



# ***Literature on the Move***

***Ottmar Ette***

INTERNATIONALE FORSCHUNGEN ZUR ALLGEMEINEN UND VERGLEICHENDEN LITERATURWISSENSCHAFT

# Literature on the Move

88

in Volume 10

The following list of authors and their works is intended to provide a general overview of the literature on the move. The list is not exhaustive and is intended to be a starting point for further research. The authors are listed in alphabetical order of their last names. The works are listed in chronological order of publication.

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(University of



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Internationale Forschungen zur  
Allgemeinen und  
Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft

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# Literature on the Move

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Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Les hasards heureux de l'escarpolette*, 1767.

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## Signposts

The experience of living after history, in a *posthistoire*, seems to repeat itself in modern Europe with a certain regularity. It can be found in various grades, for instance, in Georg Forster<sup>1</sup> at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Jules Michelet<sup>2</sup> around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or in the recent present.<sup>3</sup> The experience of after-historical periods is intertwined with the evolution of historical thinking in general in a particular way. There are a number of clues that we have overcome the sensation of living in a post-history that was widely held in North America and Europe, but also in other places. And so begins a period of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was labeled postmodernity, often interpreted as an epoch by itself, but which apparently settles in a common space of modernity and postmodernity.<sup>4</sup>

This book has been written against the background of this new situation and in expectation of a fresh evaluation of cultural aims, which have to be shaped by a structure of space that has been fundamentally changed in territorial and non-territorial respects: this shall serve as a first determination of a room for maneuver that started to move again. It embraces, therefore, in the chronological sense, the time/space of modernity and postmodernity between the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At the same time it interrogates literature regarding the evolution of spatial concepts, which – often also in dialogue with other media, particularly the visual arts – were meaningful for the last quarter of the second millennium and that emerge above an aesthetic and “spatiality” of the modern. The point of departure for a bordercrossing literature on the move will be constituted by travel literature, from which the view should be opened up on other spaces, dimensions and patterns of movement, which will shape the literatures of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And these will become – one needs no prophetic gift to see – for a major part *literatures with no fixed abode*.

When our ten-year-old daughter asked me what the title of this book was to be and heard that it is concerned with “Literature on the move,” she was visibly disappointed and surprised. Literature actually would be not on the move; indeed, all the letters stayed firmly and did not move at all – in contrast to the images of film or the Internet. After a lengthier pause she added that she had already thought about letters changing their place in the book overnight and that they might not be in their proper anymore place the next morning. Was this what I meant by movement? She had hit upon an idea that had caused already fear, but probably also fascination, in Jorge Luis Borges – a figure who perhaps more than any other stands at the interface of the modern and the postmodern – when he was a child, according to his own statement. Books can indeed change overnight. “All of a sudden” texts are read differently, and readers rub their eyes in surprise since they always believed they know their authors well. Simply standing still does not help: the texts move along, even without us, and leave us behind.

<sup>1</sup> See Lepenies, Wolf: *Das Ende der Naturgeschichte. Wandel kultureller Selbstverständlichkeiten in den Wissenschaften des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1978, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> See the essay, published first in April 1951, by Barthes, Roland: Michelet, l'Histoire et la Mort. In (idem.): *Oeuvres complètes. Edition établie et présentée par Eric Marty*. 3 vols. Paris: Seuil 1993-1995, here vol. I, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> See Gumbrecht, Hans-Ulrich: *Posthistoire Now*. In: Gumbrecht, Hans-Ulrich / Link-Heer, Ursula (eds.): *Epochenschwellen und Epochenstrukturen im Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachhistorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1985, pp. 34-50.

<sup>4</sup> See Ette, Ottmar: Roland Barthes. Eine intellektuelle Biographie. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1998, pp. 487-489.

But that is only *one* part of the movement, which I will focus upon. What would it mean, if not only letters (and single texts), but literature in general would be on the move, or if we look at it from this perspective? If literature – as Umberto Eco thought, inspired by the moveable pieces of art by Calder – would turn as a mobile, with which the observer – moving themselves – would constitute constantly new configurations?<sup>5</sup> But would it then be still possible to understand the dynamics of such a complex space and to distinguish diverse patterns and basic figures of movements, as in a choreography at which we can look, but whose steps we can follow and dance by ourselves? It is these questions, which have fascinated me for a long time, that I will try to follow, in a literary sense, in this volume – not to answer them in totality, but to depict basic figures of literature's being on the move and to open up new perspectives of analysis. If we look out of a train window at another train on the neighboring track, we often cannot tell whether our train, the other one or both are moving. These short, transposing, temporary moments, which we eliminate quickly with the help of an alarmed activation of body sensation in a kind of self-securing of one's own standpoint via fixed objects, can be given to us by literature – but these moments are then longer and more intense.

Not only the places described, but also the places of writing and the places of reading are in reciprocal as well as in independent movement. Far too seldom we see – and reception theory has heretofore hardly contributed anything – that we, the reader, also move constantly. That does not only concern the fact that our readings are embedded into diverse contexts of other readings (texts, sign, everyday life experiences, etc.), but also the phenomenon (which is little considered in all its consequences) that we only rarely read a longer book in the same place. Certainly, the traditional places for reading still exist. The apparently least mobile of these places is the bed at home, the reading before falling into slumber – here the book is the ideal transition into a world of dreams. We take the book with us on our way to work, we read while traveling or we finish it after we return home. The journey reading contains a no less spatial and temporal dynamic than the one that emerges when we start to read a book but finish it months later. Are these movements without influence on our perception, our reading of the book? Would our appropriation of the text be the same if we were to read it exclusively in the closed-up world of a library? Is the *world as a will and imagination* the same if we perceive it as bedtime reading or as train reading?

The motivation and the conception of this book goes in a sense back to the question of literary space, which came up a few years ago.<sup>6</sup> It became obvious how fast coordinates change that are built up between literary texts and other texts, other authors, cultures and continents. This is not only true for single texts but also for text groups. Actually it concerns – to name a geocultural example – a historically changing asymmetry of literary relationships between Europe and America in general. It was apparent that the synchrony of the analysis of "static" spaces in a given point of time could be complemented and dynamized by diachrony. What are the consequences of these findings for the analysis of concrete single texts, which shall stand in the foreground of the following "Passages"?

The political, cultural, economic, social and also literary spaces surrounding us have changed since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with increasing rapidity. Literatures acknowledged this fact, while literary studies mostly ignored the problem – even in the field

<sup>5</sup> See Eco, Umberto: *Opera aperta*. Milano: Bompiani 1976, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> My first publication focused on this question was: „Cierta india que sabe francés": Intertextualität und literarischer Raum in José Martí's "Amistad funesta". In: *Iberoamericana* (Frankfurt am Main) IX, 25-26 (1985), pp. 42-52.

of travel literature, which seems to be made for investigations of this kind. The present study tries to give a couple of answers to these problems and to point out how the dynamics of space and space relations on various levels as well as in concrete single texts can be analyzed within the context of greater temporal development. The "Passages" and the "Traverses" focus on these movements, each from different, but never static viewpoints.

The new mappings, the new cartographization of the cultural, which co-shaped at least the last quarter of the past century under the sign of the postmodern, start to lose their efficacy and their ability to represent. New movements, which indeed had been announced by the discussions in the shadow of postmodernity debates, claim new spaces for themselves and demand, especially for literary texts, new modes of thought and possibilities of analysis. It seems to me that this concerns in particular imaginations and concepts that turn into a changed and still rapidly changing spatiality. Besides an unmixed phenomenon of *multiculturalism* and the *intercultural* phenomenon of mixing, we now have a *transcultural* phenomenon that is all mixed up (I do mean this in a positive sense), in which the different cultures penetrate and alter each other. Constant habitats and residences of cultures belong in their majority to the past. The discussion about cultural hybridity, forced from the "margins" to the "centers" but increasingly worldwide, points unmistakably to these new, irreversible developments.

The much cited and often rightfully criticized as fashionable/non-committal discourse of globalization has not been considered sufficiently in its consequences for literature and even more so to those studies and fields of knowledge which are concerned with literature.

The thoughts presented here start with the conviction that whatever shape a further evolution might take, whatever might come "after" the postmodern – not considering whether we declare it ended or not – in any case the problem field and the experience of space will be of decisive importance (determining meaning?). But might this be a basically erroneous evaluation? Is the object we focus on not threatened by minimization, indeed even extinction? There are good reasons to claim that space will disappear in the future. On the one hand, we all see that an infrastructure modernized with increasing rapidity reduces and minimizes the time necessary to overcome distances. Thus the spaces within which we move constantly become bigger but the time connected to them smaller and smaller. To put it differently: the more we stretch space, the smaller the world becomes.

The situation is a paradox: while we widen our space of movement, we minimize with improving velocities of movement this space and those spaces neighboring it in more and more radical ways. Contrary to the space in space, the space on Earth is limited. Today, the boundaries of the *ecumene* are accessible within hours. The quantity of crossings of its borders – be it polar regions, high altitude mountain regions or broad deserts – questions the limits of the *anecumene* itself and often couples these spaces that are not only scientifically but increasingly *touristically* used spaces to our space of experience. At the same time new spaces are yielded to literature. While modernity from its start always sought *borderspaces* – with Rousseau, for example, the high mountain area – as visual foci for (self)reflection, in the postmodern – with at times surprising consequences – new *landscapes of theory* have been developed, which – as evident as in the (for postmodernity characteristic) desert – are also regions beyond or close to the border of spaces on this planet where human beings can settle permanently.

But it is not done with this world-wide expansion and at the same time reduction and minimization of space, which also result in those *touristic* offers to travel around the globe – left or right – in a few hops and a couple of stop-overs. It has been convincingly pointed out that empirical space is annulled by rapid evolution of electronic media and the related



creation of virtual space.<sup>7</sup> When we interconnect in almost-simultaneousness the most different spaces of our planet via the Internet or satellite and put them into the same virtual temporality, then we have brought the empirical space close to zero. Why should we then speak about space – and especially about space that is empirical to experience: Why should one choose this species which is in the process of disappearing as a point of departure for new reflections?

Whoever in the devolution of his own life (not only occupational) experienced the introduction of the personal computer undoubtedly recollects the commentaries and forecasts that the writing on a virtual surface would very quickly make the use of paper superfluous, or if not, reduce it drastically. As is well known quite the opposite is the case, and we wonder with concern how we can possibly master the ever-growing avalanche of paper that is now electronically produced. What if this experience can be transferred to the problem of space? What if we did not face the creation of a world-wide homogenized space that extinguishes all differences successively, but if we actually experienced a differentiating of spaces that can play with their differences because of a reciprocal communication that is fundamentally eased?

The dream of modernity, the creation of an increasingly homogenized space before the background of world traffic, world trade, world economy, has, to a large extent, become true – a dream that started with the modern age and that has in Christopher Columbus, who necessarily has to be included, one of its multi-layered symbolic figures. But *simultaneously* with this development that has been quickening since the end of the 18th century, new cultural spaces have been developed, which do not stand for dis-differentiation but for new phenomena of differentiation. One might therefore confidently assume an ongoing simultaneousness of *both* developments. That is why the problem of processes configuring space seems to me of such decisive meaning, not least for the literatures that are unfolding right now and that will be written in future, and the studies that are focused on them and try to learn from them.

Globalization is at once a fact *and* a fiction, better still: a staging. Nothing has made this more apparent than the worldwide raging millennium fever. The broadcasting of the start of the new millennium moving forward in planetary rotation speed offered a gigantic scenery, whose actual main figures were the worldwide networked media themselves. The medium has been not only the message, but at the same time transmitter, receiver, protagonist and channel in one. There was no lack of supernumeraries. Choirs of schoolchildren in the South Seas or Big Wheel installations in Paris, rejoicing celebrations in Asia, rites of shamans in the Andes, or orgies of fireworks in the United States: it was always a superlativist global show, staged *by* Western media *for* Western media. The *global village* celebrated “its” media. The world-wide broadcasting showed the globalization and even more so its imaginative character, insofar as the most different cultures seemed to participate that indeed have nothing in common with the Western Christian embedding of the worldwide and irresistible expansion process hidden behind codes and number symbolism besides being dragged into this vortex – admittedly a fundamental fact. That, of course, was fact enough. It manifested itself in the way in which the most different of cultures have been telegenically and datatransferably set into movement worldwide.

These evolutions have picked up speed in the range of literatures as well, even if it has not been acknowledged in Europe yet – in contrast to the United States. A little oversubtly one could say that the Germans did create the term “Weltliteratur” with Goethe’s concept

<sup>7</sup> This has especially impressively and originally been described by Schmidt, Aurel: *Von Raum zu Raum. Versuch über die Reiseliteratur*. Berlin: Merve Verlag 1998.



and brought it into play, but since then have not bothered with it anymore. Actually, it is not done with an internationalization of the literatures in the sphere of G7 countries or of the utterances made by the First World, but it is a real planetary - even if certainly not universal - development. When do we take these evolutions seriously in literary studies and when do we adjust our concepts to them? Why have we so rarely dealt with the question of why crucial innovations and changes at least in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century in such an astonishingly large amount did not come from the "centers" any more, but from the supposed "margins"? Also in this sense literature is on the move, a process that has been constantly strengthened since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and has reached meanwhile a breadth and dynamic that changes and will change the literatures of the supposed "centers" in a more fundamental way. Scholarship will change too, especially in Europe. At least in the field of information technology and tradition of knowledge - and literature belongs to this as much as science - the dream of the Italian futurists of ubiquity and simultaneity became everyday reality.

While for the French theoretician of the 60's a fixed canon of self-evident European texts (moreover texts from only certain parts of Europe supplemented by a few North American works) was still unchallenged, today such a binding canon no longer exists to a comparable degree. Here, too, things are on the move. In this sense, the study of bordercrossing literatures also means that these are literatures beyond clear-cut national, continental, and territorial borderlines, that these are literatures that cross through and over the until now valid borders of national-literary, literature-historical, genre-historical, or cultural kinds.

The present volume turns to borderlinings that not only concern physical geography, nation-states or the stratification of society, not only the various media, the arts, or nature, but also the scholarly disciplines, the literary genres, the landscapes, the myths, the sexes, age.

A related goal is to support a new understanding of the studies of these literatures beyond the borderlines between the single disciplines, beyond a scientifically disciplined construction of objects. It is highest time for it: not only because of the unending streams of migration that have for a long time grown to planetary dimensions, the literatures of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be literatures without a fixed abode, literatures that evade attempts at clear territorialization. Goethe's remark from January 31, 1827, has received its meaning only recently: "national literatures do not want to say much today, it is the turn of the epoch of world literature, and everybody must now work to speed up this epoch."<sup>8</sup> This volume intends to make its contribution to the task.

In its own way this book is many books, but it is especially two books. Be it at times based on a rhizomatic, sometimes even only proliferating thinking (and writing), it nonetheless does not intend to be a rhizomatic book in the sense of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It resembles, rather, two other types of books, which have been distinguished by the always stimulating French theoreticians. Because it is on the one hand a "root book"<sup>9</sup> that absolutely is structured hierarchically and whose stem is a group of basic questions that have already been touched upon. On the other hand it is also the kind of book in which the

<sup>8</sup> Eckermann, Johann Peter: *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. Herausgegeben von Fritz Bergemann. Bd. I. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag 1981, p. 211.

<sup>9</sup> Deleuze, Gilles / Guattari, Félix: *Rhizom*. Translated by Dagmar Berger et al. Berlin: Merve Verlag 1977, p. 8.

"tufted root or the system of small roots" prevails, a type that - as Guattari and Deleuze cunningly added - "modernity likes to claim for itself."<sup>10</sup>

This has not least to do with the fact that the majority of the following chapters developed out of lectures<sup>11</sup> that have been supplemented by additional texts and chapters. These lectures have been written - with exception of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter - focused on a unified book, whose conception naturally changed during the past five years. Originally a book on travel literature with the title "Travelers and those left at home" was supposed to be written. During the lectures and the following discussions the topic broadened significantly. New chapters had to be written that were completely different from those planned at first; originally planned chapters have been uncoupled and published separately. The volume in its recent version turns among others to texts by Aub, Balzac, Barthes, Baudrillard, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Borges, Butor, Calvino, Cohen, Columbus, Condé, Diderot, Goethe, A.v. Humboldt, Kristeva, La Condamine, La Pérouse, Le Clézio, Raynal, Reyes, Rodó, Stadler and Flora Tristan. At the same time it was intended to maintain the possibility of reading the book not only in its totality but also each chapter separately. I do hope that this possibility is still given in spite of all the crossings-over and reciprocal references among the chapters.

Besides this linear reading that can be extended to the entire book or single chapters, numerous subtitles should also enable different readings and routes. They serve the orientation and are supposed to enable in the spirit of basic figures of movement that are presented in the first chapter, not only linear, but also circular, discontinuous-jumping, star- and pendulum-like readings; and in this way the movement is not only the object and the

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 9. Further thoughts that are of importance for the concept of this volume can be found in "Continuous and discontinuous readings" in chapter six of the present study.

<sup>11</sup> First versions of single chapters that were more or less revised later on already have been published partly in foreign languages. These are in detail for chap. 1: Est-ce que l'on sait où l'on va? Dimensionen, Orte und Bewegungsmuster des Reiseberichts. In: Bernecker, Walther L. / Krömer, Gertrud (eds.): Die Wiederentdeckung Lateinamerikas. Die Erfahrung des Subkontinents in Reiseberichten des 19. Jahrhunderts. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag 1997, pp. 29-78; Chap. 3: Diderot et Raynal: l'oeil, l'oreille et le lieu de l'écriture dans l'"Histoire des deux Indes". In: Lüsebrink, Hans-Jürgen / Strugnell, Anthony (ed.): L'"Histoire des deux Indes": réécriture et polygraphie. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation 1996, pp. 385-407 and La mise en scène de la table de travail: poétologie et épistémologie immanentes chez Guillaume-Thomas Raynal et Alexander von Humboldt. In: Wagner, Peter (ed.): Icons - Texts - Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality. Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter 1996, pp. 175-209; Chap. 5: Unterwegs zum Orbis Tertius? Balzac - Barthes - Borges oder Die vollständige Fiktion einer Literatur der Moderne. In: Bremer, Thomas / Heymann, Jochen (eds.): Sehnsuchtsorte. Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Titus Heydenreich. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag 1999, pp. 279-305; Chap. 6: "Una gimnástica del alma". José Enrique Rodó, Proteo de Motivos. In: Ette, Ottmar / Heydenreich, Titus (eds.): José Enrique Rodó y su tiempo. Cien años de Ariel. Frankfurt am Main - Madrid: Vervuert - Iberoamericana 2000, Chap. 7: "Una minúscula Grecia para nuestro uso". Mito griego, identidad mexicana y vanguardia latinoamericana en Alfonso Reyes. In: Bulletin of Hispanic Studies (Liverpool) LXXII (1995), pp. 327-343. I am grateful to the editors of these publications as well as to the organizers of conferences in Mainz, Osnabrück, Ithaca (USA), Mexico and Berlin for their permission to print here the reworked versions. Not in this volume but separately published have been the following essays that were written in the same context: Fernández de Lizardi: "El Periquillo Samiento". Dialogisches Schreiben im Spannungsfeld Europa - Lateinamerika. In: Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte / Cahiers d'Histoire des Littératures Romanes (Heidelberg) XXII, 1-2 (1998), pp. 205-237; Albert Cohen: "Jour de mes dix ans": Räume und Bewegungen interkultureller Begegnung. In: Große, Sybille / Schönberger, Axel (eds.): Dulce et decorum est philologiam colere. Festschrift für Dietrich Briesemeister zu seinem 65. Geburtstag. vol. 2. Berlin: Domus Editoria Europaea 1999, pp. 1295-1322; "Tres fines de siglo" (Teil I). Kulturelle Räume Hispanoamerikas zwischen Homogenität und Heterogenität. In: Iberoromania (Tübingen) 49 (1999), pp. 97-122; and "Tres fines de siglo" (Teil II). Der Modernismus und die Heterogenität von Moderne und Postmoderne. In: Iberoromania (Tübingen) 50 (1999), pp. 122-151.

proceeding of this book but also the way to appropriate it. This volume does not seek to be a tome but a page turner that invites different directions of reading.

This book has emerged from movement: more precisely, from movements – the movement of traveling as well as the movement of staying home. It is based fundamentally on those changes of location that come with lectures, conferences and guest lectureship. At times it seems to me the best (and most fertile) places for discussion are those that are beyond the every day horizon of discussions. Therefore this book itself is a result of a movement of literature and scholarship insofar as it is obliged to discussion partners in various American and European countries. I would like to take the opportunity to thank them here. I am especially grateful to my colleagues in Mexico who, in combination with a guest lectureship that was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service, made it possible for me to examine this book another time critically together with students and faculty of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* and the *Colegio de México*.

This foreword was begun in Germany and finished in Mexico. It testifies about the movement, in the sense of motion *and* emotion to which this book is indebted, and which should be presented from differing, changing perspectives on the following pages.

Potsdam/Mexico City, March/April 2000

Ottmar Ette



# One

## Parcours

### Mapping a world on the move

What would a travelogue be, in which it is said, one would stay but without ever having arrived, one would travel but without ever having left - in which it is never said, once departed, if one has arrived or not arrived? Such a report would be a scandal, the exhaustion of readability through loss of blood.

Roland Barthes, S / Z

### Approaching movement

Literature and scholarship are based on an immense number of changes of location that rarely become conscious and upon which it is seldom reflected in literature and even more rarely in scholarship. Whether train or plane, Internet or World Wide Web: Our processes of thinking and writing are based on a multitude of movements that are aimed not so much at space but rather at overcoming space. Disturbing distances should be overcome and relations and forms of exchange that are as direct as possible should become established. Scholarly as well as literary communication lives through overcoming, and at times also through the admittedly problematic cutting-out of space.

If literature and scholarship are inevitably connected to space and its overcoming, then it might be meaningful to search for an approach to both via a genre that is open for both fields and forms of knowledge. The travelogue is fundamentally this type of literary and scholarly writing, in which writing becomes perhaps the most conscious about its reference to space, its dynamics, and its needs to move. It might seem paradoxical, but even in the study of travelogue the question about its locations has surprisingly seldom been raised. I do not mean primarily the problem of referentiality of the travelogue, i.e. its organization, either according to the country of origin of certain travelers (for example, the investigation of French, Spanish, German, Chilean or Chinese authors) or according to their geographical goal (journeys to America, to Europe, to Asia). Because space and movement are omnipresent in the travelogue, they often remain unreflected. But the investigation of literary, hermeneutic, philosophical or writing-specific aspects of travel literature can not only inform us about itself but also allow us new insights about literature and its forms and stagings of knowledge in general.

The fascination that travelogues, especially of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, had for their contemporary readership is impressive and stayed constant over extended historical periods; it is with these texts of the early modern epoch that we want to begin our *Parcours*. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century too, the literary travelogue has lost nothing of its radiance - as can be proved by the extensive and intensive study of this genre during the last 30 years - not only as the object of a however defined (literary-)historical interest or an interest in the history of scholarship, but at the same time as a lively literary form of expression, although the travelogue now has to fight with new competitors and new media on various levels. Not only traveling, but also the forms of writing of the travelogue - as the following chapter will



demonstrate – have become ubiquitous in contemporary literature. It is well known how a travelogue of the 18th century – Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde* of 1771 – together with other, more or less literarily successful travelogues, like the one by Anson, or by Byron, captivated an audience beyond educated French society, and directly started a "Tahitian fashion," coupled with a longing for other social forms and times. Still, Georg Forster, who, on James Cook's second journey following the traces of Bougainville, entered what the latter had named the so richly referential *Nouvelle Cythère*, and who later reported about this experience in his impressive (and for the German travel literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century exemplary)<sup>1</sup> travelogue, could not escape the charm of the Frenchman's creation that was well known to his contemporaries. He too, was not free from the "South Seas intoxication" that rolled over the European audience in the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Undoubtedly, the fascination produced by travelogues, especially about far-away cultures, is not least shaped by the perception of cultural, social and political alterity, but our example shows how high the part of the Self can be in the perception of the cultural Other:

Since Forster's enthusiastic description, impressive in its poetry, of ensembles of scenic beauty, generous abundance of nature, healthy climate with naive morals, loveliness and pleasurable body shapes of the inhabitants of this Island was now published, the South Seas-drunken audience read from this "journey around the world" only that which fit into the concepts they have grown fond of.<sup>2</sup>

The complex play between the reported and that which is not known by a contemporary audience on one side, and the existing amount of knowledge of scientific and literary origin on the other (which often is able to transfer the unknown unconsciously but sometimes in well calculated fashion into structures of pre-knowledge), here appears obvious. This is about function modes of perception of cultural alterity, that have been – especially during previous decades – worked out and presented in an increasingly differentiated manner,<sup>3</sup> therefore a discussion seems to be superfluous here.

The geography offers such considerable advantages that only a few estimable and brilliant human beings exist who do not turn its knowledge into pleasure. It is beautiful, useful and moreover easily approachable. One might even say that it is necessary for everyone, because without its help one could not hold even the most simple discussion or understand a gazette.<sup>4</sup>

Although this statement that Martineau placed in 1700 at the front of his *Nouvelle Géographie ou Description de l'Univers* is about geography that is accessible to everybody, "to the kids as well as to the adults, to the vulgar people as well as to the well-educated, to women as well as to men,"<sup>5</sup> it can certainly be transferred to the travelogue and its varied forms of reception by a broad and therefore quite heterogeneous audience. Travelogues

<sup>1</sup> In the second volume of his *Kosmos*, Alexander von Humboldt put up a literary memorial for his "teacher and friend Georg Forster." He let him start "a new era of scientific journeys, whose aim is the comparative study of people and countries." In him he found the author who, because of his imagination and power of expression, did justice to the depicted objects: "Everything that permits one to see the truth, individuality and vividness of exotic nature can be found united in his works." Humboldt, Alexander von: *Kosmos. Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*. Second volume. Stuttgart – Tübingen: Cotta 1847, p. 72. The European perspective of this utterance is conspicuous.

<sup>2</sup> Steiner, Gerhard (ed.): Georg Forsters "Reise um die Welt". In: Forster, Georg: *Reise um die Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel 1983, p. 1029.

<sup>3</sup> Referring to the European-Latin American area of conflict, this has been done by, among others, Tzvetan Todorov in his classic study *Die Eroberung Amerikas. Das Problem des Anderen*. Translated by Wilfried Böhringer. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Broc, Numa: *La Géographie des Philosophes. Géographes et voyageurs français au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Editions Ophrys 1975, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. The parallels between the single "couples" of this quotation are informative.

fascinate the most diverse social clusters; this fascination also finds expression in the way travelogues rapidly become the popular topic of the day – as shown in our quotation, but also in, for example, the embedding of Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* into the frame of a conversation between two fictive dialogue partners. Can the reasons for the fascination and radiance of the (literary, scientific and perception-specific) genre of the travelogue be found only in its concern with determined objects, the examination of cultural otherness, or – as the preceding quotation proposes – in the apparently easy appropriation of the text by a (contemporary or historically backwards-looking) audience? Both aspects seem to me to refer equally and from two different perspectives to a deeper motive that serves the following thoughts as thesis of departure. The fascination of the travelogue – according to my thesis – is based fundamentally on the movements of understanding that are omnipresent in travel literature, understood as movements of understanding in space, which transfer the dynamic between human knowledge and acting, between pre-knowledge and the unknown, between the places of reading, the places of writing and the places reported as spatially concrete – or to say it more vividly, into a dynamic model of space that can be easily understood by the reader. Understanding is presented as a closed – but for the reader open – process, as an experience that is understandable in its specific processuality. Each travelogue therefore presents visual models of understanding that are unfolded in their spatial-temporal dimension to the reader. The travelogue is a staged model of experience that is based on the appropriation of the perception modes of foreign cultural elements – and not primarily on these elements themselves. Such a perception model, of course, contains proceedings and practices that – so it seems to me – are of fundamental meaning for the understanding of literary communication in its totality.

## Dimensions of the travelogue

In reference to a remark by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who stressed in his *Tristes Tropiques* that traveling can be placed in at least five dimensions,<sup>6</sup> it must be emphasized firstly, that the first two dimensions of space become visual, especially in the cartographic registration and evaluation of the examined journeys. The traveler moves practically within a two-dimensional system of coordinates along a line, which becomes obvious in the first handwritten notes and the first cartographic elaborations based upon them.

Probably the best known German-speaking traveler of the 19th century, and certainly the most famous Latin America researcher of his time, Alexander von Humboldt, drew in his travel diaries cartographic recordings of the rivers he had traveled that show the linear-like advancing of the traveler – and partly also that of the travelogue, where it follows this axis. Humboldt's drawings of the Río Magdalena in today's Colombia are confined to a multiple meandering line and complemented by sharply limited, small, indicated hatchings for mountains left and right of the river, that the Prussian natural scientist could put in from his own experience.<sup>7</sup> Written notes supplement the optical figures that testify how tunnel-like remained the perspective, which the traveler had from the river. A finished topographical map covers up this perspective of the slow palpitating of one line, since it

<sup>6</sup> See Lévi-Strauss, Claude: *Tristes Tropiques*. Paris: Plon, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> See the reproduction of his maps of the journey through Colombia in Humboldt, Alexander von: *In Kolumbien. En Colombia*. Bogotá: Publicismo y Ediciones 1982, pp. 29a-34a.

always produces one broad, all-embracing gaze from above, a "floating above things"<sup>8</sup> from an angle of view that is no longer that of a concrete subject and of his limited field of vision. The creation of a topographical map is therefore equivalent to the transfer of linear, individual experience, via diverse intermediate phases, into a two-dimensional extended overview that refers to a (map-)net that suggests a perfectness that can never be produced by the traveler alone. At the same time, it must remain partial and, while doing so, gives a *frame* in which space, time and action of the actual travelogue are situated. The diaries of the Prussian natural scientist and author offer the fascinating spectacle of how the frame and content of his so often conjured "painting of nature," of how line and expanse bring forth each other.

This is pointed to not least by the materiality of his notes. The free spaces on the paper of Humboldt's diaries are – not only for economical reasons in the use of the valuable material – filled with extensive written notes that follow the shape of the river and fill what was left empty. Image and text not only illustrate, but also penetrate each other. Herein one may not only detect an expression of the *horror vacui* that decorated the unknown areas of early modern maps with various monsters and fable creatures. Rather one has to award the intertwining of image and written text an epistemological status, insofar as the range that was recorded by the eye is extended by those data that the researcher collected during the journey from other informants. What has been seen joins what has been heard or read, the unknown and the pre-known or approachable reservoirs of knowledge, eye and ear<sup>9</sup> relate to each other to dispel the emptiness of the unknown from the definitive image of the map – even if this cannot always be complete. In a journal entry the Prussian scholar himself, facing initially skeptical and deprecatory reactions on the part of the colonial Spanish administration, pointed out the processuality of his cartographic work, certainly without a lack of necessary self-confidence:

The details are very applicable, the smallest *laderas* are noted down, it is the first map (*Plan*) that was ever made from this river, in spite of all the engineers who traveled it during the past 300 years. I am unlucky, because I am a foreigner [...]. To whatever extent and with good reasons I believe my map to be exact, it will always be believed to be bad, because it was made by a Prussian. Besides, my map is a first attempt, and I have no doubts that it still could be corrected.<sup>10</sup>

Still, on the gorgeous double page of Humboldt's *Atlas Géographique et physique du Nouveau Continent* that shows the Magdalena river in a section from today's Colombia,<sup>11</sup> there exist areas without registrations, but here the gaps are filled by cartographic details of single river segments. The field of knowledge is greatly expanded, far beyond what can be caught by the eye of the single traveler. The transformation from the travel journal to the travelogue goes parallel to this devolution, even if according to its own rules of the literary genre.

The *third dimension* of space is the one that the travelogue at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century discovers and makes its task. There is hardly one travelogue of these times in which you do not find some kind of mountaineering. The view from above designs a theory of the landscape as well as a landscape of theory, whereby the

<sup>8</sup> This formulation comes from a letter by Alexander von Humboldt from April 28, 1841 to Varnhagen von Ense in which he writes in regard to his *Kosmos*: "The actual goal is the floating above things that we know in 1841." *Briefe von Alexander von Humboldt an Varnhagen von Ense aus den Jahren 1827 bis 1858*. Edited by Ludmilla Assing. Leipzig: Brockhaus 1860, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 3 in this book.

<sup>10</sup> Humboldt, Alexander von: *In Kolumbien*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. This map is easily accessible in Hein, Wolfgang-Hagen (ed.): *Alexander von Humboldt. Leben und Werk*. Frankfurt am Main: Weisbecker Verlag 1985, p. 244.



transparency of this view has as much a literary as an epistemological meaning. Literature and scholarship, theory and practice often combine closely in such landscapes of theory.<sup>12</sup> The mountaineerings by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Voyage à l'île de France* are exemplary and serve as a literary model that, entirely in line with Rousseau, seek clarity and transparency from the mountain summit and lead up to a first aesthetization of non-European mountain worlds. Referring to the range of specific scientific expeditions and their results, Alexander von Humboldt's achievements have to be mentioned once more. They are by no means limited to the famous climbing of the Chimborazo,<sup>13</sup> but led to new modes of cartographic depiction of altitude and elevations that show the traveled areas faithfully in relation to one another like schematized profiles. Once more eye and ear supplement each other; the experiences and results collected by the traveler himself are complemented through the conclusions from other researchers and travelers and through the study of primary sources in archives and libraries. Certainly the most famous result of these works is the *Tableau physique des Andes et pays voisins* which Humboldt had outlined on his journey in 1803 during a stay in Guayaquil, and later, in Paris, rearranged into an – also artistically – impressive work. Picture of nature and ideal profile, aesthetic artifact and scientific result in one, it presents an accumulation of research results that refer to a wide geographical space depending on levels of altitude and that step far beyond the single traveler's field of vision. Here, as well, image and text penetrate each other and refer to the scientific-historical and epistemological fundamentals of Humboldt's journey evaluation. Parallel to the two-dimensionality of the topographical map the depiction of profile, too, shows the transformation from the sketch in the travel journal to the depiction satisfying scientific demands in the ideal-profile that, once more, presents the already-treated expansion of perspective and field of vision. At the same time two different places of writing face each other: one place during the travel – that has been presented, according to Humboldt's own account, in later copperplate engravings and paintings – and a second place of writing, that is located in the traveler's country of origin – this also is a place that has been often filled in with details in the iconography of the Prussian scholar.<sup>14</sup>

The *fourth dimension* of the travelogue, in the sense of Lévi-Strauss, is made by time. The traveler thereby moves in the time of his country of origin: We should not forget that only increasingly reliable clocks permitted the sailors of the 18<sup>th</sup> century an increasingly precise determination of length, that is bound, in a truly material sense, to the time of departure from the country of origin's longitude.<sup>15</sup> Space and time are not only closely related to each other but also coupled to the time of one's own space. The traveler, not only the one of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, takes his own time with him.

On the other hand the traveler also moves within the journey's own chronology which doubtlessly creates its own temporality. Moreover he also jumps during his time-travel back

<sup>12</sup> I will repeatedly come back to this term; see especially chapters 2 and 11.

<sup>13</sup> See the extraordinary movie by Rainer Simon *Die Besteigung des Chimborazo* (Koproduktion DEFA/ZDF 1989) as well as the volume by Schäfer, Paul Kanut / Simon, Rainer: *Die Besteigung des Chimborazo. Eine Filmexpedition auf Alexander von Humboldts Spuren*. Köln: vgs Verlagsgesellschaft 1990. On the aesthetical dimension of this mountaineering see Pimentel, Juan: El volcán sublime. Geografía, paisaje y relato en la ascensión de Humboldt al Chimborazo. In: Ette, Ottmar / Bernecker, Walther L. (ed.): *Ansichten Amerikas*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert 2000.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 3 in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> On the technology of the "horloges marines" and its meaning for shipping see Broc, Numa: *La Géographie des Philosophes*, p. 280. A declination of only two minutes after a ship voyage of six weeks (an aim that was approached by the precision instruments of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) produced a mistake of a half longitude (p. 282), an enormous distance that made cartographic location and the later finding of islands difficult.



and forth between different cultural and historical times. For instance, Du Tertre<sup>16</sup> tries in his thoughts about the *bon sauvage* to come to insights about the development of humankind starting from observations about the foreign, so that it becomes possible to receive knowledge about the pre-history of one's own through a time travel focused backward. Yet not only traveling backwards, but also traveling forwards is possible. One's own present can, through the concern with the Other, be illuminated as future past. For example, Alexis de Tocqueville finds out in his fundamental work *De l'Amerique*, based on a journey through North America in 1831, about the opportunities that the American Constitution offered to the European states and especially France, which therefore would be the future aspects that one can hope for or be afraid of.<sup>17</sup> One important point of departure constituted hereby is the simple question: "Where does the journey lead us?"

Does one indeed believe that democracy, after destroying feudalism and monarchs, will back off from the bourgeoisie and the rich? Will it, after it became so strong and its enemies so weak, simply stand still? Where do we go then? Nobody could say that, since we lack points of reference: the life circumstances are today among Christians more equal than was the case in any other country at any other time; this is how the greatness of what has been done already hinders the prediction of what still can be done. [...] It is not necessary that God himself speak; for us to receive a secure sign of his will, it is enough to investigate what is the normal proceeding of nature and what is the constant tendency of happenings.<sup>18</sup>

The epoch-specific experience of an historical development that increasingly evades the well-known models and that, especially in post-revolutionary France, denies *Historia* as *Magistra Vitae* any legitimization,<sup>19</sup> leads here (the phrase *Où allons-nous donc?* seems already to hint at it) to a movement of evasion in space: an investigation of democracy in the United States is supposed to illuminate its development in Europe. The journey westwards becomes here a political time machine that was started by Alexis de Tocqueville as the first in a long series of travelers. Have not German or Italian travelogues about the United States from the post-war period in this tradition also often been reconnaissance expeditions that were not so much concerned with the understanding of the present circumstances of the foreign but with the reflection of the future possibilities of one's own? So can the journey in space become – exactly as the famous Cuban author Alejo Carpentier has expressed in his Orinoco novel *Los pasos perdidos* – a journey in various times and to various epochs, a form of journey that, like the turn from utopia to uchrony, was much more evident to the traveler of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in its possibilities regarding the openness of the future. Here, too – not unlike in our century – travel literature stands for literature in general.

The European traveler of the 18<sup>th</sup> and maybe also the one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed indeed in a common time of humankind, a time axis to which they could linearly relate the different time-levels that they have stated. In such a concept time travel becomes necessarily a movement of the traveler between various grades of cultural, historical, economic and social development not dependent on whether the development is positively

<sup>16</sup> See Funke, Hans-Günter: "Barbare cruel" o "bon sauvage"? La funcionalización ambivalente de la imagen del indio en la "Histoire générale des Antilles" (1667-1671) del Padre du Tertre. In: *Dispositio* (Ann Arbor) XVII, 42-43 (1992), pp. 73-105.

<sup>17</sup> See also Neumeister, Sebastian: Alexis de Tocqueville. In: Lange, Wolf-Dieter (ed.): *Französische Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts*. vol. II. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer 1980, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de: *De la démocratie en Amérique*. Première édition historico-critique revue et augmentée par Eduardo Nolla. vol. I. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin 1990, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> See also Koselleck, Reinhart: *Historia Magistra Vitae*. Über die Auflösung des Topos im Horizont neuzeitlich bewegter Geschichte. In: Koselleck, Reinhart: *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1984, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 38-66.

or negatively connotated, whether the deployment is read as an evolution or degradation. The discovery of particular times that are independent from each other gains a place – as far as I see – only in the travel literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Flora Tristan's journey to Peru (*Pérégrinations d'une paria*) does not lack the experience of time travel either, since the author of the still fascinating travelogue believes she is shifted into European Medieval time when faced with the "mystery plays" in Arequipa that she describes.

For me, a child of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and coming from Paris, the staging of a mystery play beneath the portal of a church and in front of an immense group of people was something new; but the instructive spectacle was the brutality, the coarse clothes, the rags of just this people, their extreme illiterateness, their stupid superstitiousness that led my imagination back into the middle ages.<sup>20</sup>

While Flora Tristan also notes how quickly French fashion dictated the garments of the Peruvian women, she cannot avoid concluding from what she calls superstitions, that the Peruvian people still are in childhood<sup>21</sup> and will be subjected to the power of the church for a long time. The literary point of reference for Flora's description of mystery play certainly does not stay unmentioned: The narrator herself refers to Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*<sup>22</sup> that was published only a few years before.

While Alexis de Tocqueville's journey in 1831 to the USA led the French man into the future, Flora Tristan's journey in 1833 to Peru led the French woman into the past. But both relate the Other and the time of the Other to their own time and chronology – an interesting *chassé-croisé*; it even adds to its charm that both had highly different values oriented to the past or future. The fourth dimension contains the coexistence, the overlapping of different axes of time and time concepts including the spaces (geographical, cultural, political etc.) that are connected to it. The confrontation of different time levels contributes essentially to the appeal and to the attractiveness of the travelogue and each literature on the move.

The *fifth dimension* that is mentioned by Lévi-Strauss is concerned with the social dimension. The traveler moves through the various social clusters and stratas of the country that he travels, often with a lightness that is unapproachable for the inhabitants, especially of strongly hierarchized societies of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Flora Tristan, who, contrary to the predominant scientific alignment of the travelogue, follows a stronger political orientation and who, with the help of family relations, had access to the elite of the young Peruvian republic, is in this regard gifted with abundance, and not just by chance does she ask for a broad social panorama as a precondition for every statement that makes a claim for legitimate depiction.<sup>23</sup> Fray Servando Teresa de Mier learns about members from different strata of Spanish society as intensely as his contemporary Alexander von Humboldt on his journey through New Spain.<sup>24</sup> The travelogue therefore moves closer to a literary genre that is also not far from the reports of the Mexican Dominican monk Fray Servando: I think of the picaresque novel, the *novela picaresca*, which incidentally at just the same time in New Spain, today's Mexico, opened up the way of Spanish colonial

<sup>20</sup> Tristan, Flora: *Les pérégrinations d'une paria 1833-1834*. Paris: La Découverte - Maspero 1983, S. 143. In the title of this easily approachable, but unfortunately slightly shortened edition the definite article is wrongly used. The original two-volume issue (Paris: Arthus Bertrand) was published in 1838 under the title *Pérégrinations d'une paria 1833-1834*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 130: "This is how the peoples are in their childhood."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 85: "to describe a city, even if it only has little importance, one has to spend time, talk with all classes of its inhabitants."

<sup>24</sup> See Ette, Ottmar: Transatlantic Perceptions: A Contrastive Reading of the Travels of Alexander von Humboldt and Fray Servando Teresa de Mier. In: *Dispositio* (Ann Arbor) XVII, 42-43 (1992), pp. 165-197.

literatures into the world of novels of the modern Latin American literatures with Fernández de Lizardis *El Periquillo Sarniento* at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The consistent up and down in the foreign society offers especially the traveler of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the possibility to enter into competition with the historical novel of a Walter Scott or with the realistic novel model of a Balzac and to catch from his own (hermeneutic) movement a society's totality. At the same time the novel can be outdone insofar that the claim of depiction can be supported by the reference to the eyewitness-status of the reporter by the facticity of provable travel ways: easily referentable locations and attached maps provide the reader with a certain faithfulness to facts pretending to be a frame for the reading of the text. Travel literature is not least the literature that puts its audience into movement insofar that it prompts it to "follow" on appropriate topographical maps the described travel ways.

There can of course be no doubt that this fifth dimension is complemented by a *sixth dimension*,<sup>25</sup> that of imagination and fiction, which makes the travelogue, especially in reference to literary patterns, attractive and readable for its contemporary readers and perhaps even more so for the female readers who were hindered from traveling. Humboldt, too, saw at the end of his historical hindsight to the "Stimuli for the Study of Nature" in his *Kosmos* from 1847 no contrast between the scientific and the specific poetical dimension and function of the travelogue:

Descriptions of nature, I repeat here, can be sharply limited and scientifically exact, although the animating breeze of imagination is detracted from them. The poetical must merge from the sensed connection of the sensual with the intellectual, from the feeling of omnipresence, the mutual limitation and the unity of natural life.<sup>26</sup>

The teamwork of scientific accuracy and poetic imagination in the travelogue shall be traced more deeply in the thoughts about the frictionality of the genre.

The exceedingly complex *seventh dimension* of the travelogue could be termed the one of literary space. It concerns the mode of how a certain travelogue relates itself to other texts of other authors (*intertextual*) or to texts of the same author (*intratextual*). Thereby one can distinguish between an explicit and an implicit literary space, insofar as other texts are "faded in" through direct references or through indirect allusions that are not transparent for all readers immediately. Especially explicit references often have a discourse-supporting, legitimating function. For example the question whether a European traveler refers only to reports by his or her compatriots or also to texts that came from the inhabitants of the traveled areas is instructive and meaningful. This dimension always includes also the question to what degree the objects of the travelogue (may) have the word as subjects, too. A basic change can be detected in broader terms only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, since now those who are traveled become involved in the process of sense making, for example by European travelers.

An *eighth dimension* is concerned with the genre-specific references, whereby here the question to which norm and model-giving single text the analyzed travelogue is referring is no longer investigated, but which literary subgenres and traditions, which scholarly and especially scientific reference systems are considered and to what extent genealogies of travelogues are worked into the text. For the genre of the travelogue that is referring to space but also literature in general always takes certain positions within specific literary and genre-historical spaces and therefore locates itself within its own mappings.

<sup>25</sup> See also Pagni, Andrea / Ette, Ottmar: Introduction. In Pagni, Andrea / Ette, Ottmar (eds.): *Crossing the Atlantic: Travel Literature and the Perception of the Other*. Double issue of the journal *Dispositio* (Ann Arbor) XVII, 42-43 (1992), p. iv.

<sup>26</sup> Humboldt, Alexander von: *Kosmos*, vol. II, p. 74.



This is equally true for the *ninth dimension* that is named here as last, although it has basically a superordinate meaning, because it is constituted by the cultural space that crosses in a certain way the other spaces or dimensions. In regard to travel literature, but also in view of bordercrossing literature, in the broadest sense, the positioning of the respective text towards certain cultural poles receives a fundamental significance. In this context a heteropolar European-American field of tension shall be introduced in chapter seven. The ninth dimension of the cultural space is present in any, even a monocultural text – if this exists – but especially in travel literature it gets an immense succinctness and significance with a focus on the question of how different cultural phenomena are treated and weaved in literarily and aesthetically but also politically, socially or philosophically.

The different dimensions that are presented here will, in the following, be treated flexibly and investigated within various different contexts. Certainly, it would be possible to find further dimensions of the travelogue as well as of literature in general – for example, a political or gender-specific dimension, but also one of theory or epistemology or of the virtuality of spaces that can be realized by the audience. Much of it will be developed in the following chapters with the help of concrete examples. Yet firstly, the manifold and often surprising relations between literature and traveling have to be worked out more precisely.

## Literature and traveling

One cannot determine a borderline between fictional and travel literature. But we can name categories of historically changing pertinence that supply us with reasons to assign a given text to the genre of travel literature or not (whereby travel literature at any one time is historically differently defined). The consideration of the fact that the sixth dimension of the travelogue is referring to the reader in a fundamental way and is dependent on his relation to collective assumptions and convictions regarding the historically true is of great meaning. Many texts that we assign today to fictional literature have been read from the perspective of the travelogue or even *as* a travelogue. Conversely, reports, focused on facts, have been misunderstood or interpreted as fictional. Examples for both forms of “diverging” readings can be found easily; Wolfgang Neuber has drawn from it this following conclusion:

From this point fictionality does not mean the intentional differing from a pre-given reality but rather from what a society at a certain historical location believed to be credible. The criteria “fictive” vs. “conform to reality” become obsolete as scholarly analytical categories for the poetics of the travelogue.<sup>27</sup>

Thereby we free ourselves from a focus that is oriented on production-aesthetic aspects and on a schematic questioning of the author’s intentions and get to the problems of a viewpoint that includes reading functions of the travelogue and of literature in general. The quotation mentioned above from Humboldt’s *Kosmos* showed that the poetical function is by no means decorative padding or even a source of friction, but a principal factor also of the Western travel literature in its modern form (and to the latter belongs Humboldt’s *Relation historique*, which has the position of a hinge between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as in regard to laying the foundation of the modern travelogue on Latin America). The *effet de réel* that is achieved by a text may not be naively equated with an assumed “faithfulness” to reality; the actually attained reality effect is rather coupled to historically effective and

<sup>27</sup> See Neuber, Wolfgang: Zur Gattungspoetik des Reiseberichts. Skizze einer historischen Grundlegung im Horizont von Rhetorik und Topik. In: Brenner, Peter J. (ed.): *Der Reisebericht. Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der deutschen Literatur*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1989, pp. 51



changing forms of writing and their "credibility" in a socio-historical and epistemologic-sociological definable audience. The necessary mediation of the Other has authors of travel literature always obliged to a very conscious inclusion of that kind of question. Like the autobiography, travel literature, too, is based on an explicit pact with the reader.

The relations especially between travelogue and novel are as intense as they are complex. Both genres, each of them shattered into a multitude of subgenres, are literary hybrid forms, which are able to include the most diverse literary and non-literary text types and fragments. Here we will mention as representative of the genres and text types that are integrated into the travelogue only the diary and statistics, images and map material, political treatise and literary narration, philosophical essay and scientific discussion, legend and autobiography, but also geographical disquisition and ethnographic field studies. All these kinds of texts can of course also be found in the novel. Therefore it is not difficult to understand not only the novel but also the travelogue, in reference to Bakhtin, as a cosmos of "variety of speech,"<sup>28</sup> since one can often find in it expressions parallel to the most diverse weaved-in texts, of a multitude of (narrative) foci and partly hidden foreign speech. The "polyphony" of the word is not limited to the novel; it also might be considered valid for the travelogue. Especially for the latter, dialogicity should be recognized as fundamental for all experience and all writing, since here the Other is related in however hierarchized reference to one's own and therefore brought to speak. The oscillation between foreign and self, with the help of whichever literary process however shaped, stands for the dynamic of a literature which is not limited to a topographical dimension.

The travelogue is a translating genre insofar as each individual experience is transformed into collective reservoirs of knowledge or at least will be set into relation with them but also because cultural forms of expression of the Other as foreign have to be rendered into the language of one's own. The reports of European travelers to Latin America as well as those of Latin American travelers to Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have therefore to be understood as linguistic and socio-cultural translation processes. The spatial transport to the New World corresponds with the European traveler's semantic translation of the experienced for the Old World. This is always based on the insight that geographical knowledge cannot be understood as the result of a linear progress, of a constant accumulation and expansion of knowledges, but that it proceeds by leaps and bounds: regional reservoirs of knowledge go astray and are - if at all - approachable and useful again only later. The undoubtedly expansion of geographical knowledge in the 19<sup>th</sup> century does not mean at all that such an expansion of knowledge could be observed in all regions of the subcontinent. Databases and information superhighways today do not save us from a submersion of knowledge reservoirs, which, due to time, seem to be not relevant or pertinent. That which cannot be data specifically incorporated underlies more than ever a process of removal on whose criteria an intercultural consensus has never been found.

Let us return to the poetological dimension of our question. The movement of traveling is inscribed onto literature itself. It is well known that the first novel of the modern ages (not only in the Bakhtinian sense), Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, is based on the fundamental structure of the journey. The novel not only goes back to travel structures, it also tries to let the reader actively participate in this journey (in the *Don Quijote*, for example, through the Mancha, the geography, the history and society of Spain, but also all over literary and folk

<sup>28</sup> See Bakhtin, Michail M.: Das Wort im Roman. In Bakhtin, Michail M.: *Die Ästhetik des Wortes*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1979, pp. 154

cultural patterns of imagination).<sup>29</sup> The travelogue is in this respect - and also in reference to other kinds and subgenres such as the picaresque novel - literature raised to a higher power, since it doubles the travel structure of the novel as communicable structure of experience with the (sometimes pre-determined) facticity of a provable travel route. Therefore it is no surprise that Honoré de Balzac compares the romancier to the traveler in his famous "Avant-propos" for the *Comédie humaine*:

Because the critique ignored the basic plan, the more I forgave it, since one can hinder the critique as little as one can hinder seeing, speaking, judging. Well, the time for impartiality has not yet come for me. Besides, an author who decides not to expose himself to the fire of the critique should start with writing just as little as a traveler should set off who always counts on a clear sky.<sup>30</sup>

The comparison between author and traveler concerns not only the necessity and perils of the *se mettre en route* - whereby the writing process itself is symbolized as spatial movement - it refers also to the relation between each route and the great plan, whose understanding is a precondition for the understanding of concrete travel movements as well as a comprehensive experience project. When the "fire" of the critique is compared with the forces of nature to which the *voyageur* is subjected, this shows that not only the dimension regarding the content of writing, but perhaps even more so the writing experience of the author is understood as a movement that probably follows the great plan, the one of the *Comédie humaine*, but at the same time is exposed to coincidence which for Balzac, as it is well known, was "the greatest romancier of the world."<sup>31</sup> But coincidence and plan themselves constitute reciprocal empowering poles in the travelogue as well.

Reading, too, is a kind of traveling. The Peruvian author Clorinda Matto de Turner, for example, impressively connected the journey of the protagonist of her novel *Aves sin nido* (1889) with reading when her travelers prefer reading instead of paying attention to the Andean landscape which they have to cross on their way to Lima.<sup>32</sup> The place of traveling as reading is taken here by the modern travel reading, which is supposed to bridge an assumed lack of input while traveling. Another definition of travel literature imposes itself which is almost familiar to us through our daily reading praxis, namely the one that understands travel literature as a literature that - as for instance the *Twenty Poems to Read in the Streetcar* by the Argentine avant-garde author Oliverio Girondo<sup>33</sup> - is made to be read while traveling. This too, is a literature on the move and refers to the fundamental connection that exists between literature and traveling.

A hundred years after Matto de Turner's impressive unfolded scenery, a more radical connection between reading and traveling can be found in the form of air travel that is interesting not only in regard to mentality history. Reading can now completely exclude traveling, if this is nothing else but as short as possible a time-space between start and landing - as it is with flying. The disturbing bridging of space is faded out with the help of a literature on the move. In the ninth chapter of Italo Calvino's *Se una notte d' inverno un*

<sup>29</sup> It is well known that the tourism strategists of the Spanish government concretize this activity so pragmatically and profitably that tourists nowadays can follow precise route of the knight and so transform the travel movement of the protagonist into one's own travel movement. I will return to this problem later.

<sup>30</sup> Balzac, Honoré de: Avant-propos. In Balzac, Honoré de: *La Comédie humaine*. Vol. I. Edition publiée sous la direction de Pierre-Georges Castex. Paris: Gallimard 1976, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 11: "Le hasard est le plus grand romancier du monde: pour être fécond, il n'y a qu'à l'étudier."

<sup>32</sup> See Matto de Turner, Clorinda: *Aves sin nido (novela peruana)*. Lima: Imprenta del Universo, de Carlos Prince 1889, p. 264.

<sup>33</sup> Girondo, Oliverio: *Milonga. Zwanzig Gedichte im Tangoschritt*. Übersetzt von Thomas Ahlers u.a. Göttingen: Schlender 1984.

*viaggiatore*, a novel in which the consistent travel movements appear already in the title, it is said:

Flying is the opposite of traveling. You cross a jump in the space continuum, a kind of hole in space, you disappear in emptiness, you are a while, which is also a kind of hole in time, in no place, nowhere [...]. What do you do meanwhile? How do you fill this, your absence from the world and the world's from you? You read; from start to landing you do not lift your eyes from the book, because beyond the page is only emptiness, the anonymity of the airports, of the metallic uterus that embraces you and nourishes, the always changing and always the same bunch of co-passengers. Then you can also stick to this other abstraction of traveling that is produced by the similarity of the printed letters: Here as well it is only the evocative power of names that makes you believe that you fly over something and not nothing.<sup>34</sup>

Calvino's richly referential and tongue-in-cheek description of the play between traveling and reading, between flying over the earth and flying across a page leads us back to the materiality of the characters on the page that the reader has to go along in a linear movement of the eyes. The movement, thereby followed and produced, is in its linearity analogous to those of the hand while writing as well as those of the traveler. The travel movement is thus doubly inscribed into literature. Literature and traveling are in several ways profoundly related with each other, even if they are not reconciled. They not only exponentiate each other reciprocally, they also can compete with each other, even deny each other: the reading of travel literature can not only produce – as was the case with many Germans who followed Humboldt's traces to Latin America – new, own journeys. Intertextual relations are to authors as to readers travels that let one refer practically ad infinitum Carpentier to Gumilla and Humboldt, the latter to Gumilla and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the latter to Rousseau and Petrarch. The reading of travel literature can also substitute for traveling. Reading might then mark the end of traveling as an experience in geographical spaces. Taxicabs, today equipped with Internet access, prove that we have not at all reached even an only virtual end of the correlations between travel literature and literature travels. The place of the car or train window has been taken by screens, which still heighten the dynamic overlapping of the most different movements in the form of hypertexts.

## Travel literature as frictional literature

The travelogue, as a hybrid form tightly related to the novel, distinguishes itself from the latter through its other historical place within the system of genres, through the position assigned to it in the spectrum of fictional and non-fictional literature, as well as through specific forms of appropriation particularly in view of the institutionalization of its reading.<sup>35</sup> These production-aesthetic, genre-specific and reception-aesthetic differences have not been leveled out completely in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even if reading and writing more easily pass across the still persisting genre borders. Up to today the travelogue has not given up its claim to be read as an empirical, reality-bound document, as *narratio vera*.<sup>36</sup>

Contrary to the medieval travelogue whose predominant aim was by no means the improvement of empirically provable knowledge, the modern travelogue, especially the one

<sup>34</sup> Calvino, Italo: *Wenn ein Reisender in einer Winternacht*. München - Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag 1983, p. 253.

<sup>35</sup> These also concern the respective reading tempo depending on the genre that is read. It could be assumed that between poetry, narration, novel and travelogue a rising reading tempo could be stated.

<sup>36</sup> See Neuber, Wolfgang: *Zur Gattungspoetik des Reiseberichts*, pp. 55 and 56: "The definition of the travelogue as historiography in the sense of a narrative presentation of what has happened can demand validity basically for the entire modern times."



that turns to the so-called “New World,” seems to be oriented to the gain and tradition of knowledge. This legitimized a reading that sees and analyses the travelogues as historical, sociological or geographical sources. The usefulness of the travelogue for certain academic disciplines and subjects is “guaranteed” by the institutionalization of the genre that started with the early reports and chronicles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These forms of writing that turned to different addressees, aimed at securing the stream of information from America to Europe, of course here always (and unquestionably) oriented to the utility of the European mother countries. Still, many travelogues of the 19<sup>th</sup> century place themselves in this tradition of information transfer, which are oriented to the (colonial) interests of these clients in whose service the traveler stands.<sup>37</sup> Such an institutionalization of the travelogue is, by the way, also true for some travelers in the other direction, the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento,<sup>38</sup> for example – similar to other Hispano-American intellectuals – who went in the 40s to Europe, not as a private person, but by order of the Chilean government that hoped for practice-oriented advice for its own acting. Yet these relations are not only based on an economic or social asymmetry, but also on an intercultural one<sup>39</sup> that not only keeps the Latin American traveler away from thoughts of domination over the visited country but that brings the literary arranging of the travelogue itself to other functions and forms of expression. Up to today Europeans seem only seldom to care about what non-European travelers have to say about Europe.

The beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century might certainly be marked by this perspective of transatlantic information transfer by a dissociation of forms that are oriented towards discipline-specific expertise and those that are not bound to a specific discipline.<sup>40</sup> But also here one should not neglect forms and functions of reading, but include them into our thoughts. Discipline-specific authentication strategies are by no means in a position to fade out the literary proceedings or these “tropes of discourse” that are inherent in every writing, including historiographic writing, to “protect” the text from patterns of reading from outside the discipline. A discipline-specific evaluation of this kind of travelogue as source is legitimate; but no less legitimate is to question pragmatic or expository texts about their literary proceeding, about their metaphorical and metonymical movements, briefly: to work out the literary in travel literature and to treat the poetical function equally with other functions and tasks of the travelogue.

Thus, the genre of the travelogue is based, although differently every time, on a separation and a subsequent convergence between the narrated I and the narrating I. The discipline-specific evaluable statements, especially, refer in regard to the authorization strategies to a reinforcement of the (literary) figure of the told I, since only this can appear credible as a direct eye-witness and source of the reported, a function that is emphasized in the travelogue of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through constant references to one's own seeing of the depicted objects and that documents the transition from the dominance of the ear to that of



<sup>37</sup> See Pratt, Mary Louise: *Humboldt y la reinención de América*. In: *Nuevo Texto Crítico* (Stanford) 1 (1987), pp. 35-53 and Pratt, Mary Louise: *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London - New York: Routledge 1992.

<sup>38</sup> See Hozven, Roberto: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In: Iñigo Madrigal, Luis (ed.): *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana*. Vol. II: *Del neoclasicismo al modernismo*. Madrid: Editorial Cátedra 1987, pp. 431 ff; on the importance of European travelogues for Sarmiento's thinking and writing, see also González Echevarría, Roberto: Redescubrimiento del mundo perdido: el “Facundo” de Sarmiento. In: *Revista iberoamericana* (Pittsburgh) LIV, 143 (abril - junio 1988), pp. 385-406.

<sup>39</sup> See Ette, Ottmar: Lateinamerika und Europa. Ein literarischer Dialog und seine Vorgeschichte. In: Rodó, José Enrique: *Ariel*. Mainz: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung 1994, pp. 9-58.

<sup>40</sup> Even if not in such an absolute separation as W. Neuber seems to assume. See Neuber, Wolfgang: *Zur Gattungspoetik des Reiseberichts*, p. 57.



the eye.<sup>41</sup> But this connects the travelogue structurally to the autobiography and their authentication strategies that are based on a no less complex structured play between narrated and narrating I.

The parallel between autobiography and travelogue has been often acknowledged. Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow has often pointed out, that contrary to the autobiography, "a typology of travel literature can most likely be developed from a typology of the traveler."<sup>42</sup> Several years earlier, Numa Broc had already suggested a typology that distinguishes between *voyageur pur*, *voyageur compilateur* and *compilateur pur*.<sup>43</sup> In view of the fact that a separation between the narrated and narrating I can be found in Lapérous' *Voyage autour du monde*, although this report was written during the journey and could not be revised because its author died under mysterious circumstances, it is doubtful whether the division proposed by Numa Broc can be more than a useful schematic classification, that, at best, points to a basic tendency of the individual travelogue. The "pure traveler" who only reports what he has seen himself and ignores every other kind of information is not conceivable from a hermeneutic point of view. The pre-knowledge of travelers always influences their perception (and thereby the level of the text in the perspective of the narrated I, through whom the narrative function of the "immediate experience" is transmitted). The function of the narrating I consists normally in guaranteeing the information transfer and so correlating with the existing reservoirs of knowledge (or with those reservoirs that are expected in the target audience). The "pure traveler" therefore turns out, on the level of the text, to be a figure modeled by the author, that not least serves as authentication (and later utilization) of the reported, while in this singular division of labor the narrating I undertakes the task of a transmission belt that transfers and receives the "information." The authentication by the immediate experience and seeing (narrated I) is effectively complemented by the perspective of the narrating I, to whose authentication proceedings belong the distanced description, the critical use of sources and a discursive mediation that considers the dissemination of knowledge about society. From the tension between the narrated and narrating I emerges the possibility of reflecting in dialogue with the reader forms and problems of the perception of the Other and even of getting the reader himself involved in these theoretical problems of perception and therefore confronting him with the movement of understanding not only on a narrative, but also on a theoretical-discursive level. In this way readers get the chance to re-think their own habits of perception and to try new forms of appropriation of foreign realities. Travel literature sets a hardening perception of the foreign as well as of the self into motion again.

Our thoughts about the separation of (at least) two I-positions in the travelogue show that also from this perspective a division of "fictive" and "conforming to reality" regarding a theoretically revised classifying analysis of the travelogue is not tenable.

The travelogue is, like the novel, a hybrid form. Yet it is, in contrast to the novel, in reception- as well as production-aesthetic respects, not bound to the fictional pole in the field of tension between fictional and non-fictional forms of text. If we can generally assign the novel to the pole of fiction, then the question arises, how in contrast to it the travelogue can be classified. From what has been said it should have become clear that a reading that

<sup>41</sup> See chapter 3 of this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Wuthenow, Ralph-Rainer: *Die erfahrene Welt. Europäische Reiseliteratur im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel 1980, p. 417.

<sup>43</sup> Broc, Numa: *La Géographie des Philosophes*, pp. 187 ff. The two poles of this typology are the traveler, who only uses what he has seen by himself, and the *géographe de cabinet*, who does not leave his study, but exclusively evaluates other people's reports.

assigns the travelogue to the non-fictional pole and that reads the information transported by it as documents and sources is doubtlessly legitimate, but does not exhaust its possibilities (and never can). Rather it has been shown that the travelogue – and by no means “only” in its fantastic version – attracts fictional as well as non-fictional patterns of reading and frequently amalgamates the both inseparable. But where, then, is the travelogue to locate?

In a pioneering study, Gérard Genette introduced a distinction between fiction and diction, and defined both terms as following:

Fiction-literature is that, which is essentially marked by the imaginary character of their objects, while diction-literature essentially impresses through its formal qualities – again regardless of the amalgams and mixed forms.<sup>44</sup>

If one tries to use the definition offered by Genette for the travelogue, one can see that it is not pertinent for its analysis. The “imaginary” object range can generally be as little assigned to the travelogue as *ex negativo* – here we should remember the parallels to the autobiography – a non-imaginary diction-literature. Rather it is marked by a characteristic oscillating between fiction and diction, a jumping to and from, that does not permit, neither on the side of production nor reception, to make a solid assignment. Between the poles of fiction and diction, the travelogue rather leads to a friction, insofar as clear borderlines are also to be avoided as attempts to produce stable amalgams and mixed forms. Contrary to the novel, the travelogue is a hybrid form not only referring to the ingested genres and its variety of speech, but also in regard to its characteristic of evading the opposition between fiction and diction. The travelogue wears off the boundaries between both fields: it is to be assigned to a literary area that we might term frictional literature.<sup>45</sup>

## The places of the travelogue

The travelogue is a genre of the place, or to be more precise, of the change of place and the constantly new positioning. This sounds obvious, even banal; but nonetheless this aspect in its specific aesthetic consequences has not yet been adequately thought about. The places of the travelogue have until now been investigated predominately under their referentable, text-external aspect that refers to an extra-linguistic reality. This affects predominately the dictional, in the Gettian sense, character of travel literature; in the sense of Broc’s terminology, one could ask rightfully whether a place mentioned in a travelogue has not only to be described by the author, but also visited, *seen* by the author. Between a reading that is authorized in this way on the one hand and the reading of fantastic travel reports on the other, a pattern of reading can be imagined that oscillates between the “conforming to reality” and the “fictive,” and that in this way neither lessens nor fixes the polysemy of the inspected text through text-external referentiality or innerliterary fictionalization, briefly: that does not limit the diversity of movement, dynamics and indefiniteness of the travelogue. In consequence four different locations of travel literature shall be offered as exemplary.

<sup>44</sup> Genette, Gérard: *Fiktion und Diktion*. München: Fink 1992, pp. 31 ff. The French first edition was published one year earlier at Seuil in Paris.

<sup>45</sup> See chapter 5 and Ette, Ottmar: *Roland Barthes. Eine intellektuelle Biographie*, pp. 308-312.

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