextes historiques successifs. C'est le spectacle de ces idées dans leur interaction avec les dynamiques historiques qui permet de clarifier la force reproductive d'un ordre instauré depuis la chute des Maures en Espagne et la conquête des Amériques. Ce qui se manifeste dans la manière dont il est internalisé, parfois par des traducteurs désireux de réhabiliter l'histoire en représentant le conquistador comme une victime innocente. Tout mène à l'idéologie propre à la *Reconquista* et à la façon dont l'esprit expansionniste définit des concepts comme territoire, empire et autre.

Keywords: invention, réinvention, autre, conquête, Reconquista, Maure, Amérindien, épistémologie, traduction, violence

FELLA BENABED, Liquid Modernity and Fluid Identity in Caryl Phillips's Counter Travelogue *The Atlantic Sound*

The Atlantic Sound (2000) is a partly autobiographical counter travelogue in which Caryl Phillips tells his journey across the multiple loci of his belonging in the Caribbean islands, Great Britain, Ghana, the United States, and the Negev Desert. Borrowing theoretical concepts like María Lourdes López-Ropero's counter travelogue, Zygmunt Bauman's liquid modernity, Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, and Michel Foucault's heterotopia of the ship, the article analyzes the author's fluid sense of self and liminal position between his different homes in liquid modern times. Phillips revisits not only his ancestors' Atlantic slave route, but also his parents' migration route with the "Windrush generation." He attempts to understand the problematic concepts of home and identity through different lenses, first, from the narrator's perspective, and second, through the stories of Ocansey in Liverpool (UK), Quaque in Elmina (Ghana), Waring in Charleston (USA), and the African American Jews in the Negev Desert (Israel). While he feels at home in all these places, he is, paradoxically, not fully at home in none of them.

WARDA DERDOUR, Trips to the Algerian Sahara in the stories of Chawki Amari

The Algerian Sahara is a huge ocean of sand, rocks, stones and pebbles, dotted with roads, steppes, mountains and oases. It occupies a large part of the country's surface, but it is also an empty space because it's the home of few natives. Some men venture there to discover its magical beauty or to unlock the secret of its mysterious magic. The Sahara hasn't always been the favourite space of Algerian writers because of the geographical distance. Chawki Amari, an Algerian author and journalist, is one of the rare writers who are interested in the Algerian desert and write stories unfold in this big space. By publishing travel narratives whose stories unfold in the Sahara, Chawki Amari focuses on rediscovering the desert to Algerian and foreign readers. In this article, we

propose a study of three of his travel stories: “3°E” (short story), *Nationale 1* (travel narrative), *Le faiseur de trous* (novel). We will try to highlight the recurring themes relating to the Sahara and reveal the symbolism of this space in the writings of Chawki Amari.

WILLIAM DONOHUE, Hamlet Joins a Motorcycle Gang: A Contemporary View of the (anti)Hero’s Journey

While exploring the purposeful connections between Hamlet and the contemporary television series *Sons of Anarchy*, the essay maps the contemporary iteration of a hero’s journey, albeit a journey that centers on an antihero. An examination between Jax, the protagonist of *Sons of Anarchy*, and his relationships with the other characters reveals the journey of the antihero and the attractiveness of a character trapped in the middle-class America to a contemporary audience. The narrative of Jax mirrors that of *Hamlet*. Both have a desire to avenge their father’s death at the hands of the man now married to their mother. Both travel inward to examine their character yet neither is able to take the appropriate action. Their journeys come to abrupt ends. But, they both discover the freedom that allows that end to be met without fear.

SONIA DOSORUTH, *Voyage à l’Isle de France* de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: de la valorisation de la nature au rappel d’une société esclavagiste

When Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre embarks on *le Marquis de Castries*, for a long journey to the island of Mauritius—then Isle de France—he could hardly imagine the hard times ahead with the poor weather conditions, the ship being struck by lightning and the scurvy which would kill many of the travellers. However, all through the long travel, the narrator will discover a rich fauna and flora, and people’s reaction in a “natural” environment. He will also observe how enslaved men and women not only are relegated to the background but are also subject to excessive humiliation and harsh treatment. In this paper, we shall analyse the narrator’s perspective of a “new” nature that he discovers all through his travel, the human behaviour in connection with slave trade in Mauritius, and the experience of otherness.

Lorsque Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre s’embarque pour l’Isle de France, rien ne présage qu’il arrivera à bon port avec : son vaisseau rempli de “caisses de vin de champagne, [de] coffres [...] [de] bestiaux qui mugissent, des oyes & des volailles qui piaulent sur les dinettes,” les agitations causées par le mauvais temps, le vaisseau foudroyé, le scorbut qui touche presque la totalité de l’équipe. Certes, une fois à terre, et remis de ses émotions, l’auteur va littéralement déconstruire cet espace nouveau pour en découvrir les habitants. On découvre rapidement qu’il a un faible pour l’antiesclavagisme puisqu’il semble, à de multiples reprises, qualifier d’avanie ce pan de l’Histoire. Il semble aussi puiser de sa propre expérience pour s’adonner à une forme de calque de certains personnages dans son futur chef-d’œuvre *Paul et Virginie*. Voyager devient pour l’auteur une découverte à de multiples niveaux : la toponymie, la faune et la flore locale mais avant tout l’homme dans un espace naturel. S’il reconnaît en Labourdonnais d’avoir été le “fondateur” de la Colonie (174), il

insiste sur le fait que le développement de l'île s'est fait avec des "espèce[s]" de tous genres – du bon au moins bon des hommes. La découverte de l'Autre passe par le redécouverte du soi et du soi dans son rapport aux autres (esclavagisme). Cette étude nous permettra de voir comment l'on investit un espace nouveau afin de comprendre comment le narrateur valorise la nature, rend compte des pires comportements humains à travers l'esclavagisme, et considère la découverte de l'Autre comme un passage initiatique pour mieux appréhender le monde.

Keywords: voyage, mers, espace, esclavagisme

EZRA ENGLING, My return to Spain, with the Lexington Singers

Spain is the fourth largest and the most culturally plural country in Europe. The Lexington Singers is the finest, oldest, and most diverse community choir in the US state of Kentucky. In the summer of 2016, these two entities would meet, for the first time, during the choir's tour of Spain. The trip was organized by the Classical Movements musical touring company, allowing the present author to combine his love of music and travel with his scholarly interest in Spain, serving as unofficial translator and cultural liaison between choir and country. This travel narrative is based on a collection of mental and scribal diary entries from the 10-day trip. It describes a veritable pilgrimage across the regions of Andalucía, Madrid, and Castilla-La Mancha, featuring visits to eight Spanish cities, and performances in four. It also appreciates the Arabic influence on the Spanish language and culture, the background to the subtle presence of religion in the secular life of Spain, and it documents trips to iconic sites, such as the cathedrals of Seville, Cadiz, Toledo and Segovia, the famous Segovia Aqueduct, the Atocha train station, the Plaza del Sol and the Prado Museum quarters of Madrid, and the Tajo and Guadalquivir rivers. The choral repertory was mostly comprised of sacred music, selected in accordance with the available performing sites. Three of the four standing-room-only concerts were in religious spaces, where the choir performed Mozart's *Regina Coeli*, Fauré's *Requiem*, and American Spirituals and Gospel music. The only recital in a secular venue added selections from Broadway musicals, featuring a tribute to Miguel de Cervantes by way of pieces from the musical *Man of La Mancha*, and American patriotic anthems. The pleasant and illuminating meeting between choir and country was interrupted only by the news of a terrorist attack in Nice, France. The Lexington Singers chose to honor the victims of the attack in the remaining concerts.

SAMIRA ETOUIL, Réalité coloniale et stratégies intellectuelles dans *Voyage au Maroc* de l'Américaine Edith Wharton

The purpose of this paper is to explore the modes of representation of reality in the travel novel by the American novelist Edith Wharton, *Voyage au Maroc*. We will explore the realistic gaze and the way narrated facts are subverted through personal interpretations and reflections aimed at reinventing their object. This will lead us, at a final stage, to underline the many intellectual stakes behind this kind of behavior. Edith Wharton's task is not only to formulate a tonic testimony, with its picturesque ornaments, but also to

embellish the colonial order under the euphemism of “protectorat.” The entire project confirms Wharton’s travel project: reproducing epistemic practices behind common representations of Morocco as Other while keeping in mind personal considerations. Reality is magnified, often manipulated, to fit in the traveler’s complex program and to be conform to her immediate purpose. To explain the distance between selfless reality, formed through immediacy and ubiquity, and modeled reality, we will explore the multifaceted nature of a gaze that seeks to reinforce its own credibility.

L’objectif de cette recherche est d’analyser les représentations de la réalité dans le récit de voyage de la romancière américaine Édith Wharton, *Voyage au Maroc*. L’analyse porte sur les cadrages réalistes du récit pour les déterminer d’abord, puis pour en déterminer la part de l’inventif et du subjectif. Il s’agit d’étudier les écarts entre le récit des faits et les altérations qu’il subit du fait d’interprétations personnalisées, issues d’une pensée qui invente son objet. Pour ce faire, il faudra considérer les enjeux intellectuels derrière ces modifications. Nous expulserons ensuite comment le travail de la romancière consiste à formuler un témoignage vivant, non sans ornements pittoresques, pour embellir l’image de l’intervention coloniale, désignée par l’euphémisme “protectorat.” La tâche s’avère difficile pour une dame, romancière de surcroît, qui tente tant bien que mal à démêler l’écheveau d’un composé de sensations immédiates, prises sur des moments furtifs, sans consistance historique, pour les convertir en une vision aux allures objectives. Ce qui fait que la mission se prête plus à une manœuvre épistémique, où la vision personnelle reproduit des modèles de représentation communs. Pour répondre à ce programme complexe, la réalité est magnifiée, voire manipulée, suivant les situations et les objectifs instantanés du voyage. Expliquer les écarts entre la réalité désintéressée, formée autour des représentations immédiates et directes, et la réalité retravaillée revient à décortiquer la complexité du regard qui cherche à renforcer les liens de crédibilité.

OLFA GANDOUIZ, “The ocean is always rough, but we are good sailors:” The Travel Experience of Italian Immigrants in Arthur Miller’s *A View from the Bridge*

The present chapter examines the travel of the Italian brothers from Sicily into Brooklyn. It mainly focuses on the long journey of otherness and the effects of the machine of imperialism on two Italian American generations in Arthur Miller’s *View from the Bridge* (1955) from a postcolonial perspective. The presence of the bridge alludes to the ethnic boundaries and to the spatial and ideological separation of Italian citizens. Both legal (like Alfieri) and illegal Italian immigrants (like Rodolpho and Marco) are disillusioned with the American dream of opulence and ethnic integration. The experience of marginalization heightens the protagonists’ feelings of otherness and dramatizes their longing for belonging. There are two types of otherness in the play. In addition to external otherness exerted by the American gaze of inferiority and to the gap between educated and non educated Italian men, each Italian character goes through moments of internal otherness. This type of otherness is witnessed through self-loathing and through the inner divided house of the Italian characters. For instance, Edie’s tragic dilemma stems from

“the betrayal of the best values of both Italian and American cultures” (Richards). The fresh Italian immigrants are characterized by their pagan acceptance of life and their loyalty to the classical Roman values of life-celebration, passion and romanticism.

The innovative aspect of this chapter lies in dealing with Italy as a postcolonial region and approaching Miller’s text from a postcolonial perspective. External otherness and the otherness of the Italian American self will be analyzed to show the role of postcolonial discourse in inventing the Manichean discourse. Dramatic, thematic, stylistic and theatrical devices will be analyzed to show the way Miller’s Italian characters go beyond imperial stereotypes, celebrate their cultural uniqueness and reach moments of decolonization.

Key Words: Travel Literature, Otherness, Self-Loathing, Self-Glorification, Decolonization, Postcolonial Italy, Italian American Identity

ANN M.GENZALE, *The Words Are Maps: The Contemporary Hiking Memoir as Life Writing*

Among the most popular sub-genres of travel literature in recent decades has been the autobiographical travel narrative, and particularly memoirs featuring long-distance hiking. Following the success of Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* and its 2014 film adaptation, there has been a proliferation of hiking memoirs written by women, such as Carrot Quinn’s self-published *Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart: An Adventure on the Pacific Crest Trail*, which she adapted from blog entries written from the trail, and Rahawa Haile’s essay, “Going It Alone,” which describes her through-hike of the Appalachian Trail and is the basis of a forthcoming book. This essay analyzes these three texts, discussing their contributions to the sub-genre of the hiking memoir and to travel writing more broadly. By presenting their hikes as deeply embodied, transformative experiences, Strayed, Quinn, and Haile, each in their own way, adapt the generic conventions of the hiking memoir to illuminate and reflect on the broader scope of their lives off the trail. The stylistic and thematic variations in these texts, I argue, demonstrate the emerging potential of the hiking memoir as a form of life writing, in which the outward progression along the trail is accompanied by an inward journey of self-determination that fundamentally alters the ways the narrators see themselves and the ways they move through the world.

AGNIESZKA KACZMAREK, *Facts and Fiction in Maurice Herzog's Annapurna*

A classic of mountaineering literature, Maurice Herzog’s *Annapurna: The First Conquest of an 8000-Metre Peak (1951)* chronicles the unprecedented ascent of one of the fourteen highest summits on earth, which in 1950 marked a new epoch in the history of climbing by simply proving it was possible to reach the top of an eight-thousander. As its title and subtitle indicate, the memoir is supposed to exemplify a first-hand account of a momentous climb, yet what makes the reader ponder is its author’s classification of his eyewitness story as “a true novel.” Such an assertion implies the intersection of fictional and factual

elements, thus posing a question of what kind of narrative, in effect, this mountaineering classic that became an international bestseller emulates. In addition to scrutinizing the authorship of the memoir, which is not so indisputable as the book's title page would suggest, the article examines rhetorical techniques applied to convince the reading audience of the account's authenticity. And to help the reader acquire a broader understanding of this climbing achievement for the mountain world, the analysis begins with providing a historical context outlining the final phases of the endeavors to finally scale an eight-thousand-meter peak.

Keywords: Herzog; Annapurna; authorship; climbing; eight-thousander

BERNADETTE MCNARY-ZAK, Aboard the Castilia: Clarissine Formation for the New World

This essay offers a close reading of the literary construction of humility in the voyage section of *Memoirs* of Maddalena and Constanza Bentivoglio. By representing humility in metaphorical terms that foreground its relational qualities, the sisters craft a memory that hearkens to their ongoing pursuit for stability in an unpredictable period of monastic foundation. As a result, their work impacts the theological imagination of their sisters and informs the historical reconstruction of their origins in the United States.

CATARINA NUNES DE ALMEIDA, Deux voyageuses ibériques en Asie centrale: pour une lecture du féminin dans le récit de voyage de notre temps

In this article, I intend to analyze two travel narratives written by two Iberian writers: *Una viajera por Central Asia* (2016), by the Spanish author Patricia Almarcegui, and *Caderno Afegão* (2009), by the Portuguese Alexandra Lucas Coelho. My aim is to observe, through both travelogues, the balance between innovation and tradition in contemporary feminine accounts: to what extent they follow the literary standard and to what extent they surpass it. The analysis of the texts cover the point of view of the motivations that are the origin of the journeys, the objectives and achievements accomplished by these women writers, and the relations they establish along the way. It will be particularly important to demonstrate how the place of travel continues to define limits, boundaries and possibilities, while it constructs or deconstructs the identity paradigms through which the narrators define themselves (as independent, solitary, solidary, nostalgic and romantic). The choice of so-called "patriarchal societies" as their destinations—Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan—will allow us to further discuss gender issues in contemporary travel writing. I intend to show that the existence of a public and a private sphere—the latter more accessible to women—is an idea that is still central in the vision of these writers, for they believe that the mere presence of their bodies confronts and threatens the established norms.

Dans cet article sont analysés deux récits de voyage écrits par deux écrivaines ibériques: *Una viajera por Asia central* (2016), par l'écrivaine espagnole Patricia Almarcegui et *Caderno Afegão* (2009), par la portugaise Alexandra Lucas Coelho. Le but de cette étude est d'observer, à travers ces ouvrages, de

quelle manière innovation et tradition s'équilibrent dans les récits féminins produits à notre époque; dans quelle mesure elles suivent le canon littéraire et dans quelle mesure elles le dépassent. Les textes seront analysés du point de vue des motivations à l'origine des voyages, choix de la destination, objectifs et réalisations respectifs, et des dynamiques relationnelles au fil du périple. Il sera particulièrement important de démontrer comment l'espace du voyage continue de définir les limites, les frontières et les possibilités, en même temps qu'il construit ou déconstruit les paradigmes identitaires à travers lesquels les narratrices s'autodéfinissent (comme indépendantes, solitaires, solidaires, nostalgiques et romantiques). Le choix de sociétés dites "patriarcales" comme destination—Ouzbékistan, Kirghizistan et Afghanistan—nous permettra une discussion plus approfondie sur les questions de genre dans le récit de voyage contemporain. Je prétends également montrer que l'idée de sphère publique et privée—cette dernière plus accessible aux femmes—récupère une place centrale dans la vision de ces auteures, qui estiment que la simple présence de leur corps continue de confronter et de menacer les normes établies.

NEELAM PIRBHAI-JETHA, *The Island as a Space of Otherness: A Study of Non-Fictional Travel Writing on Mauritius (1830-1909), Under British Rule.*

Percy G. Adams in *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* evokes the rise of travel writing through the centuries as owing to scientific and technological advances. Travellers' writings on Mauritius, a small island colonised till 1968 by different European powers, are numerous; but only a few travel texts by European or non-European travellers have been studied, and very little research on travel writing on Mauritius from a postcolonial perspective has been undertaken. In this study, we will analyse the representation of the island of Mauritius as a space of Otherness in some non-fictional travel writing under British rule. In the first part of the study, we will see how the island, lost in the middle of the oceans, is an object of desire and is conceptualised as a space of utopian longing. Nevertheless, the smallness of the island makes some travelers feel claustrophobic and isolated and their only desire is to leave the island. What also seems to make the island a space of Otherness is the presence of the inhabitants, who were not indigenous to the land, but came from all over the world. Among them were also prisoners. In the second part, we will focus on Mauritius as a convict island.

Keywords: non-fictional travel writing, Mauritius, postcolonialism, island

SARA SCHOTLAND, "Whichever Way the Road": Travel and Agency in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Plays

This essay addresses the theme of travel and agency in two of August Wilson's Pittsburgh Plays, *Gem of the Ocean* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. This essay intends to contribute to literary scholarship on the Great Migration by considering the extent to which the protagonists in Wilson's plays choose to exercise agency to resist discrimination and poverty. In these plays the migrants travel not only physically but spiritually; they take decisions that will define them as citizens and heal emotional trauma. Like today's immigrants, the African American migrants who came to Pittsburgh early in the 20th

Century pro-actively decided to leave their homes and journey to a new destination which presents formidable socioeconomic and other barriers. Wilson's protagonists are challenged to undergo a further spiritual journey reclaiming their African roots if they are to rebuild their lives in the North.

Keywords: African Americans, Migrant, Travel, Agency, Spiritual, Pittsburgh Plays

 NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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2. Article (journal) : “Fantasmer le passé pour réécrire le présent, une étude de La Diligence s’éloigne à l’aube de Marcelle Lagesse, écrivaine mauricienne,” edited by Brigitte Le Juez and Hélène Rufat, monography 8, *Désir et appartenance : regards croisés*, 2018, URL : <http://cedille.webs.ull.es/>
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Call for Articles
Volume 9 - Fall 2021

Happiness: Practice, Process, and Product

The Lincoln Humanities Journal (ISSN 2474-7726) is requesting article submissions for its 9th special issue, to be published in December 2021, on the topic of **Happiness: Practice, Process, and Product**. Contributors are invited to explore the theme from a number of perspectives: (a) the practices of happiness: what it means to be happy; and the ever-evolving forms and definitions at all levels (individual, cultural, political, etc.); (b) the processes: the strategies and actions that seekers and providers of happiness implement to achieve happiness: consumption, hobbies, drugs, alcohol, gambling, sex, etc.; (c) and products: what happiness looks like; how it is experienced; and the various emotional, economic, socio-political, physiological and literary gadgets, symbols and manifestations that embody happiness. We welcome approaches across a broad range of disciplines such as literature, philosophy, history, anthropology, religion, psychology, popular culture, visual arts, and social media. Topics may include but are not limited to:

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- Geographical and environmental impact of happiness
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- Deadline for Full Article Submissions: June 15, 2021
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3. The article should be 4000-6000 words, including the abstract, the footnotes and the works cited
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7. Use font Georgia # 12. The entire article, including the abstract and the indented quotations, should be double-spaced, and in MS Word.
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- *Panopticon: Surveillance, Suspicion, Fear* (Volume 4, Fall 2016)
- *Us and Them* (Volume 5, Fall 2017)
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