After the End of Travel: Twentieth-Century French Travel Literatures and Theories

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PREFACE

I am most grateful to the AHRB for supporting the project entitled 'New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French', in which I have been privileged to take part. Similarly, I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Charles Forsdick, for including me within his research team at the University of Liverpool, and for providing me with crucial feedback and encouragement over the past four years.

Postgraduate research inevitably requires that many other preoccupations must 'go on hold' for a while. Thanks are therefore due to all family and friends who have waited patiently for me to complete this thesis.

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Debjani Feroza Basu

This thesis investigates ways in which French travel writers since the twentieth century have attempted to negotiate new subject matter for travel writing, without compromising the specificity of their role as both travellers *and* writers. The context for this study is the sense, popularized in the twentieth century, that travel, as a possibility, is faced with exhaustion. Concerns that there is nowhere left to go, that places and cultures have become homogeneous, and that travel is now a banal activity, are the basis of fears of the 'end of travel'. In response, a number of French travel writers have manifestly attempted to refresh the genre through practical innovation. However, there has been little recognition of this aspect of French travel writing by scholars of literature.

In order to elucidate thematic innovations in twentieth-century French travel writing, this thesis explores interdisciplinary theories of travel, and examines how French travel writers construct travel in relation to overlapping practices and theories. Two major sociocultural developments – the rise of mass tourism and the increasing sophistication and rationalization of transport facilities – are foregrounded as factors blamed for the banalization of travel. These indicate normative conditions for travel, and are presented here as a reference point in the analysis of innovative travel practices.

The final section of the thesis challenges some of the assumptions implicit in perceptions of the 'end of travel'. The notion that there is nowhere left to go is problematized by the subjective narratives of physically disabled persons, who may experience an end of literal travel that is an unexamined counterpart to a rhetorical *fin des voyages*. Also, science fiction and information technology are sites for the negotiation of new forms of travel that potentially undermine the notion that travel is an exhausted possibility.

By focusing on the continuing importance of travel practices in a broad corpus of French travelogues, this thesis demonstrates the need for an interdisciplinary methodology that can account for thematic aspects of the genre, and it introduces new theoretical resources for this purpose. More specifically, it brings to attention, elucidates, and problematizes the privileged status of the body in contemporary French approaches to travel writing.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 TRAVEL LITERATURES AND TRAVEL WRITING

> Ce thème fondamental de la littérature mondiale, le voyage. [...] Il est assez aisé de définir le voyage à partir d'un trait élémentaire, le déplacement.[1]

> Travel and writing, therefore, are forms of displacement through other worlds.[2]

'Travel literature may be interpreted in its broadest possible sense' – this is the policy of *Studies in Travel Writing*, an international journal dedicated to 'scholarly work on travel literature'.[3] Minimal definitions of travel as actual *or* imagined displacement, together with theories that writing and reading are already, in themselves, metaphorical acts of displacement, make for a potentially vast category of travel literature – or travel literatures, if national, chronological, generic or other specificities are to be acknowledged.[4] Jean-Marc Moura's assertion that travel is a fundamental theme of world literature could, if verifiable, further reinforce the sense that travel literatures are an overwhelmingly expansive field.

If the notional category of 'travel literatures' promises inclusiveness, travel writing is a genre that is currently being problematized on account of its perceived exclusiveness.[5] The travel writer, it is argued, contributes to the mythologization of elite practices of travel, and thereby effaces not only the trajectories of those involved in large-scale displacements such as immigration, but also the cultural, political, and economic grounds of the travel practices and travelling subjects that are privileged. Caren Kaplan denounces the following conception, posited as prevalent: '"Real" travel produces "real" travel books. Any other form of writing associated with any other form of travel is not truly valuable.'[6] The travel writer is treated by Kaplan as an exemplar of a

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[1] Jean-Marc Moura, *Lire l'exotisme* (Paris: Dunod, 1992), pp. 3-4.

[2] Mario Cesareo, 'Anthropology and literature: of bedfellows and illegitimate offspring', in *Between Anthropology and Literature: Interdisciplinary Discourse*, ed. by Rose De Angelis (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 158-176 (p. 162).

[3] *Studies in Travel Writing*, 6 (2002), preliminary material, page unnumbered, author unspecified. Throughout this thesis, 'studies in travel writing' will refer to scholarly works focusing on travel literatures. Studies of travel will designate travel-focused scholarship that does not privilege, even it does consider, travel literatures.

[4] See Michel de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien. 1. Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p. 171: 'Tout récit est un récit de voyage.'

[5] See Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 2-9.

[6] Kaplan, pp. 53-54.

narrow understanding of travel, and thus, as a fixed reference point against which to begin more inclusive discussions of travel. Similarly, James Clifford states: 'Travel and travel discourse should not be reduced to the relatively recent tradition of literary travel, a narrowed conception which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.'[7]

Although the project of expanding and diversifying discussions of travel is an important one, there is a need to scrutinize some of the assumptions founding wholesale critiques of travel writing. Between problematizing the exclusionary aspects of certain travelogues (posited as representative), and rejecting travel writing in favour of other travel literatures, the evolving travel practices of a number of travel writers seem to have been elided out of consideration. There has been a lack of recognition of the attempts of French travel writers to renegotiate the practical bases of travel writing since the twentieth century, although interdisciplinary studies of travel indicate that such attempts are in evidence.[8] A brief commentary on the following passage from James Clifford's *Routes* will serve to foreground this point and to contextualize the approach that is to be proposed in response.

> Travel and travel discourse should not be reduced to the relatively recent tradition of literary travel, a narrowed conception which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This notion of 'travel' was articulated against an emerging ethnography (and other forms of 'scientific' field research) on the one hand, and against tourism (a practice defined as incapable of producing serious knowledge) on the other. The spatial and textual practices of what might now be called 'sophisticated travel' – a phrase taken from the *New York Times* supplements catering to the 'independent' traveler – function within an elite, and highly differentiated, tourist sector defined by the statement, 'We are *not* tourists.' (Jean-Didier Urbain, in *L'Idiot du voyage* (1991), has thoroughly analyzed this discursive formation. See also Buzzard, [*sic*] 1993 [...].) The literary tradition of 'sophisticated travel,' whose disappearance has been lamented by critics such as Daniel Boorstin and Paul Fussell, is reinvented by a long list of contemporary writers – Paul Theroux, Shirley Hazzard, Bruce Chatwin, Jan Morris, Ronald Wright, et al.[9]

In this account of the spatial and textual practices of travel writers since the nineteenth century, a number of issues are cursorily treated. What is literary/sophisticated travel? When, how and why has 'sophisticated travel' been threatened with disappearance? What has been involved in the 'reinvention' of 'sophisticated travel'? These questions are to some extent answered by the works cross-referenced by Clifford. However, the exclusively Anglophone writers that are listed as representatives of the reinvention of

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[7] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 66-67.

[8] In this thesis, French *écrivains-voyageurs* will be referred to as travel writers, to reflect the language-medium of the study. For further attenuation of this use of terminology, see section 1.2 below. It is also to be noted that, throughout this thesis, except where stated otherwise, it can be assumed that the adjective 'French' refers to France and French-speaking Europe. Where French-speaking non-European countries are also to be included, the term 'Francophone' will be used.

[9] Clifford, pp. 66-67.

literary travel coexist uneasily with the citation of the French sociologist Jean-Didier Urbain. In *L'Idiot du voyage*, Urbain draws a number of French travel writers into his survey of anti-tourism, but Clifford's account of the establishment, demise and reinvention of 'the literary tradition of "sophisticated travel"' does not admit any non-Anglophone specificities of approach.[10] What tradition(s) of travel has/have been threatened with disappearance in a twentieth-century French context? Have French travel writers been involved in the reinvention of travel? What strategies have they used? Such questions are entirely ignored by Clifford.

Interdisciplinary French studies of travel indicate that new approaches to travel are currently being demonstrated and/or theorized, in which the re-focusing and/or restyling of travel practices are intended to refresh travel as a means of experiencing the unfamiliar or re-experiencing the familiar. The full extent to which French travel writers have been involved in the renegotiation of travel practices is unclear from existing critical resources, although it is apparent that there has been some involvement, as works of twentieth-century French travel writing are being used by scholars of travel to illustrate and substantiate analyses of contemporary travel practice.

Two works of travel scholarship are of particular relevance: Urbain's *Secrets de voyage*, and *Désirs d'ailleurs* by Franck Michel. Urbain and Michel attend to contemporary approaches to travel – integrated, in *Secrets de voyage*, with an exploration of thematic continuities across earlier centuries. These works indicate twentieth-century interest in two distinctive themes in French travel writing: clandestine travel and decelerated travel. In *Secrets de voyage*, contemporary interest in clandestine travel, including explorations of marginalized, proximal, urban spaces, testify to an 'évolution récente dans l'art et les manières du voyage, [...] un nouvel exotisme.'[11] Michel, on the other hand, adopts the stance of Edouard Glissant according to which, in the absence of any remaining, undiscovered, geographical spaces, travel is now oriented towards interpersonal encounters.[12] Walking journeys are privileged, in *Désirs d'ailleurs*, as a form of travel with particularly high potential for such encounters: 'La marche est propice à la découverte comme le désir est propice à l'ailleurs.'[13]

In *Secrets de voyage* and *Désirs d'ailleurs*, French travelogues are cited as evidence that, respectively, clandestine travel and walking journeys are of contemporary

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[10] See Jean-Didier Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage: histoires de touristes* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1993)
[11] Jean-Didier Urbain, *Secrets de voyage: menteurs, imposteurs, et autres voyageurs invisibles* (Paris: Payot, 1998), p. 104.
[12] Franck Michel, *Désirs d'Ailleurs* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2000), p. 57. See also Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).
[13] Michel, pp. 125-27.

importance.[14] The use of literary texts as primary sources is consistent with established methodological approaches within the discipline of anthropology.[15] Both Urbain and Michel are in favour of the amalgamation of differing studies of travel;[16] it is the observation of this thesis that existing interdisciplinary studies of travel illuminate studies in travel writing, but they also treat travel writing texts as undifferentiated sources, decontextualized from their wider literary/generic formations. For instance, Michel's citation of works of travel writing within a discussion of the phenomenon of pedestrian travel raises, but does not address, questions such as the following: how prevalent is pedestrian travel, as a theme in French travel writing? What is the relationship of pedestrian travel to other themes in French travel writing? What differences or similarities exist between travel writers' treatment of pedestrian travel, and other theoretical approaches to the subject? By functionalizing travel writing as a source for the elaboration of wider phenomena of travel, such issues – relating to the specificity of travel writing within that wider context – are effaced. At the same time, the one-way espousal of an interdisciplinary methodology involving contemporary French travel literatures and theories prompts consideration of an equivalent methodology operating in the other direction – that is, the use of travel theories and travel literatures to inform studies of travel writing. It also suggests that there are a number of contemporary French travelogues that, because of their visible engagement with travel as practice, invite such an approach.

The present thesis prioritizes consideration of how French travel writers have (re)constructed travel in the thematic context that Clifford evokes: twentieth-century perceptions of the exhaustion of travel. However, the objectives of this study can be seen as twofold, as equal importance will be accorded to the matter of how to approach such aspects of travel writing, in the absence of any established methodologies for this purpose. It is proposed here that since, as Clifford suggests, travel writers operate within a spatio-temporal, as well as a textual context, and since that spatio-temporal context is shared and constituted by other travelling subjects – tourists, for instance – it would seem appropriate, for the reception of travel writing texts, to elaborate this spatio-temporal

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[14] For instance, Alexandre Poussin and Sylvain Tesson, *La Marche dans le ciel* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1998). See also Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 445 for a 'bibliographie ethnoproximale' including, but not restricted to, works of travel writing.

[15] For a discussion of 'anthropology's historical use of various literary texts as sources for its analysis' see Cesareo, p. 158.

[16] See Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 109: 'Penser le voyage en tant que tel – comme *genre* et non plus à travers son émiettement en espèces.' See also Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 261 (Annexe: récits de voyage): 'Cette bibliographie veut être davantage l'échantillon représentatif d'un thème: le voyage, que celui d'une production littéraire spécifique.' Compare Michel, pp.254-61, '*Pour une anthropologie des voyages*.'

context and the positionality of travel writers within it. To this end, a range of interdisciplinary theoretical resources are available. The ability of these resources to inform studies in travel writing is as yet largely unexplored, although several scholars have drawn on some of this material without theorizing its relevance.[17] Elucidating the applicability of these 'travel theories' – a notional category intended to include any theorizations of any aspects of travel – is a priority in the present thesis, and will be attempted in relation to the overarching research question of twentieth-century French renegotiations of travel practice.

Before detailing the precise approach to be taken in this thesis, it is necessary to elaborate two contextual matters. The thematic context for this study, as it was mentioned above, corresponds to the 'disappearance' of 'literary travel' that Clifford has alluded to in passing. For reasons that will be discussed below, this context will be referred to more generally here as 'the end of travel' and will form a crucial reference point for the analysis of twentieth-century renegotiations of travel.[18] Prior to a discussion of the 'end of travel', however, an introduction to travel writing as a genre is required.

1.2 TRAVEL WRITING AS GENRE

This thesis is concerned with travel in its sense as an endangered or lost possibility, and it is concerned with some of the individuals for whom this perception is likely to apply: twentieth-century French travel writers. More specifically, it is an enquiry into under-theorized ways in which French travel writers have responded to the condition of their perceived belatedness as travellers, as well as writers, without sacrificing the specificity of the travel writer as a traveller *and* a writer, a composite role that has been memorably expressed by Jacques Meunier: 'Si vous le coupez en deux, vous n'aurez pas d'un côté

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[17] Notable examples are Sidonie Smith, Michael Cronin, Alison Russell. See below, section 1.6.1.

[18] The term 'literary travel', which appears to have been popularized by Paul Fussell, will not be retained here, as it seems to efface the homologous concerns of travelling subjects – including ethnographers, journalists and voyagers – for whom 'literariness' may be less relevant than it is to Evelyn Waugh and other primary authors considered by Fussell. See Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

un voyageur et de l'autre, un écrivain, mais deux moitiés d'écrivain-voyageur.'[19] Travel writing is approached in this thesis, then, as a site of intersection of travel practices and textual practices, of which many of the implications, in a twentieth-century French context, are under-recognized and under-theorized. However, travel writing itself can no longer be seen as a self-explanatory category,[20] particularly in a non-Anglophone context. An essential starting point, therefore, is a preliminary definition of the genre in question.

Although 'travel writing' and the 'récit de voyage' have, in Anglophone and French contexts respectively, retained currency as recognized, largely homologous publishing categories,[21] 'travel' and associated textual productions have been subject to extensive problematization and retheorization in recent years, reflected by the increasingly emergence of alternative categories such as 'travel literature', 'littérature des voyages', 'littérature voyageuse', 'travel writings', 'travel books', 'writing about

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[19] Jacques Meunier, 'Petit précis de l'exotisme', in *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, ed. by Michel Le Bris (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1999), pp. 141-51 (p. 148). See also Adrien Pasquali, *Le Tour des horizons: critique et récits de voyages* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), pp. 32-39, for a discussion of the ordering of *écrivain-voyageur* as opposed to *voyageur-écrivain*. *Ecrivain-voyageur* appears as the normative form. In this thesis, 'travel writer' is preferred to 'traveller-writer', although the latter more literally translates the French term; it is felt that although 'traveller-writer' more satisfactorily evokes the specificity of the genre, the hybridity of the role is still implicit in 'travel writer', and since this thesis is concerned primarily with popular instances of the genre, normative terminology is appropriate. It is noted, however, that 'traveler-writer' is the preferred term, in an equivalent context, in Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[20] This is a refutation of Zweder Von Martels's suggestion that in spite of the fluidity of the genre, it is generally understood as to what travel writing includes: 'Travel writing seems unlimited in its forms of expression, but though we may therefore find it hard to define the exact boundaries of this genre, it is generally understood what it contains.' See Zweder Von Martels, 'Introduction: The Eye and the Eye's Mind', in *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing*, ed. by Zweder Von Martels (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), pp. i-xviii (p. xi).

[21] Percy Adams treats 'travel writing' and 'récit de voyage' as entirely interchangeable terms in *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983). Pasquali similarly approaches travel writing, *récits de voyage*, and equivalent Italian and German terms as translated terms with a single referent. Pasquali's privileging of *récit de voyage* appears to reflect the language-medium of his study: literary criticism relating to English travel writing and Italian and German travel writings are freely applied to considerations of the French *récit de voyage* without problematization. This approach forms a precedent for the current thesis's preference for 'travel writing' in designating French primary texts. Compare, however, Forsdick: 'French mistrust of "le travel-writing", a genre considered even by a number of contemporary critics as suspiciously Anglo-Saxon (since its name, paradigms, and principal practitioners are borrowed from anglophone traditions.)' Charles Forsdick, *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity: Journeys Between Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 184. In recognizing an important homology between French and Anglophone travel writing as writing about travel, there is no intention to suggest that French and Anglophone treatment of the genre has been identical. Rather, it is argued here that referring to French travel writing as *récits de voyage*, in an English-medium thesis, would legitimize critical tendencies (as exemplified by Clifford) to efface French travel writers when making generalizations about travel writing.

travel', and 'literature of displacement'.[22] Revised categories such as these can be seen as an attempt to resolve – or, alternatively, a refusal to engage with – problems arising from the semantic complexity of the term 'travel', and from the diffusive, transnational, transhistorical presence of travel, in any or all of its current understandings, as a theme, motif, metaphor or structuring device across literary genres and across disciplines.[23] Increasingly, the replacement of travel writing by more inclusive categories is urged not only by those questioning formal and aesthetic conventions such as the privileging of narrative,[24] but also by those with political objections to the genre's presumed bias towards certain types of traveller and certain types of travel.[25] Without disputing the importance of recent attenuations of travel and attempts to diversify and politicize considerations of travel writing to take into account a broader range of human subjects in displacement, it is the position of this thesis that travel literatures continue to include a recognizable popular genre of travel writing, of which further genre-specific study is required.

Definitions of travel writing range from vague to prescriptive.[26] If a minimal understanding of travel writing as 'the retelling of a journey' or the 'mise en scène littéraire' of 'une expérience (le voyage)' seems a consistent feature of analyses of the genre,[27] even this is open to problematization, as there is disagreement among scholars as to whether – and this is only a suggestive list – fictional travel should be assigned a separate category; whether travel necessarily involves geographical displacement; whether all geographical displacements – including coerced journeys and one-way migrations – are valid subject matter for travel writing; and whether putatively objective, documentary texts such as reportage and works of ethnography are also travel writing.

In this respect, analyses of popular instances of travel writing may be instructive, as popular instances of genre are thought to adhere closely to generic conventions/reader

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[22] 'Travel literature' and 'littérature de voyage' are in widespread use. 'Littérature voyageuse' is associated with the authors of *Pour une littérature voyageuse* (see above, note 19). 'Travel writings' is used, for example, in James Duncan and Derek Gregory, eds, *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London, Routledge, 1999). 'Travel books' is a term proposed by Fussell in *Abroad*, p. 203. 'Writing about travel' is one of the terms used in Alison Russell, *Crossing Boundaries: Postmodern Travel Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2000). 'Literature of displacement' is used by Robyn Davidson in *The Picador Book of Journeys*. It is to be noted that, apart from Fussell, none of the above-listed critics explain or problematize their choice of genre name.

[23] See Pasquali, p. 105, and Kaplan, p. xi.

[24] See, for instance, Pasquali, p. 139: 'Substituer l'expression "littérature des voyages" à "récit de voyage" permet d'élargir le champ d'investigation à des textes non-narratifs.'

[25] See Kaplan, pp. 2-4.

[26] For a prescriptive definition, see Fussell, p. 203. For a vague definition, see note 27 below.

[27] The quotations are from, respectively, Russell, pp. 22-23, and Pasquali, p. 65.

expectations and therefore to present a more stable picture of genre.[28] Travel writing appears, in French as well as Anglophone contexts, as a genre with differentiated patronage, reflected by the steady output, on the one hand, of relatively formulaic, commercially successful texts that cater to the demands of readers with particular, stable expectations of the genre; on the other hand, the higher aesthetic value of certain works of travel writing has been recognized.[29] Analyses of popular travel writing are a useful reference point in discussions of generic specificity as they are likely to indicate conventions.[30]

Didactic resources aimed at the prospective 'writer of popular travel accounts'[31] foreground, as a basic criterion, the necessity of actual physical displacement to another geographical location. In *They Went: The Art and Craft of Travel Writing*, William Zinsser makes the journalistic element of the genre explicit: 'All travel writers, even Herodotus, even Thoreau, are reporters before they are anything else.'[32] According to Zinsser, travel writing focuses on geographical locations, and requires 'curiosity to find out what makes a country or a city or a town or a tribal village unique and to bring the information back.'[33] The intersection between travel writing and journalism is also highlighted in 'Le Voyage par écrit', a French online resource for prospective travel writers, aimed both at those wishing to write short articles for publication in magazines and newspapers, and at those intending to write free-standing *récits de voyage*; the same

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[28] Travel writing has frequently been classed as 'low literature', and whilst this may reflect a contemporary cultural tendency to discredit non-fictional writing , it is also arguably a generalization based on popular instances of the genre. See Fussell, p. 212. The term 'travel literature' may in some cases be intended as a euphemism, rather than a retheorization of the genre, as in Clifford's ironic evocation of '"travel literature" in the bourgeois sense.' See Clifford, p. 38. It should be noted the term 'popular' is used in this thesis to denote widespread practices, large readerships, and the commercialization with which these are frequently associated. No reference to the alternative socialist connotations of the 'popular interest' is intended. Raymond Williams has usefully problematized the concept of the popular in Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism* (London and New York: Verso, 1996 [1989]), pp. 107-09; Williams argues that the large audiences that the products of popular culture command have been welcomed by capitalist political economies for the commercial opportunities that they represent. According to Williams, socialists therefore 'no longer have any kind of monopoly of the popular interest' (p. 109). See also note 31 below.

[29] See Michel Le Bris, 'Note de l'éditeur', in *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 7-15.

[30] See Theo D'haen, Rainer Grûbel and Helmut Lethen, eds., *Convention and Innovation in Literature* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989), introduction by the editors, pp. 49-54.

[31] This is Caren Kaplan's terminology: see *Questions of Travel*, p. 2. Kaplan does not comment on the possible socialist connotations of concepts of the popular; she is in fact making the specific point that writers of 'popular travel accounts' are actively promoting an elitist conception of travel.

[32] William Zinsser, 'Introduction', in William Zinsser, ed., *They Went: The Art and Craft of Travel Writing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), pp. 3-28 (p. 17). For an enquiry into the problematics of aligning journalism and literature, see Jean-Marc Moura, *La Littérature des lointains, Histoire de l'exotisme européen au XXe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), pp. 145-47, and Chapter Four of this thesis.

[33] Zinsser, p. 17.

guidelines and conventions apparently apply in either case.[34] Like *They Went*, 'Le Voyage par écrit' also presents actual geographical displacement as an indisputable 'sujet' of any travel writing. It emphasizes the need for travel writers to find original subject matter, with the qualification that, for maximum marketability, it is advisable to conform to current fashions regarding 'pays racontés'. In either case, the function of travel writing, from the point of view of the reader, is to provide readers with vicarious, subjective experiences of travel to geographical locations.

> Le récit est là pour interpeller le lecteur, le faire réagir, le transporter en d'autres lieux, vers d'autres cultures et d'autres gens.
>
> The crucial gift that all good travel writers bestow – the sense that they were there.[35]

Holland and Huggan offer a more detailed definition of popular travel writing that is an attenuation of Paul Fussell's analysis of the genre. In *Tourists With Typewriters*, travel writing, as distinct from the travel-themed novel or the 'putatively nonfictional guidebook', is described as a 'self-consciously autobiographical, intentionally anecdotal', '*pseudo*ethnographic' genre that resembles ethnography to the extent that it appears to report on other peoples and cultures, but is alignable with autobiography to the extent that 'the self is writ large in its alien surroundings.'[36] Here again, the expectation of geographical displacement is implicit; however, whereas didactic resources for travel writing foreground the importance of finding original geocultural subject matter, Holland and Huggan's definition of travel writing as *pseudo*ethnographic implies greater autonomy from the demand of topical originality, insofar as the individual experiences of the travelling subject are accorded importance over and above the documentary aspects of the genre.[37] On the other hand, such travel writing would still rely on the ongoing value of geographical displacement as a differentiated source of anecdote, and as a guarantor of 'alien surroundings'.

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[34] 'Le voyage par écrit', at http://www.abm.fr/pratique/edition.html, author unspecified, consulted on 10 August 2004.
[35] 'Le voyage par écrit'; Zinsser, p. 17.
[36] Holland and Huggan, pp. 11-12.
[37] For the historicization of this shift in emphasis, see, for instance, Michael Cronin. According to Cronin, the nineteenth century saw a shift from the 'laconic verisimilitude of the log book' to the subjective travel account, geared towards 'recreating the experience of being a particular person in a particular place.' Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press), p. 40. Compare Daniel Boorstin, *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 123: 'Even our travel literature has shown a noticeable change. [...] Since the mid nineteenth century, [...] and especially in the twentieth century, travel books have increasingly become a record not of new information but of personal 'reactions'. From 'Life in Italy' they become 'The American in Italy'. People go to see what they already know is there. The only thing to record, the only possible source of surprise, is their own reaction.'

The purpose of this section has been to highlight a particular subcategory of travel literatures that conventionally depends on first-hand experiences of literal travel to places posited as other. It is proposed that popular instances of the *récit de voyage* and Anglophone travel writing are analogous genres to the extent that they share this convention. It was noted in section 1.1. that Clifford's generalizations about travel writing effaced the specificity of French travel writing, while drawing on a French theorist of travel (Urbain); however, the restriction of practices of travel writing to Anglophone travel writers would seem inappropriate, given the homologous activities of French *écrivains-voyageurs*. In the following section, consideration is given to the conditions that theoretically constrain travellers, including travel writers, in the twentieth century: this will serve to clarify the understanding of travel that is supposedly at stake.

1.3 THE END OF TRAVEL: PROPHECY, CONDITION OR TROPE?

The thematic context for this study, as mentioned above, corresponds to the 'disappearance' of 'literary travel' that Clifford alludes to in passing. In this thesis, it will be referred to more generally as 'the end of travel', for reasons that will be elucidated below. Citing Boorstin and Fussell, Clifford notes that the disappearance of 'literary travel' has been a concern, although he does not specify the chronological period to which this applies. In this thesis, it is proposed that perceptions of belatedness are an important context for approaching renegotiations of travel in the twentieth century, and that the lamentations of Boorstin and Fussell can usefully be united with other articulations of the reduced feasibility of travel in this period, as well as with a more general cultural and artistic paradigm of exhausted possibility that is a familiar feature of twentieth-century criticism – 'the used-upness of certain forms or the felt exhaustion of certain possibilities.'[38]

In referring to the twentieth century as a period associated with the 'end of travel', allusion is made to Claude Lévi-Strauss's seminal 1955 text *Tristes tropiques*, of which the first part is famously entitled 'LA FIN DES VOYAGES'.[39] Whilst this is arguably the most familiar articulation of the belatedness of the twentieth-century traveller, it is by no means the first, with Gobineau, Loti and Segalen cited as earlier

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[38] John Barth, *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 64.
[39] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1955), page unnumbered.

authors voicing related concerns.[40] Unless stated otherwise, the 'end of travel' refers not to the end of geographical displacement (literal travel) but to the notion that there is nowhere left to go – both in the sense that there are no unexplored regions in the world, and in the sense that global diversity has given way to an uninteresting monoculture. This notion of the 'end of travel' is therefore largely interchangeable with that of the end of exoticism, understood minimally as the diverse,[41] and this indicates a primary understanding of travel, in the context of French travel writing, as displacements motivated by the desire for alterity.

The idea that there is nowhere left to go, or that places have become homogeneous, is articulated differently from author to author, with no apparent standardization of expression. However, in aligning these different articulations with a single, continuous paradigm of 'the end of travel', the example of Adrien Pasquali is followed; Pasquali appropriates Lévi-Strauss's 'la fin des voyages' to refer to a generalized phenomenon: 'Tous décrètent la domestication totale de la planète, la mort de l'exotisme et la généralisation du Même.'[42] As the 'end of travel' is not specifically a French paradigm and is equally prevalent in Anglophone travel writing and literary criticism, it has not been considered necessary to retain French terminology in referring to this concept in an English-medium thesis. In the remainder of this section, an overview is provided of key articulations of the 'end of travel', with a comment on its disparate treatment as something imminent, actual or largely rhetorical.

Pierre Loti and Victor Segalen contribute important understandings of the 'end of travel' as a condition towards which the world is tending, but one that is not yet complete. As Pierre Loti precedes the chronological period that forms the central focus of this thesis, the prophecy of the 'end of travel' expressed in *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887) is instructive here, demonstrating continuity between but not equivalence of concerns within late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts:

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[40] See Forsdick, p.21.

[41] Diversity is common to definitions of exoticism, but in many cases, additional connotations are seen as integral to the concept, to reflect the political aspects of its historical use in practice. See for instance Jean-Marc Moura, *Lire l'exotisme*, p. 33. This thesis will adopt a neutral definition of exoticism and problematize this where required. The default understanding of exoticism and related verbs will therefore follow Segalen's, as a synonym of the diverse, with the qualification that there is no evaluation of degrees of diversity implied – that is, no insistence on exoticism as radical, impenetrable otherness. As a precedent for this usage of exoticism, see Pasquali and Urbain. See Forsdick pp. 26-29 with regard to 'exoticism as an Aesthetics of Diversity' (p. 26). Note also p. 36: 'Viewing the genesis of the exotic as such a dynamic process of relation allows a shift from understanding exoticism on thematic or chronological grounds [:xoticism is not, as Segalen had initially considered in 1904, restricted to the geographical.'

[42] Pasquali, p. 61.

> Quand Nagasaki parut, ce fut une déception pour nos yeux: au pied des vertes montagnes surplombantes, c'était une ville tout à fait quelconque. [...] En fait de choses banales déjà vues partout, rien n'y manquait. Il viendra un temps où la terre sera bien ennuyeuse à habiter, quand on l'aura rendue pareille d'un bout à l'autre, et qu'on ne pourra même plus essayer de voyager pour se distraire un peu.[43]

This extract is consonant with Lévi-Strauss's articulation of the homogenization of the world, as will be discussed below, but it is presented here as a prediction of future conditions rather than a process that is anywhere near completion at the time of writing. There is, then, a need both to acknowledge nineteenth-century awareness of the possible implications of the expansion of travel practices, and to register the chronological specificity of a shift from solely prophetic articulations of global homogenization to expressions of belatedness as a contemporary phenomenon.[44]

Victor Segalen, in *Essai sur l'exotisme*, approaches global diversity in terms of decline rather than comprehensive loss. Segalen identifies a plurality of *exotismes*, the most obvious of which – 'un exotisme des pays et des races, un exotisme des climats, des faunes et des flores; un exotisme soumis à la géographie, à la position en latitude et longitude' – are shown to have been prioritized by travellers. Segalen suggests that such geographically-sourced exoticism is the least subtle form, and it is this category of diversity that is most at risk from depletion, notably as a result of increased global mobility: 'montrer leur dégradation par la multiplicité des Voyages.'[45] A general paradigm of decreasing diversity is announced, synonymous with the entropy of the universe; however, this is a slow, progressive and incomplete process, and it does not exclude the more discerning individual from ongoing experience of the radically other.[46]

Claude Lévi-Strauss, Paul Fussell, Daniel Boorstin and Jean-Marc Moura are key examples of a diverse range of scholars who have theorized the 'end of travel' as a condition that is already in effect, to the exclusion or near exclusion of any ongoing possibility of travel. Fussell emerges as the most categorical in terms of the current impossibility of travel, defining the interwar period (1918 to 1939) as the 'final age of travel' and asserting the assumption that 'travel is now impossible and that tourism is all

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[43] Pierre Loti, *Madame Chrysanthème*, quoted in Geneviève Bussac, *L'Autre et l'ailleurs par les textes: anthologie* (Rosny s/Bois: Bréal, 1992), p. 1.

[44] See James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 1-13. Buzard demonstrates the presence of fears of homogenization in the nineteenth century, suggesting thematic continuity across the centuries, but these fears are still prophetic in emphasis in the chronological period considered by Buzard. See also Chris Bongie: 'The repetition of [a story] that was very much on the nineteenth-century mind: the gradual loss of alternative horizons that had to result from the diffusion of "Western civilisaton" to all corners of the globe.' Chris Bongie, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism and the Fin de Siècle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 4.

[45] Victor Segalen, *Essai sur l'exotisme: une esthétique du divers* (Paris: Fata Morgana, 1978), p. 99.

[46] Segalen, p. 83

we have left.'[47] The position of Boorstin is similar, presenting the supersession of travel by the degraded practice of tourism, which has been an aspect of the 'multiplication, improvement, and cheapening of travel facilities'.[48] Travel, according to Boorstin, has become 'diluted, contrived, prefabricated.'[49] Whilst Fussell and Boorstin scapegoat the rise of mass tourism, Lévi-Strauss laments the spread of monoculture and the contamination of the Southern hemisphere by unattractive by-products of Western civilization.[50] There is slippage between discourses of actuality and imminence, but a lost age of unspoilt travel is recurrently evoked by Lévi-Strauss: 'Je voudrais avoir vécu au temps des *vrais* voyages, quand s'offrait dans toute sa splendeur un spectacle non encore gâché, contaminé et maudit' (p. 42).

According to Moura, the exhaustion of global exoticism began with the establishment of the first intercontinental shipping route in 1857. This marked the advent of an 'ère des communications de masse' that has in turn witnessed the proliferation of journeys and written representations of journeys, as a result of which 'la planète est entièrement connu' and 'aucun voyage ne peut plus prétendre à des découvertes stupéfiantes.' Moura shares Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on the processes of European imperialist expansion as the vector for global homogenization, and the perceived loss of authenticity of 'civilisations non occidentales' is foregrounded as the most noteworthy aspect of the 'end of travel'.[51]

Recent critical discussions of the 'end of travel' have approached articulations of the belatedness of the traveller as rhetorical devices: this is exemplified by Kerry Featherstone, who announces that belatedness as a recent trope of travel writing: 'Another trope of late-twentieth-century travel writing is the sense that earlier writers, in earlier textual representations, saw a world that has now been lost.'[52] According to Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, travel writers often take 'rhetorical advantage of their own imagined obsolescence'; they find that the assertion of belatedness can often be linked to commercial motives, as the diffusion of belief in a homogenized global society can increase the attractiveness and the urgency of travel literature in the eyes of potential purchasers:

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[47] Fussell, p. vii; p. 41.
[48] Boorstin, p. 88.
[49] Boorstin, p. 83.
[50] Lévi-Strauss, pp. 36-37.
[51] Moura, *Lire l'exotisme*, p. 23.
[52] Kerry Featherstone, 'Not Just Travel Writing: An Interdisciplinary Reading of the Work of Bruce Chatwin' (Unpublished PhD Thesis: Nottingham Trent University, 2000), p. 15.

> The travel literature industry – and in this should be included both literary-minded travel narratives and more information-oriented travelogues and guidebooks – has been quick to cash in on Westerners' growing fears of homogenization, promoting its products as thrilling alternatives to the sanitized spectacles of mass tourism.[53]

Although Holland and Huggan here suggest that discourses of belatedness rely on binaries of authentic travel and homogeneous touristic experience, the rhetorical importance of asserting the 'end of travel' is elsewhere frequently associated with the perpetuation of imperialist nostalgia: the loss of exoticism that is lamented is then indissociable from the loss of inequitable power relations involving non-Western cultures.

Whether presented as imminent, actual or rhetorical, the 'end of travel' largely appears as a diagnosis of geocultural and political conditions rather than conditions of physical access: the ongoing possibility of physical displacement (literal travel) is rarely in question.[54] Rather, physical displacements, in their multiplicity, are paramount among the factors blamed for the declining possibility of travel, as these are associated with the depletion of geocultural diversity and the spread of monoculture: 'Those same globalizing processes that have helped make the world more accessible have also arguably made it less exciting, less diverse.'[55] Insofar as travel depends on the ongoing existence of diversity, and this diversity is perceived as threatened by increased volumes of displacement – whether as a result of mass tourism, industrial expansion or political change – travel arguably emerges here as an inherently elitist phenomenon.[56] As such, it would seem reasonable to theorize the 'end of travel' as an aspect of the reaction against mass culture generally that is associated with modernism. Travel, in such an argument, is being contaminated by mass-cultural equivalents, and the traveller must reinforce distinction from degraded forms 'through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.'[57] This thesis accords considerable attention to the specification of how, exactly, 'mass-cultural equivalents' are thought to detract from a particular understanding of travel, and

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[53] Holland and Huggan, p. 2.

[54] The exception here is Boorstin, whose discussion of the dilution of travel also includes a comment on the end of displacement – 'We are moving towards Instant Travel' (p. 122). This is consonant with the (meta)theories of Saint-Pol-Roux and Paul Virilio; the elision of displacement will be considered in Chapter Three of the thesis.

[55] Holland and Huggan, p. 2.

[56] See Kaplan, for detailed problematization of the individualism of travel and exile and the effacement of mass displacements that is entailed by the critical foregrounding of solitary figures in the representation of human displacement. Kaplan rejects, as a normative understanding of travel, its treatment as 'the movements of individuals in the modern era.' (p. 2).

[57] Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. vii. This is quoted also in Kaplan, p. 57.

how French travel writers respond to this. As a context for such considerations, however, it is necessary to indicate existing responses to the subject.

1.4 CRITICAL RESPONSES TO TRAVEL WRITING 'AFTER THE END OF TRAVEL'

Where scholars of travel writing have addressed aspects of the 'end of travel', there has been a division of emphasis that leads, in all cases, to the elision of key twentieth-century French renegotiations of travel practice. Three general critical approaches will receive comment here, which prioritize, respectively: imperialist nostalgia; formal, stylistic and textual innovation; postmodern thematic innovation.

1.4.1 TRAVEL WRITING, BELATEDNESS AND ORIENTALISM

Ali Behdad's *Belated Travelers* has been selected here as an example of the critical prioritization of Orientalist dimensions of the 'end of travel'.[58] 'Belated travelers', in Behdad's study, refers specifically to European travellers to the 'Orient' since the mid-nineteenth century: these are elsewhere redefined as 'Belated Orientalists' (p. 13). According to Behdad, this period represented a time of belatedness as it corresponded with a relatively advanced phase of European colonial expansion, in which the 'Orient' had already been domesticated in line with 'Western hegemony', resulting in a perceived loss of authenticity in comparison with the 'Orient' as it had been encountered by previous generations of European travellers. The rise of tourism is also included as a factor leading to perceptions of belatedness in the mid-nineteeth century, but only tourism to the 'Orient' is discussed. The development of steam ships and railways are cited as factors revolutionizing access to the 'Orient' and contributing therefore to its increased familiarity, but the implications of further advances in the history of mechanized transport do not receive comment.

Behdad considers travel writers in conjunction with other sources ('theoretical images, photographs, signs, letters, and traces') in order to identify and elucidate the 'discursive heterogeneity' of Orientalism in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, as exemplified by 'traveler-writers'. The 'end of travel' in question is very specifically the

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[58] Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). References for quotations of this work will be given parenthetically in the text.

'search for a counterexperience in the Orient and the melancholic discovery of its impossibility' (p.15); the theoretical framework adopted for its analysis is postcolonial, and focuses on slippage between neocolonial and 'interventionary/anamnesiac' (p. 8) processes. Belatedness, travel practices and travel writings outside the context of trajectories to former European colonies in Africa and the Middle East are not examined.

Whilst this is a relevant paradigm for the reception of much travel writing, and (anti)colonial discursive formations have a diffusive presence even in texts that are not obviously steeped in colonialist nostalgia, its effacement of the specificity of other aspects of belatedness – such as the expansion of global leisure travel – makes insufficient account of a number of twentieth-century French approaches to travel writing. In other words, it is argued in this thesis that the lost authenticity of the Orient is not the only factor contributing to perceptions of belatedness, and in some cases, it does not visibly take precedence over other factors such as the changing characteristics of actually being in transit. To illustrate this point, the opening lines of Jacques Lacarrière's 1981 work, *En cheminant avec Hérodote*, are instructive:

> Voyager est devenu de nos jours une activité si courante qu'elle ne peut plus apparaître comme synonyme de risque où d'aventure. [...] On comprendra donc aisément que ce mot de voyage avait un sens bien différent il y a trente-cinq siècles. [...] Le voyage alors, surtout individuel, n'était pas du tout synonyme de tourisme, de dépaysement, encore moins de divertissement. C'était une entreprise physique difficile, aléatoire et éprouvante, vu qu'il n'existait alors ni cartes ni boussole ni relais sûrs et encore moins de syndicats d'initiative![59]

In revisiting the travels of Herodotus to Persia and the Middle East in the fifth century BC, Lacarrière may be appealing to nostalgia for an early, authentic Orient. On the other hand, Lacarrière's preface to the work immediately expresses nostalgia for times before the advent of mass leisure travel: specifically, the facilitation, rationalization and trivialization of displacement seems to be regretted, and the reference point provided is tourism rather than earlier colonial journeys.[60]

1.4.2 TRAVEL WRITING, BELATEDNESS AND TEXTUAL INNOVATION

Adrien Pasquali and Alison Russell are examples of scholars of travel writing who highlight the importance of textual innovation as means of refreshing the genre in the specific context of the 'end of travel'. Whilst Pasquali's consideration of textual

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[59] Jacques Lacarrière, *En cheminant avec Hérodote* (Paris: Pierre Seghers, 1981), p. 9.

[60] Whilst tourism is open to theorization as an extension of colonialism, this is also contested. See for example Michel, p. 37: 'Le tourisme international ne répresente ni une invasion du Sud par le Nord ni un impérialisme incontrôlé et généralisé. [...] Il n'en constitue pas moins, en maints espaces tropicaux, la dernière corde de l'arc colonial avec son cortège d'exotisme et de domination des marches et des esprits.'

innovation is, to a large extent, speculative, Russell decisively approaches such innovation as an important feature of late twentieth-century travel writing. In *Le Tour des horizons,* Pasquali concludes a chapter dedicated to 'La fin des voyages?' with the opinion that linguistic inventiveness may compensate for the exhaustion of practices of travel and thereby assure the continuing viability of the *récit de voyage*.

> L'insistance sur l'épuisement des contenus du voyage (entendu comme exploration de l'exotique) fait aussi peu de cas des possibilités inventives offertes par la langue, face à la stéréotypie des pratiques voyageuses modernes. L'exemple de M. Butor le montrera à l'envi: le travail sur les formes narratives renouvelle les potentialités du récit de voyage.[61]

The position of Russell is similar: 'Travel writers unwilling to traverse the beaten narrative path have been able to refresh the genre by employing experimental textual practices.'[62] Russell corroborates this claim with a study of six Anglophone authors who demonstrate such an approach. Although the point that Pasquali and Russell are making is an important one – textual innovation is a visible feature of twentieth-century travel writing – it is notable that the exhaustion of travel practices is treated, by both critics, as a given. As well as finding new ways of writing about travel, travel writers are also engaged in renegotiating travel practices, and yet there is a reluctance, on the part of these scholars, to scrutinize the changing nature of travel. Pasquali and Russell dismiss, rather cursorily, the significance of beaten *geographical* paths as parameters for twentieth-century travel writing, as will now be discussed.

1.4.3 TRAVEL WRITING, BELATEDNESS AND THEMATIC INNOVATION

Studies in Anglophone travel writing have identified, as a response to the 'end of travel', a popular tendency towards thematic innovations featuring unorthodox travel practices. Practically-innovative travelogues have been famously categorized by William Grimes as 'gimmick books'.[63] Russell, in her introduction to *Crossing Boundaries: Postmodern Travel Literature*, acknowledges the phenomenon of practical innovation, but does not consider it necessary to problematize Grimes's analysis or to refer to any specific primary texts:

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[61] Pasquali, p. 65. These remarks are made without reference to any specific work or works by Michel Butor; however, in a later section of *Le Tour des horizons*, subtitled 'Travail sur les formes littéraires' (p. 85), Pasquali refers the reader to Michel Butor, *Mobile: étude pour une représentation des Etats-Unis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962).

[62] Russell, p. 7.

[63] William Grimes, 'Travel', *New York Times Book Review*, 16 June 1996, p. 13.

> Contemporary travel writers struggle to find unexplored territory and new ways to travel. [...] Many travel writers seek challenging means and methods of moving through familiar terrain. [...] Although William Grimes described such travel narratives as 'gimmick books' in an essay written for the *New York Times Book Review*, he acknowledges that contemporary travel writers face a serious problem in finding new places to write about, and thus they embrace novelty in the form of the 'bizarre challenge' or 'arcane itinerary'.[64]

With regard to practical innovation in travel writing, Holland and Huggan have theorized a practice of 'countertravel'. According to Holland and Huggan, countertravellers 'locate themselves in opposition to "conventional" modes of travel, particularly tourism'; in a passing reference to the popularity of countertravel – 'countertravel, of one sort or another, has certainly energized travel writing and, increasingly, travel theory, in the decades since the war' – a discussion of specific examples is again elided. The topic of countertravel serves, in *Tourists With Typewriters*, to underline the point that the popularity of 'English imperial questing – or more or less self-conscious parodies of it' remains undiminished in the presence of new thematic alternatives.[65]

Pasquali alludes to a possibly analogous approach to travel within the chapter of *Le Tour des horizons* that is dedicated to the question of 'La fin des voyages?'. Pasquali addresses a form of travel allegedly based on the 'fabrication des risques': 'Le voyage se serait ainsi réduit à l'accomplissement d'un exploit, à l'aide d'une technique nouvelle ou du repérage d'un nouveau circuit qui aussitôt devient touristique.'[66] As the use of the conditional tense suggests, Pasquali is treating this phenomenon with scepticism; this scepticism is explicit in his introduction to the argument: 'Curieusement, à lire ces textes [unspecified sociological and literary-critical studies], notre modernité n'aurait engendré qu'un seul type de (récit de) voyage, par exacerbation de la pratique touristique' (p. 63). Once again, no examples are provided of primary texts that conform to this model; whereas Russell, and Holland and Huggan, imply that Anglophone examples are in fact widely available, Pasquali leaves it unclear as to whether corresponding French travel writing texts exist.

It is notable that conventions for popular travel writing and the *récit de voyage* seem to differ in relation to the permissibility of arcane subject matter. Whereas 'gimmick' is a recognized component of popular Anglophone travelogues, equivalent French guidelines for travel writers warn against excessive unorthodoxy. Thus, the forthcoming Travel Writing Workshop 2005, organized in association with Fodor Travel Guides, includes 'Hook, gimmick' within its curriculum of components of 'good travel

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[64] Russell, pp. 8-9.
[65] Holland and Huggan, pp. 198-99.
[66] Pasquali, p. 63.

writing.'[67] By contrast, the online resource 'Le voyage par écrit' advises travel writers that, although originality of subject matter is a requirement, 'un voyage "extraordinaire" ne fait pas forcément un récit extraordinaire.'[68] It has been the observation of this thesis that arcane itineraries in Anglophone travel writing – recent examples include *Travels With My Radio*, by Fi Glover; *Travels Around Ireland With a Fridge*, by Tim Moore, and *Are You Dave Gorman?*, by Dave Gorman – may be specific to Anglophone travel writing, and may reflect a generic overlap with comic/humour genres that is not often applicable to French travel writing.[69] Without denying that French travel writing may manifest humour, irony, bathos or elements of the tragi-comic, it is proposed here that French travel writing is not characteristically a comic genre. For this reason, Anglophone interpretations of practical innovation – which may be influenced by comic travelogues such as those listed above – are not necessarily appropriate for the reception of French renegotiations of travel practice as theorized by Urbain and Michel.

1.5 TRAVEL WRITING AND TRAVEL PRACTICE: CURRENT RESEARCH NEEDS

So far, this introductory chapter has foregrounded a genre – travel writing – that conventionally depends on first-hand practices of travel as a source of interest, and it has delineated a context – the 'end of travel' – in which travel is perceived to have been domesticated and banalized, for reasons of lost geocultural diversity and/or the expansion and rationalization of facilities for geographical displacement. It has indicated that in existing studies in travel writing, little attention has been given to distinctive, twentieth-century attempts to refresh travel writing at the level of travel practice, particularly in a French context; however, interdisciplinary French studies of travel suggest that French travel writing is a site for the negotiation of new approaches to travel practice. It is proposed that the isolated and decontextualized instances of thematic innovation that feature in interdisciplinary studies of travel would benefit from recontextualization within a genre-specific study that examines a range of French

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[67] The curriculum for this workshop is available at http://heritagehousemuseum.org/html/workshop.htm.
[68] http://www.abm.fr/pratique/edition.html. Author unspecified; last consulted 10 August 2004.
[69] Fussell, and Holland and Huggan, claim that travel writing is, in part, a comic genre. See Fussell, pp. 203-14, and Holland and Huggan, pp. 8-20. A number of Anglophone travelogues, such as the works of Dave Gorman and Tim Moore, are simultaneously marketed as 'humour' books and 'travel writing'. For a discussion of certain French-language travelogues open to interpretation as 'gimmick books', see Chapter Three of this thesis.

responses to perceived constraints to travel in the twentieth century. This will involve the elaboration of constraining parameters for travel in this period, and the analysis of primary travelogues that engage with these parameters.

A broad corpus of primary French travelogues has been identified, in which travel practices are visibly presented as a source of interest or originality. In order to elucidate innovative travel practices, it would seem appropriate to scrutinize travel practices that may be seen as conventional. For the contextualization of these travelogues, therefore, consideration is given to travel practices that are theorized as normative in twentieth-century France, but have been associated with the 'end of travel' by travel writers, travel scholars and scholars of travel writing: these are mass tourism, and generalized use of mass mechanized transport, such as in commuter journeys.[70]

Michael Cronin has stated, 'The body is important to any discussion of travel, [...] in that travel is considered typically to involve physical displacement.'[71] The critical repositioning of the role of the travelling body appears, indeed, to be a common feature of the strategies considered, and the structure of the thesis will reflect this observation. It will be argued here that the privileging of the travelling body, as a means of re-authenticating travel 'after the end of travel', is an important and underacknowledged aspect of the specificity of twentieth-century French travel writing. Moreover, it will be argued that this privileging of the body is also an insufficiently problematized issue. It is a key objective of the present thesis, therefore, to address not only the distinctive corporeal strategies that French travel writers have demonstrated in response to the 'end of travel', but also the problematics of these strategies.

The next section provides a detailed overview of the themes explored in this thesis, the argument presented, and the methodology applied.

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[70] Jacques Lacarrière's schema of three forms of travel will be adopted here. Lacarrière distinguishes between *voyageants*, *voyagés* and *voyageurs*, and the distinctions appear to be based on travel practices that are posited as normative or non-normative. *Voyageants*, according to Lacarrière, are involved in perfunctory displacements which are not undertaken for their own sake, but only as a means to an end. *Voyagés* are tourists embarking on pre-arranged vacations; *voyageurs* are defined in opposition to those involved in displacements that are either perfunctory or passive: 'Dans un monde où tous les pays semblent être à notre portée, l'essentiel demeure: voyager n'est pas seulement se déplacer.' See Jacques Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', *Le Monde de l'Éducation*, May 1997, pp. 20-21

[71] Cronin, p. 133

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THESIS STRUCTURE AND CRITICAL METHODOLOGY

A tripartite structure has been adopted, comprising of an initial section that examines acknowledged major causes of the 'end of travel' relating to mass-cultural practices of travel, a central section investigating distinctive corporeal strategies for re-exoticizing travel, and a final section appraising the implications of largely or entirely unacknowledged constraints to travel in the contemporary period.[72] Each section is subdivided into two chapters, to allow for differentiation between contrasting approaches within the same category. Two of the chapters are subdivided further to accommodate the consideration of complementary but distinct phenomena.

Part One: The End of Travel

- Chapter Two: Tourism and Travel Writing
- Chapter Three: Contemporary Transport Technologies and Travel Writing

Part Two: Returns to the Body

- Chapter Four: Travel, Transvestism and Transsexuality
- Chapter Five: Walking Journeys

Part Three: Rethinking Corporeality, Rethinking Travel

- Chapter Six: Travel and Disability
- Chapter Seven: Science Fiction and Cybertravel

A methodological and thematic overview of each thesis part and chapter now follows. For each section, where applicable, a key precedent for the proposed treatment of the topic[s] will be summarized. It must be emphasized that the precedents identified are not necessarily key secondary resources for discussion within the main body of the thesis; rather, they are scholars whose work overlaps with, or forms an important precedent for, particular aspects of the present thesis. They are introduced here with a comment on the issues that they do not address, and they serve to situate the current study in the context of overlapping scholarship. All relevant primary and secondary resources are detailed within the main body of the thesis.

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[72] The period for consideration is the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. The last decade of the nineteenth century is also included where there is obvious thematic continuity.

1.6.1 TRAVEL PRACTICES AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Edward W. Said has presented an argument in favour of the application of interdisciplinary theories to fields including literature. The transfer of theories 'from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another' is validated by Said as a 'usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity.'[73] Interdisciplinary theoretical resources will be drawn on for the elaboration of the themes relevant to each chapter, for the purpose of delineating the wider theoretical contexts within and against which travel writers have been constructing understandings of travel:[74] these resources include Anglophone, as well as French, theories emerging from disciplines including sociology, geography, gender studies, tourism studies, disability studies and cultural studies.

The primary corpus for this thesis has been selected on the basis of the approaches to travel practice that are thematized by the authors concerned, and this has involved the juxtaposition of texts of vastly differing aesthetic merit. In the present thesis, as is the case in many similar studies, issues of aesthetic value are not addressed in detail, and textual practices are similarly elided, in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the thematization of travel practices and to accommodate a broad corpus of primary texts. The integration of analyses of textual and aesthetic characteristics of the primary corpus would ultimately be desirable but is outside the scope of the present study.[75]

Common to the treatment of each chapter topic is a discussion of existing approaches within studies in travel writing; an introduction to relevant theories originating outside the discipline of literary criticism; and a study of a corpus of primary texts selected for their engagement with and/or problematic relationship to the topic at hand. However, the proportion of these three core components will vary from topic to topic and from chapter to chapter, according to the extent to which a subject has been theorized across disciplines and represented in contemporary French travel writing; the

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[73] Edward W. Said, 'Traveling Theory', in Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, 2nd edn (London: Vintage, 1991), pp. 226-47 (p. 226).

[74] For a discussion of the inherently interdisciplinary nature of studies of cultural phenomena, see Stuart Hall, 'Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies' in *Rethinking Marxism*, 5 (2001), 10-18, p. 11. Compare also Kaplan, p. 6: 'Interdisciplinary cultural studies provides a framework for the pastiche of methodologies and approaches that characterize the modus operandi of this book. Neither literary criticism nor sociology per se, this work stages a number of questions about the way disciplines produce knowledge in order to create "imagined" textual spaces of criticism.'

[75] As a precedent for this treatment of aesthetic unevenness and the privileging of theme, see, for example, Sidonie Smith, *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing* (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2001). Smith juxtaposes French, North American and Australian women travel writers including Alexandra David-Néel and Irma Kurtz, a columnist for *Cosmopolitan* magazine

distribution of interest is in each case to be accounted for in this thesis. As mentioned in section 1.1. above, the present thesis responds not only to the under-recognition of thematic developments in twentieth-century French travel writing, but also to the question of an effective methodology for the reception of thematic/spatial aspects of travel writing. Priority will therefore be accorded to the elucidation of the interrelationship between travel writers, studies in travel writing, and interdisciplinary theories of travel. This marks a departure from existing interdisciplinary approaches to travel writing that incorporate theoretical resources for illustrative purposes, but do not comment on the method used, or address the extent to which the various sources reflect, contradict or problematize one another.[76]

Kerry Featherstone's unpublished PhD thesis, 'Not Just Travel Writing: An Interdisciplinary Reading of the Work of Bruce Chatwin', is a key precedent for the interdisciplinary approach of the present study. Featherstone proposes an interdisciplinary methodology for the analysis of 'identity-formation' in the works of Bruce Chatwin, on the grounds that exclusively literary-critical resources are insufficient for the reception of Chatwin's extensive thematization of identity. Featherstone reads Chatwin's texts in parallel with interdisciplinary theories concerned with identity formation: specifically, this involves the incorporation of a range of materials drawn from 'reflexive ethnography, globalization theory, reflexive modernization theory and consumer research, as well as from literary studies.'[77] Featherstone's methodology is designed for the interpretation of a single author's treatment of the specific theme of identity formation, although Featherstone anticipates that it is applicable also to the reception of other works of travel writing. 'Not Just Travel Writing' does not, therefore, indicate interdisciplinary resources relevant to considerations of travel practices; nevertheless, its demonstrates the viability of an interdisciplinary approach to the thematic study of travel writing.

1.6.2 PART ONE: THE END OF TRAVEL

The thesis begins with an exploration of two acknowledged root causes of the 'end of travel': respectively, the rise of mass tourism and the expansion and increased

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[76] A key example of such an approach is Sidonie Smith's *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing* (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2001) See section 1.6.4 below.

[77] See Featherstone, 'Not Just Travel Writing', pp. 1-4. For a detailed analysis of the value of elucidating the interrelationship of writers and theorists 'working within a continuous intellectual and historical environment in which ideas inevitably interact,' Stanley J. Scott's pioneering 1991 work is to be consulted. See Stanley J. Scott, *Frontiers of Consciousness: Interdisciplinary Studies in American Philosophy and Poetry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), pp. xii-xvii.

sophistication of mechanized transport. Although these phenomena are allocated separate chapters, it is recognized that there is significant overlap between the development of tourism and transport, and that the one has arguably been dependent on the other.[78] The separation of these subjects here is justified as follows: whilst tourism and transport are mutually associated with the banalization of travel, they also, individually, raise issues of importance, such as, for instance, the concern that the acceleration of transport is leading to the elision of displacement as a differentiated phase of travel. Further, the specificity of the responses of French travel writers to tourism and transport needs to be addressed: transport technologies have been renegotiated by travel writers independently of the question of tourism, necessitating the consideration of a different primary corpus, and the retention of separate chapters promotes clearer contextualization of the two distinctive primary corpora.

Paul Fussell's *Abroad* is a key precedent for the critical foregrounding of tourism and mass mechanized transport within a study of twentieth-century travel writing and the belatedness of the traveller. Fussell's approach to the 'end of travel' is, however, consciously retrospective, and this is consistent with his argument that the final age of travel writing is located in the past and that at the present time 'the idea of literary traveling must seem quaint and a book about it a kind of elegy' (p. 227). Fussell's approach to the 'end of travel' is therefore to deny that there are any subsequent developments worthy of discussion. Fussell's study does not therefore address contemporary approaches to travel, other than to make the generalization that tourism is the successor of travel. Fussell's rationalization of the current impossibility of travel is notable: travel, according to Fussell, requires 'variety of means and independence of arrangements' (p. 41); this is followed by the apparently flippant suggestion that 'perhaps the closest one could approach an experience of travel in the old sense today would be to drive in an aged automobile with doubtful tires through Roumania or Afghanistan.' (p. 41). Fussell does not pursue this line of enquiry – which might have suggested a number of more recent travel writings – but his interpretation of travel as a set of practices to which tourism and mass mechanized transport are antithetical, is a useful basis for approaching twentieth-century French travel writing.

Fussell excludes consideration of the significance of European colonial expansion and decolonization, as factors contributing to the 'end of travel'; although the present thesis replicates Fussell's position to the extent that it foregrounds issues of tourism and transport to the exclusion of issues of (de)colonization, it does so advisedly. The position

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[78] See section 1.3 above.

of this thesis is that (post)coloniality is an essential aspect of the politico-historical context of twentieth-century French travel writing, that is being temporarily elided to allow for a more thorough investigation of French travel writers' relationships to travel practices that are normative for a notional mass culture – a subject that is currently under-theorized.[79]

1.6.3 TOURISM AND TRAVEL WRITING

As the most heavily theorized source of the 'end of travel', the multiplication of 'tourists' and 'tourism' has been selected as the first topic for consideration in this thesis. A dichotomy of traveller *vs* tourist is by now a commonplace of studies in travel writing in both French and Anglophone contexts; on the other hand, there has been little recourse, in existing studies of travel writing, to the abundant theorization of tourism emerging from other disciplines. Equally, in asserting the mutually exclusive nature of the relationship between travel and tourism, critics have overlooked possible instances of non-conformity, in works of travel writing, with the norm of anti-touristic discourse. In response, the aims of this chapter are twofold: to evaluate the usefulness, or otherwise, of non-literary theories of tourism, as applied to the study of contemporary French travel writing; and to investigate whether tourism has been engaged with by contemporary French travel writers to negotiate an unexpected source of travel and exoticism.

A key precedent to this chapter's study of tourism and travel writing is James Buzard's *The Beaten Track*. In terms of primary material considered, Buzard's study is restricted to the consideration of Anglophone texts written in or before 1918, and does not therefore contribute directly to the study of French and/or contemporary travel writing. However, there is limited but important thematic and methodological overlap between *The Beaten Track* and the present thesis. *The Beaten Track* uses interdisciplinary resources including contemporary Anglophone theories of tourism, to examine an aesthetically and generically mixed corpus of texts drawn from 'literature, travel-writing, periodicals, and business histories' (p. 5). Literary analysis is prioritized, on the basis that tourism is a site of cultural representations. Travel writing is not, however, approached in *The Beaten Track* as a differentiated or privileged primary resource. As *The Beaten Track* is intended as an elucidation of nineteeth and early-

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[79] The use of the term '(post)coloniality' follows that of Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 1-5. For a bibliography of scholarly works relevant to the theorization of travel writing in this context, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

twentieth-century precedents for contemporary concerns about the democratic and institutionalizing aspects of tourism, it contributes useful analysis of the relationship between tourist and traveller that is of relevance to this thesis's study of the association between tourism and the 'end of travel'. However, in *The Beaten Track*, considerations of tourism are specifically approached for their ability to shed light on attitudes to 'culture' more generally, so the overarching focus of the study is the evolution of Anglo-American cultural paradigms.[80] In the present thesis, consideration is given to a wider selection of contemporary theories of tourism, and to the relevance of such theories to the study of twentieth-century travel writing in French.

1.6.4 CONTEMPORARY TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGIES AND TRAVEL WRITING

Chapter Three focuses on the transport technologies that underpin touristic practices and other aspects of the increased local and global mobility of a notional world population.[81] Mechanized transport – particularly the motor car – has been a popular focus of theorization within the social sciences, and historical and sociological studies of such transport are increasingly being integrated into studies in travel writing. The associated question of the acceleration of travel has also been theorized across the disciplines, although this has received less attention. Within studies in travel writing that contextualize primary texts in terms of the history of mechanized transport, there has been a tendency to emphasize normative usage, although mechanized transport and its associated infrastructural systems have been engaged with creatively by a significant number of French travel writers. Those scholars of travel writing who have addressed deviance from norms of transport use have focused on a small number of texts, a particular practice, or a particular decade. This chapter considers a broader range of texts in conjunction with interdisciplinary theories of speed, transport and displacement, to

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[80] An additional precedent requiring comment here is Charles Forsdick's *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity: Journeys Between Cultures*. Although presented as a single-author study, *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity* approaches its central subject – the evolution of Segalen's 'Aesthetics of Diversity' – in full recognition of the broad applicability of Segalen's texts to a wide range of studies, including studies of travel and travel writing. pp. 193-201 present the decline of exoticism in the context of the rise of tourism. The delineation of the implications of tourism and mass mechanized transport to the identity of the 'traveller' is a precedent to this thesis's recapitulation of traveller/tourist binaries in Chapter Two. This thesis extends considerations of anti-tourism to consider additional theoretical resources drawn from 'tourism studies', and the responses of additional twentieth-century French travel writers to the presence of mass tourism.

[81] For instance, the unanalysed referent of 'notre' that is implied by Jacques Lacarrière in his diagnosis of 'un monde où tous les pays semblent être à notre portée.' Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', p. 20.

attenuate understandings both of the limitations and of the potentialities that twentieth-century transport technologies have presented to French travel writers.

Sidonie Smith's *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing* has arguably provided the most important groundwork for the chapters of this thesis in which modes of transport are foregrounded. Smith has recently approached nineteenth- and twentieth-century women's travel narratives (this is Smith's generic categorization) in terms of the modes of transport that they feature, including travel on foot, on horseback, by car, coach, train, aeroplane and, speculatively, by computer. An aethetically uneven corpus of French, North American and Australian women travel writers is considered in conjunction with sociological and historical studies of transport, elucidating the implications of transport choice for subjective experiences of places and cultures. More specifically, the increasing sophistication and availability of transport technologies since the nineteenth century is theorized as an expansion of women's opportunities for travel, and the reappropriation, by women, of 'masculinist' technologies, is analysed. This landmark study of physical displacement, subjectivity and travel writing is unique in that it approaches travel writing specifically in relation to travel practices, reflecting the same minimal understanding of travel writing that is posited in the present thesis:

> It is precisely this aspect of travel, the 'how' of travel, that has engaged more and more of my attention, forcing me to think about how the new machines transformed space, time, and the subjects of travel. [...] If the mode of moving a body through space affects the traveler who moves through space as that body, then the mode of motion informs the meaning that the traveler sends back home in narration.[82]

There are two main difference between Smith's focus and the focus of the present thesis. Whereas Smith approaches nineteenth- and twentieth-century transport technologies in terms of the opening up of possibilities for travel for a particular sociological group – white, Anglophone and French, middle-class women – this thesis investigates the association of these same technologies with the exhaustion of travel. Accordingly, Smith demonstrates normative usage of mass mechanized transport by travel writers, whereas this thesis focuses specifically on unorthodox usage.

It is notable that, for the elaboration of issues of travel writing and the 'how' of travel, although Smith demonstrates the necessity of an interdisciplinary methodology by drawing on diverse secondary resources as mentioned above, she does not theorize or

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[82] Smith, pp. xi-xii.

problematize the methodology used, and does not comment on the interrelationship of the various primary and secondary sources examined.

1.6.5 PART TWO: RETURNS TO THE BODY

Having explored contemporary French society's normative travel-related practices – tourism and commuter/day-to-day displacements – the thesis considers two oppositional behaviours that have been reappropriated by twentieth-century French travel writers as a means of re-differentiating travel from mass practices of mobility. Practices of transvestism have been identified by Jean-Didier Urbain in *Secrets de voyage* as a feature of a number of French travelogues since the late nineteenth century; Franck Michel has theorized pedestrian travel as a privileged means of re-exoticizing travel, and has indicated the presence of travelogues thematizing this. There is a link between these two approaches to travel that is not addressed by Urbain and Michel: in both cases, the travelling body is engaged in behaviour posited as eccentric, and gains additional importance as the means to a particular experience of travel.

1.6.6 TRAVEL, TRANSVESTISM AND TRANSSEXUALITY[83]

The cultural and gendered cross-dressing practices represented by travel writers including Pierre Loti and Isabelle Eberhardt have received attention in a number of scholarly works, but there has been insufficient recognition of the use of transvestic travel practices by other, non-canonical, contemporary French travel writers, and a number of interdisciplinary theoretical resources of potential relevance remain unexamined. Additionally, the intersection between transvestic travel writing and transsexual autobiographies remains under-theorized in a French context. In *Secrets de voyage*, Urbain posits thematic continuity between transvestic travel writing and subjective narratives of surgical sex change, without comment on the status of the latter as travel writing. Anglophone theorists of transgenderism are currently investigating generic overlap between transsexual autobiographies and travelogues, without recognition of relevant French primary texts. This chapter addresses the continuing presence of transvestic travel strategies in very recent French travelogues, and examines previously unexamined interdisciplinary theoretical resources that would seem relevant to the reception of such texts, including works of feminist geography, journalism studies and postmodern cultural theories. Additionally, this chapter reassesses, in a

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[83] Terminology relating to transvestism and transsexuality will be defined and problematized in Chapter Four.

contemporary French context, the intersection of transsexual autobiography and transvestic travel writing in the light of innovations in feminist geography that could justify the theorization of transsexual autobiography as another category of body-focused travel writing in French.

In addition to *Secrets de voyage*, an important precedent for this chapter's theorization of corporeal travel and associated textual productions is to be found in *Writers of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, edited by James Duncan and Derek Gregory. In common with the present thesis, *Writes of Passage* proposes an interdisciplinary approach to travel writing in which the spatial, material and corporeal referentiality of travel writing is in focus. The editors align themselves with Mary Louise Pratt, prioritizing a consideration of the problematics of translating spaces into textual representations, and addressing the production of spaces of transculturation.[84] Although the majority of essays in this collection are accordingly concerned with (predominantly Anglophone) travel writing as a site of the articulation and renegotiation of colonial discourses, attention is also given to the theorization of gay travel out of the closet. 'Travelling through the closet' by Michael Brown shares thematic continuity with this chapter's theorization of sex changes as travel, as it examines changes to the condition of being a body in geographical space, and the status of such changes as travel.[85]

1.6.7 WALKING JOURNEYS

Although it is not possible to infer this from interdisciplinary studies of travel in which walking is addressed as a mode of transport, the thematization of domestic and international walking journeys has been a highly visible publishing phenomenon in France since the late twentieth century. This indicates a potential feature of French specificity, as there does not appear to be a resurgence, of equivalent scale, of interest in pedestrian journeys in Anglophone contexts. To date, the popularity of walking as a theme of contemporary French travel writing remains largely unanalysed, although there has been recent interest in walking as a sociocultural and anthropological phenomenon. The elucidation of contemporary French interest in this approach to travel is therefore a matter of critical importance. This chapter examines a sample of domestic and international walking journey travelogues in relation to theories of walking that emerge from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and cultural geography. Key issues in

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[84] See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[85] Michael Brown, 'Travelling Through the Closet', in *Writes of Passage*, pp. 185-99.

this chapter are the low velocities, high levels of corporeal engagement, and increased opportunities for interpersonal encounters, that are associated with pedestrian travel.

The privileging of walking journeys by recent French travel writers indicates an interest in body-powered, as opposed to mechanized, modes of travel. This raises the question of the implications, for the travelling subject, of intermediate transport modes that are both mechanical and body-powered. Cycling and rollerblading are considered in the final section of Chapter Five as key examples of such transport. A significant number of late-twentieth-century cycling journey travelogues in French are in evidence, and a detailed investigation of French thematizations of cycling would be desirable; however, within the limits of the present thesis, in order to allow for a more detailed analysis of the major publishing phenomenon of walking journey travelogues, discussion of cycling will be confined to the identification of convergences and divergences with pedestrian travel. Unlike cycling journeys, rollerblading has yet to feature as a theme within French travel literature; nevertheless, leisure and commuter practices of rollerblading have enjoyed marked popularity in France since the launch of the inline rollerskate in the mid-1990s. With reference to recent sociological studies of rollerblading, Chapter Five explores the possible implications of rollerblade displacements for travel writing. It is intended that the analysis of hybrid travel modes that integrate speed with corporeal effort will further elucidate the specificity of French walking journey travelogues in their contemporary sociocultural context.

1.6.8 PART THREE: RETHINKING CORPOREALITY, RETHINKING TRAVEL

This thesis examines twentieth-century travel writing in relation to travel practices; travel practices, as it has been mentioned above, ordinarily imply physical displacement, which in turn implies a travelling body. The first two parts this thesis demonstrate that a significant number of twentieth-century French travel writers are rejecting or renegotiating normative, mass travel practices such as tourism and motorized commuter journeys, in order to counteract the perceived indifference, passivity and banality of these practices. Strategies for reinstating travel as a differentiated source of experience have relied, to a greater or lesser extent, on the reinscription of corporeality into travel. The objective of the third part of the thesis is to challenge and problematize the corporeal bases both of the 'end of travel' and of key French strategies for the re-authentication of travel. Specifically, two virtually unacknowledged issues are to be raised: the implications of physical disability for the French travelling subject, and the spatial and temporal limits of able-bodied travel. Chapter Six will propose a re-reading of twentieth-

century French responses to the 'end of travel' in the light of theories of disability and the subjective narratives of French disabled individuals for whom an 'end of literal travel' may be in place. Chapter Seven considers the extent to which current conceptions of the 'end of travel' reflect the limitations of existing transport technologies, and how the real or imagined development of new modes of transport could influence travel writers in the future: this will involve consideration of science fiction and of information technologies such as the Internet and Virtual Reality.

The first two parts of the thesis privilege French travel writing, as the textual productions of authors for whom the differential term of *écrivains-voyageurs* is meaningful.[86] In the final section, the primary corpora examined may be theorized as twentieth-century French travel literatures. Subjective narratives of disability, and primary works of science fiction, give thematic prominence to issues of travel, and are approached here as essential constituents of the wider literary, sociocultural and theoretical context in which travel writers construct travelogues; they are not approached as generically identical to the travel writing texts considered in preceding chapters.

1.6.9 TRAVEL AND DISABILITY

While twentieth-century French travel writers and scholars of travel lament the 'end of travel' and develop new strategies for counteracting the perceived banality of travel, a number of physically disabled French subjects have written personal accounts of the loss of physical mobility following disabling accidents or illnesses. Their testimonies suggest that physical disability may amount to an 'end of literal travel' for individuals concerned. This chapter reassesses the effaced (im)mobilities of French disabled subjects by examining issues of travel in primary narratives of disability and in theories of disability. The extent to which these resources elucidate and/or problematize body-focused travel strategies such as pedestrian travel will be evaluated, and conceptions of the 'end of travel' will be relativized in the context of articulations of and 'end of literal travel.'

Urbain emerges as the only scholar of travel to have questioned the implications of physical disability for travel. However, Urbain's analysis of the subject is limited to the posing of a single, rhetorical question: 'Et Jean-Dominique Bauby, [...] lui non plus ne voyage-t-il pas?'[87] Nevertheless, the argument that contextualizes this question is

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[86] This is equivalent to Holland and Huggan's privileging of 'recent prose narratives [...] by writers who see themselves for the most part as specialists in the genre [of travel writing].' Holland and Huggan, p. x.
[87] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 111. Jean-Dominique Bauby, who will be considered in Chapter Six of the thesis, is a disabled French subject who has lost all mobility with the exception of one eyelid.

relevant for the study of travel and disability: Urbain is rejecting what he takes to be sociological overemphasis on the physical aspects of travel.

1.6.10 SCIENCE FICTION AND CYBERTRAVEL

Having considered physical disability as a constraint to literal travel, it is essential also to reassess the limits of able-bodied travel since the late twentieth century – limits that have scarcely received more attention in travel writing than those applicable to disabled subjects. Able bodies, as well as disabled bodies, are subject to spatial and temporal boundaries beyond which embodied travel is presently not an option; at the same time, new computer-based technologies are emerging, with the potential to reconfigure the role of the body in travel. In the first part of this chapter, theories and primary works of science fiction that focus on themes and issues of travel are examined, with a view to elucidating the assumptions of technological, corporeal and material reality that determine twentieth-century French perceptions of the limits of travel. Consideration is given to the strategies available to science fiction writers for the extension of possibilities for travel, and science fiction theories are investigated as a potential critical resource for the reception of travel writing, to the extent that they focus on the problematics of representing travel.

In the second part of the chapter, contemporary theorizations of information technology are considered in relation to the current and future possibilities of travel that such technologies may offer. In the context of Internet travel, Sidonie Smith and Michael Cronin have both reconsidered the corporeal basis of travel. The presence, in *Moving Lives* and *Across the Lines*, of final chapters dedicated to issues of the future of travel, creates a precedent for this thesis's analysis of new and hypothetical transport technologies in Chapter Seven:

> Nouveaux roman. Nouveaux philosophes. Nouvelle cuisine. Nouvelle société. Y aurait-il aussi des nouveaux voyageurs, une nouvelle façon de se déplacer, d'éprouver et de vivre le pressant désir d'être ailleurs?[88]

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[88] Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', p. 20.

Part One: The End of Travel

CHAPTER TWO: TOURISM AND TRAVEL WRITING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

> The age of global tourism seems to have foreclosed those forms of immortality and sources of meaning found in travel from the time of Gilgamesh, by generations who have thought to escape death by crossing space and recorded this feat in bricks, books and stories. Travel has been the medium of traditional male immortalities. That this is no longer so is disillusioning to many.[1]

If the *ère des communications de masse*[2] has enabled important increases in human global mobility, a particularly familiar aspect of this mobility has been the rise of widespread national and international tourism – that is, practices of leisure travel which are, to a greater or lesser extent, pre-organized by tour operators and marketed as a saleable commodity.[3] Within studies of travel writing, there is widespread evidence of a belief that tourism is itself responsible for the 'end of travel'. Jean-Didier Urbain has, in *L'Idiot du voyage*, completed an extensive study of the history of attitudes towards tourism: 'Pour beaucoup, le développement du tourisme signifie très tôt – dès le début de son expansion internationale [...] – rien de moins que la perte d'une authenticité: celle du voyage.'[4] According to Urbain, travellers blame tourism for having made travel less extraordinary – both in the sense that tourism has multiplied the number of people travelling, and in the sense that places and cultures are themselves stripped of exoticism in the process of being rendered amenable to tourists: '*Le voyageur reproche au touriste de banaliser le monde.*'[5]

Such interpretations would seem reductive to the extent that, if the *ère des communications de masse* has witnessed the implementation of a number of services and structures that have facilitated displacement to/from and temporary residence in most geographical locations, these developments can be attributed not only to the demands of a growing tourist industry but also to other aims such as commercial and imperialist expansion. Thus, it could be argued that the conflation of tourism with the 'end of travel' threatens to obscure the impact of the other, non-touristic, displacements that have

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[1] Eric Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991) p. 286.
[2] Moura, *Lire l'exotisme*, p. 23.
[3] This is a provisional definition, intended to reflect popular understandings of tourism. Definitions of tourism will be considered in more detail in section 2.2.
[4] Jean-Didier Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 199.
[5] Urbain, p. 59. See also Boorstin, p. 122: 'It is hard to imagine how further improvements could subtract anything more from the travel experience.'

increased in incidence within the same period.[6] Nevertheless, a consideration of the specific implications of tourism remains crucial, on account of the unique importance that has been accorded to questions of tourism within twentieth-century definitions of travel. Above all, travel writers and scholars of travel writing have tended to subscribe to a binary and hierarchical understanding of tourism as the inferior and derivative 'other' of travel.[7] Whereas the North American anthropologist James Clifford identifies a broad hierarchy of travel types, within which various forms of travel are polarized as either good or bad,[8] in the context of studies in travel writing, 'positive' and 'negative' travel are more often condensed into just two representative categories: 'travel' and 'tourism'. According to Urbain, this antithesis admits no blurring of boundaries – 'L'opposition entre touriste et voyageur est absolue' – and is, moreover, fundamental to the definition of travel as conceived by travellers themselves: 'En Europe, la distinction entre touriste et voyageur demeure dans l'opinion une inébranlable *différence de nature*. Cette différence est la clé de voûte d'une mythologie moderne du voyage.'[9] James Buzard has made the hierarchical aspects of this distinction more explicit, asserting that '"travel" acquires its *special value* by virtue of its differential relationship with "tourism."'[10] It is surely significant that of the many types of human global mobility in evidence since the mid-nineteenth century, it is tourism that has gained unique prominence as the 'other' of travel within a *mythologie moderne du voyage*. Certainly, analysis of this differential relationship has featured heavily in studies in travel writing, to the extent that the question of traveller *versus* tourist is now being dubbed a tired debate.[11]

Culturally and historically, there is little to suggest that anti-touristic attitudes are specific to twentieth-century France. Although in *L'Idiot du voyage*, Urbain does remark that France is a dominant player in the global tourism industry – 'Rappelons à cette occasion que la France, cinquième pays pourvoyeur de touristes du monde, en est aussi le premier pays récepteur' (pp. 11-12) – it would seem that, whether or not anti-touristic feelings run higher in France than elsewhere, anti-tourism is itself transnational in origin and impact. Urbain himself states that the traveller/tourist binary exists 'en Europe' rather than in France specifically; the scholarship of Daniel Boorstin, James Clifford and

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[6] Cf. Rachid Amirou, *Imaginaire touristique et sociabilités du voyage* (Paris: P.U.F., 1995), p. 11: 'Ce qui est vilipendé ce n'est pas le tourisme mais la masse, la quantité d'hommes auxquels le développement des sociétés modernes permet d'accéder à certains privilèges traditionnels de l'élite, comme le voyage à l'étranger.'

[7] See Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, pp. 9-10.

[8] 'Travel, negatively viewed as transience, superficiality, tourism, exile, and rootlessness [...]; travel positively conceived as exploration, research, escape, transforming encounters.' Clifford, p. 31.

[9] Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 52; p. 24.

[10] Buzard, p. 18; my italics.

[11] See, for example, Ian Littlewood, *Sultry Climates* (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 7.

James Buzard confirms that anti-tourism is equally prevalent in North America at the very least.[12] Additionally, Buzard's 1993 study of travel literature and anti-tourism indicates that the fundamental themes of anti-tourism predate the rise of large-scale, commercialized global tourism and its associated transport technologies:

> Visions of an engulfing ersatz cultural domain, totally administered or pre-packaged as spectacle, commenced neither with twentieth-century writers nor with modern theorists of the 'culture industry' or the 'society of the spectacle' or the 'simulacrum' – nor, for that matter, with Disneyland. Uncomfortable impressions that tourism destroys the 'sanctity' or unity of culture, supplanting it with a discrete tourist world of cliché and confirmed expectations, flourished alongside the nineteenth century's expansion of tourist institutions and services.[13]

Buzard is here proposing that, contrary to popular assumptions, anti-tourism did not begin in the twentieth century.[14] This does not, however, undermine the continuing relevance of issues of tourism to a thesis concerned primarily with innovations within twentieth-century and contemporary travel writing in French, as the twentieth century has witnessed a significant expansion in practices of tourism, and a corresponding intensification of anti-touristic sentiment.

Although the phenomenon of anti-tourism will be introduced and elaborated in this chapter as an essential context for understandings of twentieth-century French travel literature, a catalogue of anti-touristic features within French travel literature texts will not be included, as a comprehensive survey of such features has already been provided by Urbain in *L'Idiot du voyage*. Rather, the intention here is to supplement existing scholarship by investigating the application of theoretical work on tourism.[15] In the twentieth century, tourism has been the subject of innovative theorization, often independently of issues of travel writing. The usefulness of studies of tourism as a critical resource has largely been neglected by scholars of travel writing,[16] and will be addressed in this chapter, in relation to the following questions:

- What are the main features of twentieth-century anti-touristic thought?

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[12] See sections 2.2 and 2.3 below.

[13] Buzard, p. 11.

[14] Urbain makes the same point in *L'Idiot du voyage*: 'La "touristophobie", devenue aujourd'hui norme de comportement, n'est pas une réponse à la naissance des vacances populaires, et n'a attendu ni 1936 ni le développement des voyages touristiques vers des destinations lointaines. Le mépris du touriste précède le tourisme de masse et le choc des cultures suscité par le développement des transports internationaux' (p.26).

[15] For the purposes of this thesis, histories of vacation and leisure practices will be treated as separate from the theorization of tourism.

[16] A notable exception is Michael Cronin, who occasionally draws upon theories of tourism in his 2000 study of travel and isssues of language, *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation*. See below, section 2.2.

- How does tourism, as perceived by anti-touristic travel writers and literary critics, compare with twentieth-century theorizations of tourism generally? What are the implications of twentieth-century theories of tourism for definitions of travel, when travel is posited as essentially different from tourism?
- What are the implications, for French travel writing, of contemporary renegotiations of the travel/tourism binary?

It is hoped that by investigating a wider range of theoretical resources relating to tourism, it should be possible to identify and elucidate many of the issues with which recent travel writers have been engaging. In turn, this should aid recognition and understanding of current and potential future areas of thematic innovation in French travel writing.

2.2 TRAVEL WRITING AND ANTI-TOURISM

According to Rachid Amirou, French scholarship on the subject of tourism has been dominated by anti-touristic analysis:

> Il est tacitement admis dans l'univers de la recherche, que réfléchir sur le tourisme équivaut automatiquement à denoncer 'les méfaits du tourisme'; adopter une autre problématique n'est pas souvent compris et ceux qui s'y risquent se trouvent rapidement suspectés de sympathie envers l''ennemi' (à savoir: les marchands de voyages). Aussi, hormis quelques travaux anglo-saxonnes, existe-t-il peu d'écrits pertinents sur les touristes eux-mêmes (si on écarte bien sûr les essais dénigrant le touriste).[17]

Amirou goes so far as to theorize the existence of a *paradigme criticiste*, constituted by 'l'ensemble de ces propositions antitouristiques' (p. 21). The acknowledgement here of 'essais dénigrant le touriste' is a useful reminder that anti-touristic propositions serve not only to attest the belatedness of the traveller, but also to enforce ongoing distinctions between traveller and tourist by critiquing the attitudes, motivations and behaviours of the latter. It may usefully be added that anti-touristic propositions are by no means confined to dedicated 'essais', or even to written material – Jean-Didier Urbain has diagnosed 'touristophobie' as a European behavioural norm.[18]

The intention in this section is to provide an overview, necessarily suggestive rather than exhaustive, of the understandings of tourism and the tourist that emerge from

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[17] Amirou, p. 19.
[18] Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 26

anti-touristic writings on the subject. Texts of particular relevance include dedicated studies of anti-tourism and critiques of tourism, as well as primary travel literature texts. Studies of anti-tourism referred to here are those present in Jean-Didier Urbain's *L'Idiot du Voyage*, Adrien Pasquali's *Le Tour des horizons* and Rachid Amirou's *Imaginaire touristique et sociabilités du voyage*. Critiques of tourism mentioned include Victor Segalen's anti-touristic comments in *Essai sur l'exotisme*, Tzvetan Todorov's portrait of the tourist in *Nous et les autres*, and Daniel Boorstin's chapter on tourism in *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream*.

Adrien Pasquali has prioritized the complaint of superficiality as fundamental to anti-touristic perspectives: 'La critique générale portée contre le tourisme moderne ne tient-elle pas précisément au fait que cette pratique dévaluée du voyage est conditionnée par sa rapidité excessive, la superficialité par laquelle elle croit appréhender le monde?'[19] In one respect, the rapidity and superficiality attributed to tourism must be associated with the use of high speed transport technologies, which, it is claimed, have been assimilated into touristic practices.[20] The consequences of such technologies for all types of displacement have been theorized and represented extensively both within and outside studies in travel writing, and will therefore form the subject of a separate chapter of this thesis. At the same time, rapidity and superficiality are also associated with touristic attitudes and values, and this association is within the scope of the current chapter. It is arguably implicit in Segalen's conception of the kaleidoscopy of the tourist – 'L'exotisme n'est donc pas cet état kaléidoscopique du touriste et du médiocre spectateur, mais la réaction vive et curieuse au choc d'une individualité forte contre une objectivité dont elle perçoit et déguste la distance.'[21] Here, the tourist supposedly favours quantity of impressions over intensity, and this perspective – equivalent to mediocrity – precludes responsiveness to diversity.

In Todorov's portrait of the tourist, touristic rapidity and superficiality are combined with ocularcentrism and a lack of interest in intercultural dialogue. Todorov theorises the tourist as a sight-seer who is obsessed with taking photographs and has neither the time nor the inclination to interact with other people in the places visited:

> Le touriste est un visiteur pressé qui préfère les monuments aux êtres humains. [...] Le touriste cherche à accumuler dans son voyage le plus de monuments possibles; c'est pourquoi il privilégie

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[19] Pasquali, p. 23.
[20] See Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 135.
[21] Segalen, *Essai sur l'exotisme*, p. 43.

> l'image au langage, l'appareil de photo étant son instrument emblématique, celui qui lui permettra d'objectiver et d'éterniser sa collection de monuments. Le touriste ne s'intéresse pas beaucoup aux habitants du pays.[22]

The tourist's experience of travel is therefore supposedly impoverished on at least two counts: it involves a superficial, ocularcentric appreciation of cultures, and it excludes human encounters – as Todorov adds, 'Dans la perspective d'une relation avec les représentants d'une autre culture, elle [la pratique du tourisme] produit des résultats plutôt pauvres' (p. 454). As it was mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the human encounter has been valorized within twentieth-century travel literatures and theories as one of the main priorities of travel – 'Le voyage doit d'abord être une rencontre s'il veut rester un voyage.'[23] By neglecting human interaction, the tourist supposedly forfeits a more profound understanding of cultures, and this aspect of tourism is therefore arguably a corollary of the question of touristic superficiality. There is, however, a paradox: the tourist is simultaneously denigrated for gregariousness within a homologous group constituted by other tourists.[24] This paradox is well illustrated by Patrick Segal in his 1977 work, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*:

> La route longe les plages où les hippies du monde entier sont venus se dorer au soleil, et fumer tranquillement leurs drogues. Traverser le monde pour ça, et refuser toute tentative de communication, quel gâchis! Qui plus est, ils ont loué des scooters et des mobylettes dont les pétarades et les fumées polluent l'air et le silence miraculeusement préservés.[25]

It is explained that the 'hippies' in question are European tourists who have been transported by coach from hotels to beaches. Implicit in this picture is interaction within the touristic group; however, such interaction is devalorized and denied interpretation as 'communication'. As an independent traveller, Segal, by contrast, encounters Balinese individuals, and is therefore not implicated in cultural 'gâchis'.

According to Urbain, as well as being considered superficial and gregarious, the tourist is criticized for failing to distinguish between the genuine and the fake, and is, moreover, suspected of being content with artifice:

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[22] Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), pp. 453-54.
[23] Michel, p. 66.
[24] Cf. Segalen's pejorative portrayal of tourists as pack animals, p. 65: 'Troupeaux errants: Il s'agit ici des touristes; et des moyens dont on peut s'en preserver.'
[25] Segal, Patrick, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, 2nd edn (Paris: Unide, 1985), p. 169.

> Grégaire, superficiel, confondant mensonge et vérité, trompe-l'oeil et réalité, le touriste est cet itinérant parti à la recherche des signes typiques d'un pays qui, sans sourciller, accepte (en retour du coût de sa visite) de se faire payer en monnaie de singe.[26]

As such, tourists are in a good position to enjoy a world that has supposedly been falsified and caricatured for their benefit: 'Le tourisme surgit ici comme une vaste opération de *falsification du monde* qui, au fil de l'aménagement matériel et humain de son infrastructure, déforme tout et toujours plus' (p. 199). This argument recalls Boorstin's earlier complaint that the multiplication of itineraries has detracted from the authenticity and excitement of experiencing travel:

> The multiplication, improvement, and cheapening of travel facilities have carried many more people to distant places. But the experience of going there, the experience of being there, and what is brought back from there are all very different. The experience has become diluted, contrived, prefabricated.[27]

For Boorstin, contemporary travel facilities indulge the tourist's fundamental passivity: 'The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him' (p. 94). The 'interesting things' are however entirely predictable – 'people go to see what they already know is there' (p. 123). Boorstin suggests that whilst this situation may be satisfactory for tourists, travel writers on the other hand are being deprived of external stimulus and have to resort to subjective interpretation as a source of originality in travel literature: 'The only thing to record, the only possible source of surprise, is their own reaction' (p. 123).

In summary, then, the 'paradigme criticiste' principally diffuses understandings of the tourist as a passive, superficial, gullible traveller who eschews intercultural contact in favour of gregariousness with other tourists; it also reflects understandings of tourism as a destroyer of exoticism and cultural sanctity. In the late twentieth century, there have been a few attempts to redress anti-touristic attitudes by valorizing touristic motivations and indicating similarities between traveller and tourist. In *L'Idiot du voyage*, for example, Jean-Didier Urbain underlines the tourist's essentially commendable desire for new experiences. Although Urbain is sympathetic towards tourists, he does not, however, go so far as to revoke distinctions between traveller and tourist altogether. On the other

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[26] Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, pp. 200-01.

[27] Boorstin, p. 88. Segalen, writing much earlier than Boorstin, is more optimistic here. Although the question of tourism depleting global exoticism is already present, Segalen concludes that the subtler sources of exoticism will remain uncontaminated by tourism since tourists favour degraded, obvious or caricatural features of place – 'Et si le tourisme diminue vraiment l'exotisme des pays, c'est que celui-ci était une forme un peu grosse, commode, et qu'on peut la leur laisser en pâture en se réfugiant sur des sommets plus glaciaires' p. 66.

hand, such a step would appear at first glance to have been taken by Holland and Huggan, who provocatively entitle their 2000 study of travel writing *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. The authors justify their choice of title with the comment that travel writers are implicated in the very processes that they despise: 'Few, of course, are prepared to view themselves as being tourists, even though the advantages they reap here are all too palpable, all too real.'[28] However, Holland and Huggan go on to reinstate the travel/tourism binary by arguing that the title of their book is actually unfair to the extent that travel writers engage with the places they visit in a more original way:

> To see contemporary travel writers *merely* as touristic scribes – as latter-day tourists with typewriters – is to fail to recognise their efforts to reexplore regions of the world that, although 'discovered', remain unfamiliar, or to revive interest in familiar places, now seen from a fresh, informed perspective. (p. 3)

Where travel and tourism are more radically de-differentiated in studies of travel writing, this de-differentiation seems to reflect impatience with critical overstatement of traditional binaries, rather than a considered dismantling of oppositions. In *Sultry Climates*, Ian Littlewood explains that he uses the term 'tourism' to designate both travel and tourism: 'I use the word to cover foreign travel that is undertaken voluntarily and for personal rather than professional reasons.'[29] Littlewood does not analyse this de-differentiation, but simply presents sex as a point of convergence between travel and tourism. The conflation of travel and tourism is then reflected by the interchange of terminology in his work:

> Modern *sex tourism* in fact plays little part in the chapters that follow, for its entry into the mass-market has added nothing to what is revealed by *earlier travellers*; but the questions it raises have obvious relevance. Most of the figures with a major role in this book behaved in ways that now excite public indignation: they went abroad and paid for sex, often with young people. It is pointless either to disguise this fact or to dress it up as something else. I have no interest in writing an apology for *eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sex tourism*, but nor do I intend to spend much time condemning it. (pp. 5-6; my italics.)

Littlewood expresses impatience with critical interest in distinctions between travel and tourism generally, and it is unclear as to whether he would endorse de-differentiation of these categories beyond the specific context of sex tourism.

Another critic who departs from the conventional separation of travel and tourism is Cronin, who, in *Across the Lines*, treats 'travel and tourism' as mutually relevant

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[28] Holland and Huggan, p. xiii.
[29] Littlewood, p. 7.

categories to be considered simultaneously in relation to language, thus: 'Critical writing on travel and tourism has [...] largely neglected this fundamental aspect of travelling – the relationship of the traveller to language.'[30] This statement may be considered misleading in its failure to problematize the grouping together of categories theorized by many as diametrically opposed. Whilst Cronin draws on an impressive and unusually wide range of interdisciplinary resources including theories of tourism, travel literature and linguistics, he apparently decides to ignore the issue of whether separate terminology should be retained for the differentiation of tourists from travellers. This results in some problematic paraphrases – for example, Dean MacCannell's ideas about the tourist, as expressed in *The Tourist*,[31] are summarised by Cronin with the substitution of 'traveller' for 'tourist', as follows: 'Dean MacCannell sees contemporary travellers as typically in pursuit of authenticity and "authentic" experiences' (p. 94). This substitution is highly problematic, as MacCannell makes these points with specific reference to traditional misconceptions about a figure explicitly referred to as the tourist.

Frank Michel, by contrast, attempts to justify his own merging of the categories of travel and tourism. In *Désirs d'ailleurs*, Michel implies that the resources that have been set in place for the purposes of mass travel are the legacy of all contemporary travellers, however they choose to define themselves – 'Sans moyen de transport, sans hôtel, sans agence, sans guide de voyage, donc sans service et sans confort, le voyageur ou le touriste moderne serait encore un explorateur!'[32] Thus, in a discovered, domesticated world, tourist and traveller resemble one another but differ from the pioneering explorers of previous centuries. For Michel, this is a reason for abolishing traditional distinctions between traveller and tourist. Michel deliberately uses the terms 'voyageur' and 'touriste' interchangeably, as well as substituting both terms with the new coinages 'le touriste-voyageur' and 'le badaud-flâneur' (p. 49), based on Jean Chesneaux's description of the differences in rhythm and emphasis between tourism and travel:

> L'un ne cherche qu'à 'faire' des lieux dont la liste est établie par avance; l'autre, même s'il sait les mérites de tel site prestigieux, laisse venir à lui les bruits de la rue, les odeurs des marchés, et jusqu'aux petites annonces de la presse locale. Il va tenter d''entrer', si rapide que soit son passage, dans la vie simple des simples gens.[33]

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[30] Cronin, pp. 1-2.
[31] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999 [1976])
[32] Michel, p. 24.
[33] Jean Chesneaux, *L'Art du voyage* (Paris: Bayard, 1999), p. 65.

Such terminological innovations have yet, it would seem, to enter into the vocabularies of contemporary French travel writers. It is apparent that even the most contemporary of French travel writers continue to uphold traveller/tourist binaries by denigrating the tourist as the inferior 'other' of the traveller; thus Bernard Ollivier, writing in 2000, laments moments of overlap with touristic experience: 'Et me voici forcé, comme un vulgaire touriste, de marcher sur cette route aussi impersonnelle qu'internationale.'[34] *Longue marche* is itself evidence of a need to scrutinize the persistence of anti-touristic attitudes on the part of travel writers, since Ollivier frequently betrays reliance on the rights of the tourist, declaring, for instance: 'Attendez. Je suis un touriste. Je visite votre pays. Que me reprochez-vous? Suis-je en état d'arrestation?' (p. 190).

Anti-touristic conceptions of the relationship of travel to tourism are fraught with such paradoxes, which are identified both by Jean-Didier Urbain and by Holland and Huggan.[35] It remains, however, to question anti-touristic definitions of tourism, which, it would seem, are categorized by a number of vague stereotypes and rigid generalizations. Is 'tourism' as homogeneous and readily definable as these propositions would suggest? Do these propositions adequately categorize twentieth-century tourism or is their importance largely rhetorical, as a benchmark against which to define 'travel'? As mentioned in the preceding section, tourism has, in the twentieth century, been the subject of independent research and theorization within the discipline of Tourism Studies. This area of study, which remains, with little exception, largely unexplored by scholars of travel literature, may be the source of a more complex and detailed understanding of tourism than that which is available at present in studies in travel writing. It is possible that such analyses of tourism could further understandings of the parameters within/outside which contemporary travel writers are working. This section lays foundations for such an approach to travel writing studies by identifying issues in Tourism Studies that may be of relevance.

2.3 THEORIZING TOURISM

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION TO TOURISM STUDIES

What are Tourism Studies? According to Chris Rojek and John Urry, the increasing academic accreditation of Tourism Studies as a discipline is problematic, given the fundamental difficulty of defining tourism itself as a meaningful entity:

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[34] Bernard Ollivier, *Longue marche* (Paris: Phébus, 2000), p. 260.
[35] In, respectively, *L'Idiot du voyage* and *Tourists With Typewriters*.

> We will begin by demarcating the very category of 'tourism'. Is there such an entity? Does the term serve to demarcate a usefully distinct sphere of social practice? Where does tourism end and leisure or culture or hobbying or strolling begin? [...] [Tourism] embraces so many different notions that it is hardly useful as a term of social science, although this is paradoxical since Tourism Studies is currently being rapidly institutionalised within much of the academy.[36]

Rojek and Urry argue that whereas in the early- and mid-twentieth century, tourism was associated with particular spatiotemporal practices that were distinct from other cultural practices, by the late twentieth century, the boundary between tourism and culture had dissolved. This merging of categories has been theorized as part of a wide-ranging 'post-modern cultural paradigm' involving 'a de-differentiation between all sorts of social and cultural spheres which were previously distinct' (p. 3). According to Rojek and Urry, the primary motive of those wishing to retain the terms 'tourism' and 'travel' as descriptive of 'clear and identifiable processes "out there"' (p. 2) is that of facilitating conventional social science explication of these topics. Whilst Rojek and Urry reject the reduction of tourism to any single set of definitions, they do propose the theoretical usefulness of studying 'a wide range of phenomena which are characteristically viewed as "touristic"' (p. 2).[37]

Within studies of touristic phenomena, issues of (dis)embodiment and sociability have been extremely popular subjects of analysis. Broadly speaking, there has been a tendency to theorize tourism as a set of practices biased *against* corporeal experience and against the interpersonal encounter, although, very recently, the alleged disembodiment and impersonality of touristic experiences has been contested.[38] Many assertions about tourism have been problematized by recent recognition of the evolving nature of touristic

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[36] Chris Rojek and John Urry, 'Transformations of Travel and Theory' in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997), pp 1-22 (p. 1).

[37] Franck Michel occupies a similar position: 'Cette définition [celle du 'tourisme'] reste assez vague et tend à nous montrer qu'il n'existe pas un touriste-type ou une forme de tourisme donnée, mais des touristes et des tourismes. Par tourisme, on entend donc, entre autres, l'ensemble des activités liées aux déplacements touristiques, mais les définitions sont innombrables et varient considérablement selon l'angle d'approche choisi.' Michel, p. 25. It should nevertheless be noted that references to 'tourism' and 'tourist' as singular entities are widespread and normative. Even Clifford, who gives considerable thought to the terminology of displacement, readily speaks of 'tourism' and 'tourists' without commenting on the ambiguity of these phenomena. (Clifford, p. 66.) In fact, this chapter concerns both 'tourism' and tourisms (touristic practices/phenomena), as on the one hand, there will be consideration of the relationship between travel literature and theories of touristic practice, and on the other hand, it has been demonstrated that generalized notions of 'tourism' and 'the tourist' have had a significant impact on travel literatures and theories.

[38] See below, and Simon Coleman and Mike Crang, 'Grounded Tourists, Travelling Theory', in *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, ed. by Simon Coleman and Mike Crang (New York: Berghahn, 2002), pp. 1-20.

practices, with certain scholars heralding both the end of tourism, and the age of post-tourism.[39] These ideas will be explained in more detail below.

2.3.2 THE MODERNITY AND/OR POSTMODERNITY OF TOURISM

Within late-twentieth-century theoretical work on tourism, much emphasis has been placed on the centrality of consumption to touristic practices – in other words, the 'close linkage between commodification, consumerism and tourism'.[40] The interest in tourism as a consumptive phenomenon can be situated in the context of broader cultural analyses that theorize a general condition of consumerism in contemporary society.[41] Baudrillard's 1970 argument is paradigmatic: 'Nous sommes au point où la "consommation" saisit toute la vie, où toutes les activités s'enchaînent sur le même mode combinatoire.'[42]

As a branch of consumer culture, tourism has been associated with particular settings that invite consumptive behaviour: George Ritzer and Allan Liska, for instance, point to 'the enormous popularity of [...] Disney World, Las Vegas, cruises, shopping malls and fast-food restaurants' as tourist destinations.[43] Ritzer and Liska are among many theorists of tourism who consider the consumptive focus of touristic practices to be symptomatic of postmodernism – 'Post-modernism has long been linked with the consumer society' (p. 103). It has been acknowledged, however, that tourist destinations are not limited to those listed above: John Urry, for example, signals a recent trend for nature and the 'natural'. Urry argues that even nature-based tourism conforms to postmodern patterns of consumption:

> On the face of it this attraction of the countryside seems to have little to do with postmodernism; indeed it looks like its very antithesis. [...] But I shall suggest here that there is indeed a relationship, albeit complex, between postmodernism and the current obsession with the countryside. [...] To the extent to which contemporary appropriations of the countryside involve

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[39] See below, and John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995)

[40] George Ritzer and Allan Liska, '"McDisneyization" and "Post-Tourism": Complementary Perspectives on Contemporary Tourism' in *Touring Cultures*, pp. 96-112 (p. 103).

[41] It should be noted that although tourism is widely held to be a consumptive phenomenon, there exists a specific category of 'consumptive tourism' which designates a particular set of touristic practices. Thus, Laura Lawton and David Weaver state: 'Although all tourism activities incorporate elements of consumption, consumptive nature-based activities per se are generally perceived as those that intend to offer not just experiences to the participant, but also tangible products. [...] Hunting and fishing [are] the commonest forms of consumptive tourism.' 'Nature-Based Tourism and Ecotourism', in *Tourism in the 21st Century: Lessons from Experience*, ed. by Bill Faulkner, Gianna Moscardo and Eric Laws (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 34-48 (p. 36).

[42] Jean Baudrillard, *La Société de consommation* (Paris: Denoël, 1970), p. 23.

[43] Ritzer and Liska, pp. 107-08.

> treating it as a spectacle, even a 'theme', this can be seen as a postmodern attitude to the countryside, to be contrasted with an approach which emphasises its 'use'. [44]

Urry's reference to 'spectacle' is crucial: the prevalent understanding of consumption in the context of tourism is that it is a primarily visual process. Urry is himself credited with having brought the notion of the tourist gaze to the forefront of studies of tourism.[45]

> Consumption in the case of many tourist services is a rather complex and inchoate process. This is because what is the minimal characteristic of tourist activity is the fact that we look at, or gaze upon, particular objects, such as piers, towers, old buildings, artistic objects, food, countryside and so on. The actual purchases in tourism [...] are often incidental to the gaze. [...] Central to tourist consumption then is to look individually or collectively upon aspects of landscape or townscape which are distinctive.[46]

Urry's theory of the tourist gaze would appear to be an extension of a long-standing conception of tourism as sight-seeing, which is also current within anti-touristic writing, as discussed in section 2.2 above.[47] It has been argued that within this model of tourism as a process of visual consumption, the activity of the individual tourist is extremely limited. In the first place, the society of the spectacle is associated with observation rather than direct participation – 'Tout ce qui était directement vécu s'est éloigné dans une représentation.'[48] Secondly, the dual condition of the society of the spectacle and consumer society is said to have brought about a state of affairs in which 'modern subjects are all essentially consumers in the sense that both their desires and the means of fulfilling them are structured by a system in which the most individuals can do is make choices'.[49] If the tourist accordingly 'tends to be theorised as decoder of products,

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[44] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), pp. 97-98.

[45] See David Crouch, 'Surrounded by Place: Embodied Encounters' in *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, pp. 207-218.

[46] Urry, *Consuming Places*, pp. 131-32.

[47] '[The tourist] goes "sight-seeing" (a word, by the way, which came in about the same time, with its first use recorded in 1847)' Boorstin, p. 94. Compare also Todorov, p. 454: 'Le touriste cherche à accumuler dans son voyage le plus de monuments possibles; c'est pourquoi il privilégie l'image au langage, l'appareil de photo étant son instrument emblématique, celui qui lui permettra d'objectiver et d'éterniser sa collection de monuments.'

[48] Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967), p. 9. See also Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997)

[49] Slater, pp. 126-27.

production and their representation', this is understood to be a passive and disembodied role, performed by a 'decentralised observer'.[50]

Given that sight-seeing came to be associated with tourism more than a century before the advent of postmodern theory – and, indeed, assuming that, as Urry claims, 'tourism has always involved spectacle',[51] a query is raised as to whether contemporary tourism should be theorized as a symptom of postmodern paradigms such as the society of the spectacle and the consumer society. Echoing Buzard's analogy between Victorian culture and the society of the spectacle, Urry characterizes all tourism as 'prefiguratively postmodern because of its particular combination of the visual, the aesthetic, and the popular'.[52] However, the theoretical division of tourism into two or more distinct phases complicates discussions about tourism and postmodernism. If a notional first-wave tourism is analysed in terms of its close linkages with postmodernity, what is to be understood by the further differentiation of recent tourism under categories including 'postmodern tourism', 'post-tourism' and 'the End of Tourism'?

Urry's analysis of the history of tourism implies that whereas earlier tourism can be associated with postmodernity because of its bias towards consumption and visual culture, final-phase tourism also reflects some additional features of postmodern society, including a convergence between everyday and touristic experiences, and a postmodern emphasis on diversity and eclecticism. According to Urry, touristic practices have evolved in relation to evolving economic and political emphases, as follows. Urry recognises a preliminary phase of 'liberal capitalism', in which travel was restricted to wealthy individuals; this is followed by a phase of 'organised capitalism' during which 'organised mass tourism' flourished; 'organised capitalism' has now supposedly been superseded by a contemporary situation of 'disorganised capitalism' which is resulting in

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[50] Crouch, pp. 207-208. See also Boorstin, p. 94. Crouch has however been among the first theorists to argue that such an analysis of tourism is unrealistically clinical and that the importance of the gaze in tourism has been overstated. Crouch reinscribes corporeality into tourism by arguing that tourism involves multisensory engagement with multidimensional places and that claims to the contrary are based on an erroneous conflation of actual touristic experiences with experiences of looking at pictures and photographs: 'In thinking of the subject as embodied we are necessarily taken beyond a one-dimensional reading of texts and representations across an inert space. Tourist places, unlike paintings and posters with which they are too often elided in analysis, are multidimensional. [...] We discover the world in tourism "with both feet" and figure sensual and mental and imaginative evidence together.' Crouch's assertion of the embodied subjectivity of the tourist does not contradict the interpretation of tourism as consumption: rather, it suggests that within tourism, consumption does not only involve images and a consuming gaze.

[51] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 86.

[52] Note that Dean MacCannell also suggests that the tourist may have been prefiguratively postmodern. MacCannell's emphasis differs, however: 'Much of the material that would eventually be analyzed under the heading "postmodern" already put in an appearance in *The Tourist*. [...] Perhaps "the tourist" was really an early postmodern figure, alienated but seeking fulfillment in his own alienation – nomadic, placeless, a kind of subjectivity without spirit, a "dead subject."' Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999 [1976]), introduction to the 1989 edition, p. xvi.

a notional 'end of tourism' due to the infiltration of touristic phenomena into everyday existence:

> If disorganised capitalism involves the predominance of culture, consumption, the global, the local and concern for the environment, then all these characterise contemporary travel and hospitality. Disorganised capitalism then seems to be the epoch in which, as tourism's specificity dissolves, so tourism comes to take over and organise much contemporary social and cultural experience. Disorganised capitalism then involves the 'end of tourism'. People are tourists most of the time whether they are literally mobile or only experience simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images.[53]

Contemporary tourism, then, conforms with Lash's definition of postmodernism as 'a regime of signification whose fundamental structuring trait is "de-differentiation"'.[54] Organised tourism, on the other hand, is associated with 'modern' social, cultural and economic norms: Jeff Poon has argued that tourism has witnessed changes reflecting a shift from Fordist to post-Fordist patterns of consumption, in which standardization is no longer the ideal.[55] It is claimed that within 'disorganised capitalism', holiday camps and other highly prescriptive, regulated package tours popular until the early 1980s have fallen into decline as a new generation of tourists are demanding greater choice and flexibility. The theorization of mass package tours as Fordist problematizes the categorization of twentieth-century tourism as prefiguratively and figuratively postmodern to the extent that such tours can be aligned with modernist paradigms, and it is apparent that such tours have in fact yet to disappear even in the twenty-first century, even though they now coexist with newer alternatives.[56] There is therefore a need to recognize the potential relevance of both modernist and postmodernist concepts within twentieth-century Tourism Studies.

A useful contribution to this area of enquiry is Ritzer and Liska's theory of the 'McDisneyization' of tourism, which builds on Ritzer's earlier thesis of the 'McDonaldization' of society as a whole – that is, '*the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world.*'[57] According to Ritzer, all aspects of contemporary life, including travel, have been influenced by four core objectives held by McDonalds and other fast food restaurants. These objectives are as follows: efficiency,

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[53] Urry, *Consuming Places*, p. 148.
[54] S. Lash, *Sociology of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 11.
[55] See Urry, *Consuming Places*, p. 150.
[56] See Crouch.
[57] George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society: an Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1996), p. 1. (Author's emphasis.)

predictability, control, and the replacement of human with non-human technology. Ritzer claims that 'the package tour represents the McDonaldization of travel' (p. 96), and this idea is developed in the subsequent theory of 'McDisneyization', in which Disney and other theme park tourisms are presented as 'paradigms of this process'.[58]

In '*The McDonaldization of Society: an Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life*', Ritzer examines the intersection between modernist and postmodernist paradigms within McDonaldization, concluding that McDonaldization fulfils Jameson's criteria for postmodernism but only because such criteria are merely a continuation of aspects of modern society:

> Thus, McDonaldization fits Jameson's five characteristics, but perhaps only because he sees postmodernity as simply a late stage of modernity. [...] McDonaldization shows no signs of disappearing and being replaced by new, postmodern forms. *It is a highly rational modern phenomenon yielding, among other things, extremely rigid structures.*[59]

With Liska, Ritzer revisits this issue in '"McDisneyization" and "Post-Tourism": Complementary perspectives on contemporary tourism'. Here, the relevance of the four key 'modern' features of McDonaldization is still upheld in relation to tourism; however, inauthenticity and sign-consumption within Disney tourism are cited as symptoms of postmodernism. Ritzer and Liska also differentiate between contemporary and earlier tourisms by emphasizing the increased choice and eclecticism available to tourists today, and the considerable overlap between touristic experience and everyday experience. In this analysis, therefore, the de-differentiation of tourism and everyday life is theorized specifically as an effect of the McDonaldization of society, and is again associated with a notional 'end of tourism' –

> McDonaldization is undermining the fundamental reason for tourism. That is, if people have in the past toured to experience something new and different, and if tourism itself, as well as the locales to which one journeys, are McDonaldized, then there is little or no reason to tour. Could it be that the McDonaldization of tourism will eventually mean its own demise? (p. 98)

Don Slater identifies the paradox that even though individuals respond to a habitual abundance of stimuli with a 'blasé attitude' of indifference and disillusionment – 'a sense that all this variety is somehow the same' – they also simultaneously desire further intensification of the same paradigms in order to refuel their will to consume: 'It is precisely this exhaustion that prompts the individual to demand even greater stimulation

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[58] See Ritzer and Liska.
[59] Ritzer, p. 159; my italics.

in order to overcome the indifference.'[60] Similarly, although Ritzer and Liska raise the question of a logical 'end of tourism' based on cultural de-differentiation, they claim that tourism will nonetheless survive the conditions outlined above, on account of a 'relentless search for inauthenticity' on the part of tourists. Theme park tourism, it could be argued, will continue to meet such a need for 'even greater stimulation' of the same order as the 'bewildering sensorium of ever changing stimuli' ordinarily characteristic of consumerist, image-focused culture.

There has been debate amongst theorists of tourism as to whether tourists seek authentic experiences or inauthentic experiences, and whether, in either case, they are able to differentiate between the real and the fake.[61] Conclusions drawn by theorists with regard to these queries contribute to evaluations of the postmodernity of the tourist. At one end of the spectrum, Dean MacCannell presents the argument that, contrary to allegations that tourists are content with superficial, inauthentic experiences, tourists are actually in search of authenticity: 'All tourists desire this deeper involvement with society and culture to some degree; it is a basic component of their motivation to travel.'[62] MacCannell argues that tourists aspire to gain access to authentic social spaces, which may be considered in terms of 'back regions', as opposed to 'front regions' which are visible to all; however, instead of reaching 'back regions', tourists are frequently confined to 'staged back regions', which offer the illusion of authenticity but are in fact artificial constructs. The regions from front to back are theorized as a continuum of seemingly increasing authenticity, of which the desired pole – the authentic social space – is only ever exposed fleetingly. MacCannell claims that the sophistication of the structuring of touristic spaces can make it difficult to differentiate between authenticity and staged authenticity, and that it is not unambiguously the case that other types of traveller are necessarily able to penetrate a genuine, unstaged setting. He also suggests the possibility that in some locations, there may not be an authentic space at all, but merely an 'infinite regression of stage sets' (p. 105). Thus, according to MacCannell, the purported failure of tourists to engage profoundly with cultures should not be seen as a reflection of touristic frivolity, but as an inevitable consequence of the structure of touristic settings, which have been designed to accommodate outsiders' desires for an intimate understanding of places, whilst protecting the sanctity of insider culture.[63]

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[60] Slater, p. 105.
[61] Ritzer and Liska assert that 'the issue of authenticity is central to the literature on tourism' (p. 107).
[62] MacCannell, p. 10.
[63] MacCannell situates his argument in opposition to that of Daniel Boorstin, who, in *The Image*, accuses tourists of being satisfied with superficiality

The extremes of inauthenticity implied in MacCannell's idea of the tourist setting as an 'infinite regression of stage sets' anticipate critical interest in the hyperreality of touristic experience. In *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981), Jean Baudrillard theorizes Disneyland as a hyperreal tourist location characterized by simulations that do not refer to any actuality:

> Disneyland est là pour cacher que c'est le pays 'réel', toute l'Amérique 'réelle' qui *est* Disneyland. [...] Disneyland est posé comme imaginaire afin de faire croire que le reste est réel, alors que tout Los Angeles et l'Amérique qui l'entoure ne sont déjà plus réels, mais de l'ordre de l'hyperréel et de la simulation. [...] L'imaginaire de Disneyland n'est ni vrai ni faux, c'est une machine de dissuasion mise en scène pour régénérer en contre-champ la fiction du réel.[64]

The implication here is that hyperreal constructs are difficult to distinguish from reality: the Disney tourist is not necessarily able to differentiate between authenticity and inauthenticity. In MacCannell's analysis of staged authenticities, the tourist's manner of engaging with artificial constructs is similarly naïve. An alternative approach to questions of authenticity and inauthenticity has been to credit tourists with greater awareness of the various forms of artifice encountered within experiences of tourism.

If Dean MacCannell theorizes the tourist as a seeker of authenticity confined to a web of staged realities, David Chaney considers the tourist to be the complicit, self-aware audience of obviously artificial representations: 'The audiences for tourist places interact with the presentations staged for their entertainment as forms of production – not as passive dupes, nor as pilgrims, or as colonialists commanding a view.'[65] Similarly, Maxine Feifer has theorized the existence of the post-tourist/post-modern tourist.[66] The post-tourist is under no illusions as to the artificial and commercialized characteristics of tourism, but embraces touristic experiences in a spirit of playfulness and ironic detachment:

> The post-tourist knows that he is a tourist: not a time traveller when he goes somewhere historic; not an instant noble savage when he stays on a tropical beach; not an invisible observer when he visits a native compound. Resolutely 'realistic', he cannot evade his condition of outsider. (p. 271)

Although this interpretation posits tourism as a quest for inauthenticity, it constitutes a sympathetic theorization of tourism to the extent that tourists are ascribed intelligence

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[64] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris: Galilée, 1981), pp. 25-26.
[65] David Chaney, 'The Power of Metaphors in Tourism Theory', in *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*, pp. 194-206 (p. 204).
[66] See Maxine Feifer, *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day* (London, Macmillan, 1995). The terms are used interchangeably within Feifer's study.

and independence of judgement. This dissolves anti-touristic binaries of the enlightened traveller and unenlightened tourist.[67]

The theorization of touristic (in)authenticities has focused on the relationship between tourist-observer and staged setting/spectacle. David Chaney complains that, although apposite, theorization of tourism as interaction with staged settings or spectacles has perpetuated notions of the primacy of the tourist gaze within practices of tourism. Chaney's argument suggests that redemptive theories of tourism should reassess the implications of the gaze, as well as analysing the (in)authenticity of its object and the intelligence of the gazing subject. According to Chaney, the metaphor of the tourist gaze is objectionably one-sided and imperialist, even in the context of self-aware post-tourism:

> In gazing, the audience is contemplating from outside, they are looking at something in a way that commands. [...] The gaze in its untroubled authority is masculine in the presupposition that it articulates normality, and imperialist in the way it appropriates other cultures. [...] Even the ironic gaze of the postmodern post-tourist, while savouring the impossibility of authentic engagement, still assumes that 'his' gaze commands the fabrications of others.[68]

Chaney argues in favour of a revised metaphor: the metaphor of the tourist glance. This, he claims, implies a relationship that is more playful and less commanding. Similarly, it acknowledges the reciprocity of interaction between 'performer' and 'audience' – 'Crucially, glancing is a form of interaction through an exchange of glances – the participants are, in principle, on an equal footing and in some sort of dialogue' (p. 200).[69] It is notable that Chaney attempts to reinstate the presence of human interaction within experiences of tourism, whilst retaining an understanding of tourism as consumption – 'Tourists *are* consumers of the public places of other culture';[70] it is more often argued that within consumer culture, relationships with objects take precedence over human contact. This point will be elucidated in the following section, which considers current theorization of the social aspects of tourism.

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[67] Boorstin's analysis of touristic credulity in *The Image* is considered by Dean MacCannell to be the paradigm of this form of anti-tourism. (See MacCannell, pp. 105-107.)
[68] Chaney, p. 199.
[69] Cf. Coleman and Crang, pp. 7-8: 'The ubiquitous idea of the gaze has proved useful in tourism studies, but is also limited by its static, auratic quality [...] and the fact that it does not take into account the answering "gaze" of those being viewed. [...] Thus, the dynamics of who is looking at whom, and what is being staged, need to be unpacked.'
[70] Chaney, p. 200; my italics.

2.3.3 INTERPERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF TOURISM

Baudrillard characterizes consumer society as a society in which human presence is overlooked, due to the overriding influence of objects and signs:

> Nous vivons moins, au fond, à proximité d'autres hommes, dans leur présence et dans leurs discours, que sous le regard muet d'objets obéissants et hallucinants qui nous répètent toujours le même discours, celui de notre puissance médusée, de notre abondance virtuelle, de notre absence les uns aux autres.[71]

The idea of the increasing impersonality of contemporary consumer culture has become commonplace in postmodern theory. Don Slater signals 'the conventional point that mediated experience (signs, media, images) increasingly replaces real face-to-face interactions, and so the social bond is effected through the logic of signs'.[72] Where tourism has been theorized as a set of consumptive practices, there has been some attempt to emphasize the human interaction that is nonetheless involved in associated transactions. Coleman and Crang, for instance, argue that shopping, taken to be a high-priority practice within tourism, is a significant source of interpersonal contact: 'Spending time at shops in tourism [...] includes much more than consumption and it becomes possible to speak of engaged and expressive body space, human interaction and so on.'[73] Boorstin has presented this point from another angle: shopping and tipping are the *only* sources of intercultural dialogue in modern tourism –

> The traveller used to go about the world to encounter the natives. A function of travel agencies now is to prevent this encounter. They are always insulating the tourist from the travel world. [...] A well-planned tour saves the tourist from negotiating with the natives when he gets there. [...] Shopping, like tipping, is one of the few activities remaining for the tourist. It is a chink in that wall of pre-arrangements which separates him from the country he visits. No wonder he finds it exciting. When he shops he actually encounters natives, negotiates in their strange language, and discovers their local business etiquette.[74]

Implicit in this analysis is the useful point that within consumer culture, the tourist is able to purchase not only goods but also services: specifically, in this example, the services of tour guides and tour operators who mediate intercultural relations by making arrangements on behalf of the tourist. Thus, whilst it would appear that tourism brings tourists into contact with people who mediate or provide services, the basis of this contact is mercantile.

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[71] Jean Baudrillard, *La Société de consommation*, pp. 17-18.
[72] Slater, pp.199-200.
[73] Coleman and Crang, p. 215.
[74] Boorstin, p. 100.

Contemporary sex tourism has been read in this light: although it is possible to theorize sex tourism as a form of tourism that prioritizes a particular type of human encounter, this area of tourism has received critical interest in terms of its implications as a consumptive practice involving the purchase of sexual services. In 'Sex Tourism: the complexities of power', Jan Jindy Pettman argues that tourism in general 'provides experiences to be consumed',[75] and that, within sex tourism, the consumed product is sex with 'Third World' prostitutes – 'enabling travelling men to purchase and play out their racialised sexual fantasies' (p. 113). While Pettman presents sex tourism as the purchase of a product, Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola theorize the transaction involved as the purchase of services. Jokinen and Veijola define the 'sextourist'[76] as a man[77] who 'criss-crosses the globe to get sexual and emotional satisfaction *with the help of women* (to a lesser extent, men) of another ethnicity; often to avoid social and moral consequences in his own culture.'[78] In spite of their slight differences in emphasis, Pettman, and Jokinen and Veijola, all suggest that within sex tourism, contact with prostitutes is not represented in terms of interpersonal encounter. Thus, Pettman claims that the experiences of the prostitutes themselves are largely elided within studies and representations of sex tourism, and Jokinen and Veijola claim that the 'sextourist' is not 'interested in the encounter, as such, with the other/strange' (p. 47).

Although theorists of tourism indicate that encountering people from other cultures is not a priority for tourists, there has been significant emphasis within Tourism Studies on the importance of other types of sociality. Specifically, tourism has been theorized as a group practice. According to Urry, it is group interaction that structures and gives meaning to the consumption that is central to tourist activity:

> It is crucial to recognise how the consumption of tourist services is social. It normally involves a particular social grouping, a 'family' household, a 'couple', or a 'group'. [...]
> At least part of the social experience involved in many tourist contexts is to be able to consume particular commodities in the company of others. [...] The satisfaction is derived not from the individual act of consumption but from the fact that all sorts of other people are also consumers of the service and these people are deemed appropriate to the particular consumption in question.[79]

Resort tourism or *villégiature* is presented as the paradigm case of sociable tourism. David Crouch claims that resort tourism of various types demonstrates 'profound

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[75] Jan Jindy Pettman, 'Sex Tourism: the complexities of power', in *Culture and Global Change*, ed. by Tracey Skelton and Tim Allen (London: Routledge, 1999), pp 109-116 (p. 112).

[76] Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola, 'The disoriented tourist: the figuration of the tourist in contemporary cultural critique', in *Touring Cultures: Transformations in Travel and Theory*, pp. 23-51.

[77] Jokinen and Veijola make the point that the 'sextourist' in usually male, and retain male pronouns accordingly.

[78] Jokinen and Veijola, p. 47; my italics.

[79] Urry, *Consuming Places*, p. 131.

sociality and practice of body-space'; for Crouch, touristic sociality is to be understood in terms of Maffesolian tribal practice.[80] This is similar to Jean-Didier Urbain's interpretation of sociality in beach *villégiature*: 'Ici, par choix ou par nécessité, le vacancier renoue avec une fraternité de base, le schème tribal.'[81] Whereas Urbain allows a degree of ambiguity as to whether the group sociality patterns within *villégiature* are a matter of 'choix' or 'nécessité', Rachid Amirou foregrounds such patterns as a specific objective of the tourist/*villégiateur* – 'Ce qui amène l'individu à partir s'inscrit dans une quête sociétale.'[82] Like Urbain and Crouch, Amirou emphasizes the importance of assimilation within groups, and considers the holiday resort in terms of a site for group interaction:

> Nous constatons, paradoxalement, que le touriste fuit un espace fermé pour un autre encore plus clos, au sens propre comme au figuré: la bulle touristique. Cependant, le fait d'être accepté dans cette 'bulle' représente une victoire en soi pour certains individus. L'essentiel est d''en' faire partie. (p. 236)
>
> Dans le tourisme organisé, le sentiment d'appartenance affective à un 'Nous', à une communauté, est la condition nécessaire à la pleine réussite des vacances. (p. 239)

Unlike Urbain and Crouch, however, Amirou theorizes tourism as a form of pilgrimage on the basis of such interaction – 'La sociabilité pèlerine constitue une sorte de matrice-mère de la sociabilité communielle de vacances' (p. 242). This argument has important implications for whether or not group sociality within tourism should be considered in terms of same/same interaction or same/other interaction: for Amirou, pilgrimage and touristic group sociality both involve the temporary unification of a notionally *heterogeneous* group:

> Comme le note Alphonse Dupront, 'la société du pèlerinage est une société confondue, donc une société sans catégories ni différences, où ages, sexes, hiérarchies, et même clercs et laïcs se retrouvent dans une communion'. On retrouve le même imaginaire dans les clubs de vacances. (p. 242)

By contrast, Urry emphasizes that resort tourism is associated with the grouping together of people from very similar sociocultural backgrounds. According to Urry, 'The resort was based on a family-regulated holiday for people of roughly the same class and from similar areas.'[83] Urry implies that in this respect, resort tourism takes its root in modern as opposed to postmodern capitalist society; thus, the supposed transition to postmodern

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[80] Crouch, p. 213. See M. Maffesoli, *Times of Tribes* (London: Sage, 1996).
[81] Jean-Didier Urbain, *Sur la plage* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1996), p. 252.
[82] Amirou, p. 236.
[83] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 102.

society has reconfigured identity formations and has thereby detracted from the popularity of such tourism:

> With the postmodern dissolving of social identity, many of these forms of group identification within space and over time have vanished, and this has reduced the attractiveness of those resorts which were designed to structure the formation of pleasure in particular class-related patterns. (p. 102)

It is apparent that in spite of Urry's 1990 observations above, the social interaction patterns described in this section have yet to fall into obsolescence – David Crouch's 2002 theorization of resort tribalism attests the continuing popularity of 'holiday camps [...], Club Mediterranne [*sic*], trekking and skiing holidays and the youth lager culture caricatured in Southern Spain'.[84] Nevertheless, the changing face of tourism has been the subject of recent theorizations and it is necessary to consider the implications of this, especially given that literary anti-tourism would seem not to differentiate between recent and early practices of tourism.

2.3.4 THEORIZING TOURISM: SOME CONCLUSIONS

At first glance, there would appear to be extensive convergence between popular themes within anti-touristic discourse, and key issues in Tourism Studies, with the obvious difference that in the latter discipline these issues are for the most part presented neutrally rather than as rationalization for unfavourable attitudes towards tourists. Thus, anti-touristic denunciation of superficiality correlates with scholarship on the primacy of visually consumptive behaviour in tourism, and anti-touristic preoccupations with inauthenticity and gregariousness also have their counterparts within Tourism Studies. It is notable that anti-touristic critiques of the consumerism of tourism and of the low-priority status of human intercultural contact within tourism remain effectively uncontested by theorists of tourism. However, anti-touristic descriptions of tourism seem unacceptably static and homogenizing when read against theories of tourism that promote recognition of the evolving nature of touristic practices, and theories that reassess issues of passivity, disembodiment, self-awareness and the primacy of the gaze in tourism.

The given overview of themes in Tourism Studies would, additionally, indicate two important, related areas of overlap between studies of tourism and studies of travel: definitional crises surrounding the notion of 'travel', as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, correlate with contemporary deconstruction of the term 'tourism', the

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[84] Crouch, p. 213.

meaningfulness of which as a set of delimitable practices is currently a matter of debate; similarly, concerns about the 'end of travel' are mirrored by issues of an 'end of tourism', and both of these 'ends' may be understood in terms of fears of a loss of specificity, ascribable to a postmodern cultural paradigm of de-differentiation.

It is expected that the above introduction to twentieth-century tourism will inform readings of contemporary French travel literature in either or both of the following ways: by elucidating innovative usage of the 'touristic' as a theme within travel texts; and, conversely, by indicating challenges facing the travel writer who wishes to innovate whilst continuing to disassociate travel from tourism in accordance with existing, definitional binaries.

2.4 DE-DIFFERENTIATING TRAVEL AND TOURISM: TOURISTIC TRAVEL WRITING IN FRENCH?

> Evidemment, le touriste, c'est toujours l'autre.[85]

Can touristic itineraries form the basis of a travelogue, or is the treatment of tourism confined, within travel writing, to the expression of anti-touristic sentiment?[86] Before considering possible thematic convergences between travel writing and tourism, it is as well to note that even tourists are reluctant to be identified with the practices of tourism. As Urbain has illustrated in *L'Idiot du voyage*, the mythology of travel and tourism as respectively superior and inferior has supposedly entered into the imagination of tourists themselves: 'C'est là le premier paradoxe de ce loisir: 'Moi, touriste, jamais!'" (p. 209). Recent tourist literature has pandered to the tourist's desire to be disassociated from tourism by emphasising 'unspoilt' locations in which it will be possible to avoid 'mainstream' tourists. It is also notable that, in France, some editors are creating a deliberate alignment with travel literature in order to raise the profile of tourism in the eyes of tourists. *Le Goût de Barcelone*, for example, is at once an anthology of brief literary travelogues about Barcelona, written by authors including Paul Morand and Théophile Gautier, and a contemporary guide book for people intending actually to visit

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[85] Amirou, p. 18.

[86] This section is concerned with the thematization, in travel writing, of established tourist sites or itineraries, not with the tracing of new tourist sites, or with the juxtaposition of touristic behaviour with unlikely settings. The thematization of commuter itineraries/public transport is addressed in the next chapter.

Barcelona.[87] At the end of each literary extract, up-to-date, practical tourist information is provided so that the reader can recreate the itineraries described by the authors featured. The tourist is given the illusion that in visiting Barcelona for a few days, he/she is following in the footsteps of esteemed travellers rather than in those of unimaginative package tourists.

> Théophile Gautier, Eduardo Mendoza, [...] et bien d'autres vous invitent ici à découvrir quelques-unes des multiples facettes d'une ville toujours changeante, à travers sa gastronomie, ses habitants et ses lieux les plus symboliques. Pour ceux qui souhaitent déguster sur place le goût de Barcelone, un petit guide pratique en fin de volume renferme les principales informations utiles à la réussite de leur voyage.[88]

The volume concludes with a bibliography of publications by Mercure de France, in which guidebooks from the *Le Goût de...* series appear in the midst of titles of works of travel literature, literary fiction and poetry. The reader is therefore encouraged to align touristic research with literary research.

If the compilers of tourist information are now embracing themes and discourses of literary travel, it is unsurprising that the converse is less than usual, given that, supposedly, '"travel" acquires its special value by virtue of its differential relationship with "tourism"'.[89] It is more to be expected that travel writers would shun associations with tourist information – an attitude well illustrated by, for example, the Anglophone travel writer Bettina Selby, who is suitably indignant when the suggestion is made that her travelogue might resemble a tourist guide book:

> **Q. You are not writing a guide book, are you?**
>
> **A.** No, I'm certainly not.[90]

Touristic itineraries could nonetheless function as the subject of a literary travelogue: this possibility has been accounted for in theory within Holland and Huggan's statement that travel writers 'reexplore regions of the world that, although "discovered", remain unfamiliar, or [...] revive interest in familiar places, now seen from a fresh, informed perspective'[91] – the discovered, familiar places in question could legitimately include

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[87] Jean-Noël Mouret, *Le Goût de Barcelone* (Paris: Mercure de France, 2002). At present, five other guides are available in the same series, focusing on the cities of Lisbon, Venice, Brussels, Palermo and Seville. The definition of 'guide book' in this thesis follows Michel, p. 157: 'Le livre guide, publié pour "aider et informer" le voyageur dans l'organisation de son périple.'

[88] Mouret, rear cover.

[89] Buzard, p. 18.

[90] Santiago Henríquez-Jiménez, *Going the Distance: An Analysis of Modern Travel Writing and Criticism* (Barcelona: Kadle Books, 1995), p. 48.

[91] Holland and Huggan, p. 3.

any number of popular tourist destinations. However, although tourism has received some attention within contemporary French fiction,[92] the number of French travelogues conspicuously thematizing tourist itineraries is extremely limited, and these travelogues benefit from a further subdivision according to whether or not their convergences with touristic phenomena are acknowledged as such by the authors concerned. Michel Butor's *Mobile: étude pour une représentation des Etats-Unis*, on the one hand, offers the portrayal of consumerist, image-focused, impersonal experience specific to travel within the United States of America. Whilst *Mobile* usefully reflects a number of features of tourism theory, this overlap with tourism is not actually commented upon by the author. By contrast, Marc Augé's *L'Impossible voyage: le tourisme et ses images* and Marc Boulet's 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé' are both explicitly concerned with touristic experience – in the former work, the subject is contemporary French theme park and resort tourism, and in the latter, contemporary sex tourism is explored. An acknowledged precedent to these itineraries is Umberto Eco's *Travels in Hyperreality*, which gives the account of a guidebook-led journey through North America, and may usefully be considered alongside examples of tourism-focused travel writing in French.

To consider first a relatively early French travel text in which homology with touristic experience is clearly identifiable, Butor's *Mobile* affirms the presence of tourism to the extent of listing tourist infrastructure such as '*Allerton Hotel, 843 chambres,/ Hotel Ambassador Est et Ouest,/Hotel Atlantic, 400 chambres*', and quantifies visitors to tourist attractions – '*L'Empire State Building: 35 000 visiteurs par jour, venant de tous les pays du monde*'.[93] This evidence of mass tourist activity is underlined by a direct allusion to the tourist industry – 'HOLIDAY HOLIDAY HOLIDAY HOLIDAY HOLIDAY HOLIDAY' (p. 486). However, in *Mobile*, the presence of tourism is mostly undifferentiated from other trajectories, which provide a backdrop of constant, anonymous displacement, as in the following phrases: '*Les trains qui viennent de New York./ Les trains qui vont vers San Francisco*' (p. 84). Similarly, the itinerary implicitly followed by the narrator – a journey across the United States of America structured according to the alphabetical order of state names – is presented as arbitrary rather than popular or conventionally touristic. There is, therefore, no particular emphasis on touristic trajectories over and above other mass practices of displacement. On the other hand, thematic homology with phenomena considered to be touristic is

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[92] Notable examples include Michel Houellebecq, *Plateforme*; Lydie Salvayre, *Les Belles âmes*, Georges Simenon, *Touriste de bananes*.

[93] Michel Butor, *Mobile: étude pour une représentation des Etats-Unis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), p. 84; p. 486.

frequently in evidence. For example, the proliferation of hyperreal spectacles for purchase is identifiable in details such as the sale of wallpaper that turns walls into windows that look out onto scenes of choice:

> Par l'intermédiaire de Sears, Roebuck & Co., grand magasin par correspondance dont l'activité s'étend sur l'ensemble des Etats-Unis, vous pourrez vous procurer 'trois superbes décorations murales en dramatiques couleurs intégrales... d'idylliques paysages américains transforment votre mur en une fenêtre ouverte sur le monde'. (p. 79)

Equally, the insistent reiteration of American franchises and brand names offering predictable goods from one state to another is highly suggestive of the McDonaldization of society. This is conveyed most memorably in the example of the Howard Johnson restaurants – in every state visited, it is noted that 'vous pourrez demander, dans le restaurant Howard Johnson, s'ils ont de la glace à [certain flavours]'.[94]

Butor's narrative technique of cataloguing surface detail without description or interpretation aligns the travel writer's observations with the uncritical sight-seeing mode of tourists theorized earlier in this chapter. The following list serves as an illustration:

- merveilles de la nature
- villages indiens,
- sites historiques,
- routes pittoresques,
- itinéraires, (p. 16)

The rapidity with which the features of place are passed over indicates a stereotypically touristic appreciation of cultures; similarly, the presence of such a check-list suggests that the structures are in place to permit such an experience of travel – that is, geographical locations have been adapted to provide spectacles for touristic consumption. However, this superficial, depersonalized narration should also be seen as a reflection on the transport technologies on which this journey implicitly depends – *Mobile* can be read as a narrative of motorized displacement.[95] Equally, this text cannot be limited to an exploration of tourism, as the accumulation of surface detail is also arguably used to provide an ironic comment on other aspects of American society, such as racial segregation in 1950s America. For example, when Butor reappropriates the range of ice cream flavours featured in the context of the Howard Jones motif to trivialize perceptions of the diversity of the American population – 'Une énorme

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[94] Butor, p. 26 *et passim*.
[95] See Chapter Three of this thesis and Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique*.

Plymouth grise conduite par une vieille Blanche très jaune en robe cassis à pois cerise avec un chapeau à fleurs chocolat' (p. 86) – this can be considered to achieve various results: he may be mimicking touristic superficiality by adopting a trivial, objectifying approach to human diversity; he may also be exposing the blandness of American goods diversity and abundance; and he may be ironizing the presence of 'whites only' and 'blacks only' restrictions in American society by revealing the arbitrariness of criteria for segregation. It would therefore seem appropriate to consider tourism as one of a number of elements present in *Mobile*, and to acknowledge the overlap between the presentation of various American cultural paradigms here with phenomena elsewhere theorized as touristic, without overstating the centrality of tourism itself as a theme in this work.

The most explicit adoption of tourism as a central theme occurs in Marc Augé's 1997 work, *L'Impossible voyage: le tourisme et ses images*, which is initially presented as a collection of travel narratives – 'On peut les considérer [les textes réunis dans ce volume], en somme, comme des récits de voyage.'[96] This categorization is, however, problematized by a section title of 'REPORTAGES', which precedes the first so-called *récit de voyage* in this volume, and by chapter titles such as 'Un *ethnologue* à Disneyland'.[97] This shift in generic labelling could be read in any or all of the following ways: a refusal unambiguously to accord descriptions of theme park and resort visits the dignity of travel literature; an endorsement of the postmodern blurring of 'high'/elite and 'low'/popular culture – specifically, a statement of the equivalence of journalism and travel writing in the late-twentieth century; a statement of the interdisciplinarity of travel itself, acknowledging links with the domains of literature, journalism and ethnography; a wish to vindicate an individual's practice of tourism by presenting it as an academically useful exercise in ethnography – undermined, however, by a trivializing comment about attempting to 'aller jouer les ethnologues à Disneyland' (p. 21).

In reality, Augé makes no pretence of trying to valorize touristic practices in this work. In the first place, his visits to destinations including Disneyland, Center Parcs and Mont-Saint-Michel are situated within the context of the author's regret about the end of a more worthwhile type of travel: 'L'impossible voyage, c'est celui que nous ne ferons jamais plus, celui qui aurait pu nous faire découvrir des paysages nouveaux et d'autres hommes, qui aurait pu nous ouvrir l'espace des rencontres' (p. 13). Augé reinstates tourism as antithetical and detrimental to travel: 'Et nous, qu'avons-nous fait de nos

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[96] Marc Augé, *L'Impossible voyage: le tourisme et ses images* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1997), p. 15.
[97] Augé, p. 21; my italics.

voyages et de nos découvertes? Quel plaisir pourrions-nous prendre aujourd'hui au spectacle stéréotypé d'un monde globalisé et en grande partie misérable?' (p. 14). Having stated that it is no longer possible to travel to undiscovered places and open oneself up to human encounters, Augé explores the contemporary substitute for travel that is organized tourism. In *L'Impossible voyage*, he replicates journeys that have been made by millions of French and international tourists, and gives an account of such journeys from the point of view of a traveller – one who laments 'travel agencies' as 'les premières responsables de la mise en fiction du monde, de sa déréalisation d'apparence – en réalité, de la conversion des uns en spectateurs et des autres en spectacle' (p. 14). These are very specific objections to tourism, reflected, in the component 'récits de voyage', by a consistent emphasis on hyperreality and on the primacy of the objectifying gaze, as will now be illustrated.

'Un ethnologue à Disneyland' presents Disneyland Paris as the paradigm case of hyperreality, consumer society and the society of the spectacle:

> Nous vivons une époque qui met l'histoire en scène, qui en fait un spectacle et, en ce sens, déréalise la réalité. [...] Cette mise à distance, cette mise en spectacle n'est jamais si sensible que dans les publicités touristiques qui nous proposent des 'tours', une série de visions 'instantanées' qui n'auront jamais plus de réalité que lorsque nous les 'reverrons' à travers les diapositives dont nous imposerons au retour la vue et l'exégèse à un entourage résigné. A Disneyland, c'est le spectacle lui-même qui est mis en spectacle. (p. 32)

Augé rationalizes the attraction of Disneyland in terms of its ability precisely to fulfil expectation – 'C'était sans doute cela le premier plaisir de Disneyland: on nous offrait un spectacle en tout point semblable à celui qu'on nous avait annoncé. Aucune surprise' (p. 27). This interpretation of Disneyland corresponds precisely with Ritzer's theory of McDonaldization, according to which predictability is a core feature of late-twentieth-century experience. The same observations are also made with reference to the popular French seaside resort 'La Baule', where Augé is amazed to discover that the reality of the location is exactly as film and media images have led him to expect – 'Le plus étonnant, pourtant, à quelques détails près, c'était la conformité du lieu à l'image qu'en avait donnée le film.'[98] Predictability and the conformity of reality to image is found consistently to characterize all the touristic practices explored by Augé in this volume; however, in the case of Disney tourism, Augé emphasizes the hyperreality of the spectacles in question, on the grounds that Disneyland provides images and replicas of objects that have no referent in reality: 'Le voyage à Disneyland, du coup, c'est du tourisme au carré, la quintessence du tourisme: ce que nous venons visiter n'existe pas'

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[98] Augé, p. 37. The film in question is *La Baule – les pins*. Dir. Diane Kurys. Europa Films. 1990.

(p. 33). Augé is thus confirming Baudrillard's earlier theorization of Disneyland in *Simulacres et Simulation* and Umberto Eco's diagnosis of hyperreality in American society, including Disneyland, as described in *Travels in Hyperreality*. The following extract from *Travels in Hyperreality* demonstrates the similarity of argument:

> In this sense, Disneyland is more hyperrealistic than the wax museum, precisely because the latter still tries to make us believe that what we are seeing reproduces reality absolutely, whereas Disneyland makes it clear that within its magic enclosure it is fantasy that is absolutely reproduced. [...] What is falsified is our will to buy, which we take as real, and in this sense Disneyland is really the quintessence of consumer ideology.[99]

Intertextual indebtedness to Eco is made explicit, as Augé states that the practice of tourism involves confronting those images which contribute to the 'effets d' "hyperréalité" qu'Umberto Eco décrivait aux Etats-Unis dès les années 1970' (p. 12). As mentioned previously, *Travels in Hyperreality* also serves as a precedent to *L'Impossible voyage* to the extent that Eco, like Augé, is following in the footsteps of tourists – this is revealed by occasional mention of the guide book to which Eco is referring, for instance: 'The words, as the guidebook explains, mean 'House of John in Venetian dialect' (p. 26). It is notable that whereas Eco largely exoticizes the hyperreality of American culture,[100] *L'Impossible voyage* draws French culture into the same equation and diagnoses a global phenomenon of falsification that may entail the end of travel:

> Cette expansion [de Center Parcs] ne s'arrêtera que le jour où, l'ensemble du monde développé étant devenu fictif, les centres de distraction ne pourront plus que reproduire la réalité, c'est-à-dire la fiction. Au sens générique, Center Parcs est l'avenir du monde. (p. 71)

Although *L'Impossible voyage* explicitly prioritizes the theme of hyperreality, it is apparent that Augé's presentation of touristic experience also reflects other heavily theorized aspects of contemporary tourism. In particular, *L'Impossible voyage* perfectly illustrates conceptions of tourism as tribalist and collective: for instance, Augé notes the formation of solidary groups at Center Parcs: 'Je me trouvai paradoxalement un peu seul. Les groupes étaient déjà constitués' (p. 58). Nonetheless, the traveller's conventional

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[99] Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, trans. by William Weaver (London: PAN, 1987), p. 43.

[100] The abundance of simulations encountered by Eco are specifically attributed to American culture and rationalized as the product of a young nation lacking the rich cultural and historical heritage of Europe – 'The frantic desire for the Almost Real arises only as a neurotic reaction to the vacuum of memories, the Absolute Fake is offspring of the unhappy awareness of a present without depth' (pp. 28-29). Points of overlap with European culture are only presented exceptionally and somewhat ironically, for example: 'But, having said this, we must in fairness employ this American reality as a critical reagent for an examination of conscience regarding European taste. Can we be sure that the European tourist's pilgrimage to the *Pietà* of St. Peter's is less fetishistic than the American tourist's pilgrimage to the Pietà of Forest Lawn (here more accessible, tangible at close range)?' (p. 39).

dislike of such social formations is retained, as Augé expresses typical non-identification with touristic collectivity:

> J'allais tomber sur tous les écoliers de France et de la Navarre – proximité babillarde dont la seule idée me donnait des sueurs froides. [...] J'imaginais sans enthousiasme les longues heures qu'il me faudrait bientôt passer dans la foule solitaire à trembler au spectacle du grand huit. (p. 21)

It would seem that the writer continues to consider himself as notionally separate from other tourists engaging in the same activities, to the extent that intermingling with a perceived mass of tourists is presented as a deliberate act rather than an inevitable aspect of the situation. When Augé comments: 'Je préférais, pour ma part, me mêler à la marée des visiteurs qui montaient inexorablement vers l'abbaye' (p. 80), it is significant that he does not see himself as an intrinsic part of the 'marée des visiteurs'; tourists are othered, and any association with them is therefore a matter of choice.

The continual 'othering' of the tourist even within a touristic itinerary is also evident in Marc Boulet's 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé'.[101] Boulet commits himself to a genuine experience of sex tourism, identical to that of all the other white male tourists visiting Manila for the purposes of buying a Phillipino wife. Like them, Boulet intends to register with a marriage bureau, purchase a bride, and then bring her back to France and live with her as her husband, rather than discarding her at the end of the journey. However, Boulet also gives a commentary on sex tourists as an entity of which he does not consider himself to be an intrinsic part: 'Il [le touriste sexuel] n'hésite pas à parcourir dix mille kilomètres pour aller échanger des tréponèmes et des gonocoques avec les peuples du tiers-monde. Il contribue à la rencontre des *syphilisations* plutôt qu'à celle des civilisations' (p. 190). Similarly, Boulet completes his portrayal of sex tourism by reporting on 'real' sex tourists to whom he is, by implication, morally superior:

> - Après avoir fait l'amour, que fais-tu de ces filles?
> - Je les jette, pardi! Jusqu'à présent, toutes les filles que j'ai rencontrées étaient soit des putes, soit des boudins.
>
> Je rapporte mot pour mot les propos de Marcel, sans chercher à en atténuer la vulgarité, afin de donner une image fidèle d'un client d'agence matrimoniale. (p. 205)

On this journey, Boulet is himself, in all respects, a 'client d'agence matrimoniale' who actually does purchase a wife for sixty dollars – and yet he is simultaneously able to

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[101] Marc Boulet, 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé' (1986), in Marc Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un...* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), pp. 182-246. Note that 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé' is a free-standing short piece included within an anthology of Boulet's own work. The anthology also comprises a number of extracts from Boulet's full-length travelogues.

report on fellow sex tourists, elsewhere referred to as 'des hordes d'Occidentaux lubriques' (p. 187), as the 'other'.

Since Boulet and Augé replicate tourist behaviour but reject identification with the tourists who have preceded them or coincided with them in their practices of tourism, it may be appropriate to theorize their itineraries as post-touristic, rather than touristic, to reflect ironic detachment and awareness of the inauthentic and commercialized aspects of the tourist attractions visited. *Travels in Hyperreality* could be considered as a precedent to these examples of post-touristic travel literature, as Eco admits that his guidebook-led journey was 'begun in the spirit of irony and sophisticated repulsion' (p. 35). However, it may be argued that any distinction between post-touristic travel writers and the tourists who have shared their itineraries is spurious, if contemporary tourists are all self-aware, ironic consumers of recognized inauthenticity. Augé himself portrays fellow tourists as post-touristic, when he comments on the ludic appearance of their behaviour: at Center Parcs, he interprets tourist behaviour as complicity with the artifice of their situation – 'Le plaisir réel, incontestable, qu'éprouvaient sous mes yeux étonnés des centaines de vacanciers heureux tenait pour une part, me sembla-t-il au bout d'un moment, à la conscience qu'ils avaient de *jouer*.'[102] Tourist behaviour is then described in terms of 'jouer à faire comme si' (p. 63) – a deliberate game of make-believe. Travel writers such as Augé, Eco and Boulet could then appropriately be labelled as 'post-tourists with typewriters', to indicate that the fundamental difference between themselves and fellow tourists is that they publish written accounts of their journeys.

The replication of touristic itineraries integral to the travelogues discussed above has important theoretical implications that do not receive comment in Holland and Huggan's more general analysis of repeated itineraries. In the first place, these travel writers' visits to tourist destinations mark non-conformity with the dominant literary tradition of disassociating travel from tourism; secondly, they challenge the convention that travellers' itineraries *precede* tourist itineraries. The theoretical precession of travel over tourism is elucidated by Jean-Didier Urbain, who interprets tourism as a process of emulation of the traveller:

> Le drame du voyageur contemporain est qu'il est imitable, et imité. [...] *Le voyageur, malgré lui, ne se met-il pas à se ressembler de plus en plus au touriste?*
> Il ne peut plus dire au touriste: 'Je vais là où vous n'allez pas'; seulement: 'Je vais là avant vous.' Mais cette avance, toujours plus courte, est une différence de plus en plus mince.[103]

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[102] Augé, p. 62.
[103] Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 75; Urbain's emphasis.

Urbain suggests that travellers are increasingly resembling tourists; he does not, however, address the issue of travellers choosing deliberately to resemble tourists. Moreover, he does not consider situations in which the traveller might say to the tourist: 'Je vais là après vous.' Such a statement, it seems, would represent a radical, innovative departure from a convention of travel writing – or, alternatively, confirmation of the 'end of travel'. That is, in post-touristic travel writing, travel has lost much of its specificity with regard to tourism, itself increasingly indistinct from everyday culture.

In fact, Augé overrides his initial statements regarding the impossibility of travel, by reasserting the ongoing possibility of exoticism: according to Augé, it is now a priority to hone receptivity to the diversity that still exists in the world around us.[104]

> Entendons-nous bien: voyager, oui, il faut voyager, il faudrait voyager. Mais surtout ne pas faire de tourisme. [...] Le monde existe encore en sa diversité. Mais celle-ci a peu à voir avec le kaléidoscope illusoire du tourisme. Peut-être une de nos tâches les plus urgentes est-elle de réapprendre à voyager, éventuellement au plus proche de chez nous, pour réapprendre à voir.[105]

In *L'Impossible voyage,* then, travel and tourism are only strategically de-differentiated, enabling the travel writer to critique tourism from within. The thematization of postmodern cultural paradigms in this travelogue belies a profoundly modernist and nostalgic appeal for the re-differentiation of travel from tourism.

A supplementary conclusion is perhaps required for the other texts considered in this section, which rely on the continuing exoticism of certain touristic phenomena or practices. Thus, whilst the paradigms of inauthenticity, predictability and impersonality represented in *Mobile* and *Travels in Hyperreality* are in themselves familiar, the ubiquity and intensity of these same phenomena are exoticized as a specifically North American insistence on inauthenticity, implicitly unfamiliar to Europeans.[106] Equally, Marc Boulet's representation of tourism in 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé' relies on the continuing exoticism, in the eyes of a middle class French readership, of certain touristic practices which are regarded as marginal or taboo.[107] This is evidence of a more complex

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[104] Cf. Segalen's opinion that tourism, involving obvious, surface details only, will have no more than a limited impact on global diversity: 'Ainsi entendue, comme partie intégrale du jeu de l'intelligence humaine, la sensation du Divers n'a rien à craindre des Cook, des paquebots, des aéroplanes...' Segalen, p. 47.

[105] Augé, pp.14-15. An intertextual link to Segalen is suggested by the reference to 'kaléidoscope illusoire du tourisme' – compare Segalen, p. 43: 'L'exotisme n'est donc pas cet état kaléidoscopique du touriste et du médiocre spectateur, mais la réaction vive et curieuse au choc d'une individualité forte contre une objectivité dont elle perçoit et déguste la distance.'

[106] For the exoticization of consumer society, see also Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique*.

[107] Cf. Michel Houellebecq's thematization of sex tourism in *Plateforme*, and Lydie Salvayre's treatment of marginal touristic practices in *Les Belles âmes*, for examples of the exoticization of less familiar touristic practices within recent French fiction.

understanding of the plurality of contemporary touristic practices, far removed from the complacent, homogenizing references to a generalized 'tourist[e]' typical within anti-touristic discourse.

The overriding conclusion of this section, however, is that tourism itself remains marginal as a subject of thematic innovation within French travel writing: in other words, the paucity of texts prioritizing this theme must be significant. Without disregarding the possibility that a greater number of travel writers will experiment with thematic convergences with tourism in the future, it is necessary to reconsider, in the light of this chapter's investigation of issues of anti-tourism and tourism, Urbain/Buzard's insistence on the definitional importance of a differential relationship between travel and tourism.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEMPORARY TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGIES AND TRAVEL WRITING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 CONTEMPORARY TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGIES

Just as the previous chapter examined 'tourism' as a set of displacement-based practices treated as normative in a twentieth-century French context, this chapter considers normative modes of displacement.[1] Cars, aeroplanes, fast commuter trains and buses underpin perfunctory and discredited travel practices such as tourism and commuting; these modes of transport are heavily implicated in the multiplication of travel practices, and therefore pose an ongoing challenge to the specificity of the *voyageur* as distinct from the *voyageant* and the *voyagé*.[2] It is acknowledged that mass mechanized transport predates the twentieth century; however, it is also asserted that the twentieth century witnessed dramatic advances in the sophistication, scale and general availability of such transport.

As a context for this chapter's exploration of issues of travel and contemporary transport technologies, it is necessary to outline a number of key developments in the history of the train, the motor car and the aeroplane. The invention of the steam locomotive in the 1820s revolutionized land-based displacement; by 1829, France had its first steam train, built by Marc Seguin for the Saint-Etienne and Lyons railway; twelve years later, Thomas Cook established the first train route specificially for the purposes of tourism. In spite of the significant progress made by nineteenth-century developers of rail transport, the speeds associated with early railways were extremely limited by mid-twentieth-century

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[1] In this chapter, 'displacement' is used with reference to literal travel. Although Clifford has rejected 'displacement' because it effaces distinctions between travelling subjects who are in displacement for different reasons, displacement, or the decontextualized act of moving from one place to another, is a crucial reference point in contemporary French definitions of travel as something more than just movement. See Clifford, p. 39. 'Displacement' is retained in this thesis, then, as an accurate term to describe the transit phase common to various travel practices. See Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 24: 'On risque fort de confondre la réalité du voyage, son concept et sa fonction, avec l'une de ses variantes: le déplacement. [...] La tendance est grande [...] d'assimiler la fonction au support et de réduire ainsi la question du voyage à sa matérialité.' See also Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', p. 21: 'Voyager n'est pas seulement se déplacer.' Moura's evocation of displacement as 'un banal mouvement géographique' is also relevant. See Moura, *Lire l'exotisme*, pp. 3-4. Note also that in *Routes*, Clifford's decision to reject 'displacement' in favour of 'travel' seems to necessitate the use of problematic terms such as 'literary travel' when referring to the travel practices of travel writers.

[2] Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', p. 21.

standards.[3] The invention of the first diesel locomotive in 1913, and the subsequent (gradual) replacement of steam-powered technology by diesel engines and electric trains, resulted in radically accelerated railway systems. Landmark developments include the achievement of an unprecedented speed of 331 km/h by the French TGV ('Trains à Grande Vitesse') in 1957, and the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994, which provided a high speed rail link between Britain and France.[4]

Although the first petrol-engine motor car was invented in 1870, the generalized use of private motor vehicles is held to have begun with the mass-production of the Model T Ford in 1912; in France, private car ownership was dramatically increased by the launch of the relatively affordable Citroën 2CV in 1949.[5] The ever-increasing volume of motorized road vehicles in the twentieth century necessitated the provision of new transport infrastructure; the Italian Milan-Como motorway, built in 1924, was the first of its kind, and created a precedent for high-speed road systems worldwide.

The expansion of road transport in Western Europe and North America was paralleled by the invention and rapid development of aviation technologies.[6] The use of self-propelled, controllable aircraft is a twentieth-century phenomenon, pioneered by Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1903; passenger air transport began on a small scale in 1933 with the arrival of the first modern airliner, the Boeing 247; however, civilian air travel remained a minority practice until the introduction of passenger jet airliners in the 1950s, the first of which was the De Havilland Comet in 1952.

In the light of the developments outlined above, it should be apparent that the following aspects of transport were normalized in the twentieth century: displacements at significantly higher velocities; widespread access to private motor transport; the establishment of complex infrastructure including airports, motorways and commuter rail networks. There is therefore a need to analyse the implications of

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[3] See Paul Virilio, *L'Art du moteur* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), p. 116: 'Il y a loin des premiers wagons de chemin de fer [...] au train à grande vitesse et à la cellule du supersonique, fermé au monde extérieur qu'il traverse pourtant avec un bruit d'enfer.'

[4] For a comprehensive history of rail transport, see Anthony Burton, *On the Rails: Two Centuries of Railways* (London: Aurum, 2004), pp. 202-03. Note that the Paris *Métro* was opened in 1900, preceded by the London Underground (1870), which was the world's first underground railway system. See David Bennett, *Metro: The Story of the Underground Railway* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2004), pp. 48-51.

[5] For a timescale of events in the history of the motor car, see Leonard J. K. Setright, *Drive On! A Social History of the Motor Car*, 3rd edn (London: Granta, 2004), pp. 391-98. Note that there is some disagreement as to the inventor of the motor car, but Setright attributes the invention to Siegfried Markus (pp. 4-5).

[6] See David Blatner, *The Flying Book* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2004), pp. 188-202.

increasingly accelerated and rationalized mass transport facilities for French travel writers since the twentieth century.

The consequences of motorized transport for the travelling subject's perceptions, perspectives, and experience of space, have received considerable critical interest in the last decade. Notably, the implications of modes of transport for subjective experiences of travel have been explored by Sidonie Smith in relation to women's travel narratives in the nineteenth and twentieth century: road, rail and air transport modes are analysed in *Moving Lives* with the support of historical and sociological studies of transport. Cronin integrates Paul Virilio's theories of 'vitesse absolue' in his overview of the relationship of transport to travel in *Across the Lines*.[7] Kaplan has studied the relationship of speed to travel in the specific case of Jean Baudrillard's high-speed car journey in *Amérique*, with an emphasis on the ability of speed to decontextualize the travelling subject from cultural formations. Kristin Ross's 1996 study, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, examines the presence of the automobile in 1950s and 1960s French society, literature and film in the specific context of decolonization; within Ross's study, the implications of the car for perception are considered with particular reference to the theories of Wolfgang Schivelbusch. Vehicle-specific and/or author-specific studies of transport and travel writing have also emerged within French studies in travel writing, and these have indicated valuable resources for the consideration of transport infrastructure in travel, notably Marc Augé's *Non-Lieux*.[8] In terms of theoretical material, therefore, this chapter contributes only a few additional resources: Lothar Baier's *Pas le temps! Traité sur l'accélération* (2000) expands understandings of strategies for manipulating temporality within the use of mechanized transport; *Un anthropologue chez les automates: de l'avion informatisé à la société numérisée* by Victor Scardigli (2001) is a useful study of global tendencies towards automation; finally, Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr's recent anthology of essays about car culture, *Autotopia: Cars and Culture* (2002) contributes valuable comparative analyses of sociological and cultural representations of the car.

Although the relationship of motorized transport to perception has been extensively theorized, there has been insufficient acknowledgement of French patterns of response to the matter of writing travelogues about motorized transport and its

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[7] See Cronin, pp. 114-52.
[8] See below, section 3.1.3.

associated infrastructure, and also, insufficient contextualization of such responses within general theoretical paradigms including the perceived exhaustion of travel and the traveller's desire to retain specificity from other categories of subject in displacement. This chapter explores these issues with reference to the critical material listed above, and to a broad corpus of twentieth-century French travelogues thematizing journeys reliant on contemporary transport technologies.

3.1.2 CONTEMPORARY TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGIES AND TRAVEL WRITING: OUTLINE OF APPROACH

The present study of French travel writing about normative transport modes is divided into four sections. The first two sections consider, respectively, long-distance car travel abroad, and domestic journeys using French transport infrastructure. In each of these sections, the general approaches to travel that the relevant primary texts demonstrate will be considered in conjunction with related theorizations and existing studies of travel writing, in order to elucidate the following points:

- How are French travel writers reappropriating the infrastructural and technological bases of mass displacement, in order to negotiate experiences of travel?
- How do French travel writers legitimize the use of such facilities within practices of travel?

After the general contextualization of approaches to motorized travel, a further two sections will focus more specifically on the implications of contemporary transport technologies for the travelling subject, both in theory, and as they emerge from the primary corpus. Theoretical approaches have highlighted, as norms of transport use, the following, often contradictory, characteristics: corporeal and intellectual passivity; independence of arrangements; a lack of independence of arrangements; limitations of perspective; impersonality of experience; solitude; contact with co-travellers. One chapter section will consider issues of embodiment, independence and perception; the subsequent section will focus on the interpersonal dimensions of travel. In each section, relevant theoretical material will be indicated. The research questions central to this part of the chapter are as follows:

- What characteristics of motorized displacement are theorized as normative?
- How does this chapter's primary corpus reflect and/or problematize such assumptions?

The chapter concludes with a comment on issues of embodiment, motorized transport and the specificity of French appropriations of such transport as a basis for travel writing.

3.1.3 INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY TEXTS

Primary texts for this chapter are divided into two broad thematic categories, which are not necessarily specific to a particular mode of transport.[9] These categories are, respectively, 'Motorized Journeys Off the Beaten Track', and 'Explorations of French Transport Infrastructure'. These categories will be elucidated within this section, and recapitulated in their designated chapter sections, but as a provisional explanation it can be generalized that they correspond, respectively, to motorized journeys abroad, and domestic journeys.

An important precedent for this chapter's study of motorized journeys off the beaten track is Charles Forsdick's study of the 'récit de voyage en 2CV' in 'Slow Cars, Dirty Bodies: 2CV travel and the reordering of "elsewhere"'.[10] As Forsdick has noted, the mid-twentieth century witnessed a surge of interest in 2CV journeys, with increasing numbers of 2CV owners choosing to drive in adverse conditions worldwide, in deliberate contradiction to the specific domestic purposes for which the vehicle had originally been designed. Forsdick has argued that the rise in popularity of the 'récit de voyage en 2CV' was a striking intersection of French sociocultural, touristic and literary practices, as the 2CV established itself in post war France as a persistent signifier of many aspects of French national identity. The present chapter considers one of two foundational 2CV texts, Jacques Cornet and Henri Lochon's *Deux hommes, 2CV, deux continents* (1954).[11] The text charts an arduous long-distance 2CV journey from Canada to Tierra del Fuego.

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[9] In addition to the primary texts introduced within the thematic groupings described, reference is made to Jean Baudrillard's *Amérique* (1986).

[10] Charles Forsdick, 'Slow Cars, Dirty Bodies: 2CV travel and the reordering of "elsewhere"', in Charles Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Culture: Salvaging the Exotic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 [forthcoming]), pages undetermined.

[11] Robert Godet's *En 2CV vers les hauts lieux d'Asie* is cited by Forsdick as the other text that inaugurated this subgenre.

Within the category of motorized journeys off the beaten track, four additional texts have been selected for analysis in this chapter, representing a chronological period from the 1940s to the present, and without restriction to a specific make of vehicle. Written in English from 1943 to 1945 and translated into French by the author, Ella Maillart's *La Voie cruelle* (1952) gives the account of Maillart's journey to Afghanistan in a Ford V8 with her companion 'Christina', who was suffering from a morphine addiction. The other texts considered also feature journeys undertaken with a travelling companion: Nicolas Bouvier's *L'Usage du monde* (1963) relates a journey from Geneva to the Khyber Pass in an antiquated Fiat; the work is illustrated by the sketches of Thierry Vernet, who travelled with Bouvier. Françoise and Michel Franco, a married couple, drive together to the remote desert regions of Libya in search of meteorites in *Chercheurs de météorites* (2001); Sébastien Marre's 2000 account, *Rencontres et réalités au Proche-Orient: deux jeunes sur les routes du monde* concerns a journey across the Middle East and South Asia with his companion and subsequent life partner 'Dorothée'; Marre and his partner travel by bus, taxi and hired car.

Sébastien Marre's alternation of private and public transport brings attention to the plurality of roles offered to the user of contemporary mechanized transport. In the car journey literature introduced above, travellers possess their own private means of transport, and take on the role of driver, sometimes in alternation with that of passenger. This is equally relevant to the next category of texts considered, which includes three accounts of passenger journeys.[12]

A significant contribution to this chapter's analysis of explorations of French transport infrastructure is Jean-Xavier Ridon's study of contemporary reappropriations of the *banlieue* as a site of touristic discourse, in 'Un barbare en banlieue'. Ridon examines the transgressive use of discourses of tourism and travel in François Maspero's 1990 travelogue, *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*. The travelogue in question represents a journey on the RER-B line, which is part of a

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[12] This chapter is specifically concerned with travel modes associated particularly with the twentieth century and with the possibility of high velocity displacements. For this reason, boats and ships, which are also popular forms of mechanized public transport, have been omitted from consideration. It should nevertheless be noted that sea travel has continued to enjoy immense popularity as a subject of travel literature in both French and English, and that, accordingly, maritime literature constitutes a significant proportion of the primary texts listed in the bibliography offered by the *Pour une littérature voyageuse* movement. Examples include: Norman Lewis, *Le Chant de la mer* (Paris: Phébus, 1995); Hervé Hamon, *Besoin de mer* (Paris: Seuil, 1997); Francisco Coloane, *Cap Horn* (Paris: Phébus, 1998). See *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 207-16.

contemporary commuter rail network connecting Paris to its suburbs; with his companion Anaïk Frantz, who takes photographs for the book, Maspero travels from station to station on the RER-B route, stopping at each one to explore the surrounding area, meet local people and stay overnight at a hotel. Ridon prioritizes consideration of the explorations of the suburbs; in the present study, the specific focus is the thematization of transport and transport infrastructure.[13]

As well as *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*, this chapter considers François Bon's *Paysage fer* (2000), in which a commuter journey on the Paris-Nancy train is repeated week after week, with the author noting additional details and observations each time he takes the train. Reference will also be made to *Transports* (2002) by Rémi Cassaigne, a fictional travelogue about repeated journeys between Paris and Lyon on France's high speed TGV trains. Although fictional, this work thematizes a contemporary transport technology specific to contemporary France, and usefully reflects issues raised within the primary corpus.

Two examples of road travel will be included within the category of 'Explorations of French Transport Infrastructure': *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute* by Julio Cortázar and Carol Dunlop (1983) is an account of a journey along the *Autoroute du Sud* from Paris to Marseille. This journey, completed in a Volkswagen Combi camper van, is deliberately protracted and fragmented: Cortázar and Dunlop remain within the motorway system for just over one month, stopping at rest areas at a rate of two per day. This text forms a precedent for Pascal Vercken's 2000 travelogue, *Sur la Nationale 7*, of which the subject is a one-thousand-kilometre car journey along France's eponymous motorway, from Kremlin-Bicêtre to Italy.

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[13] A number of observations made in this chapter have been mentioned in passing by Forsdick in the last two paragraphs of Charles Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher: Uses of the Peripatetic in Contemporary Travel Literature in French', *Sites*, 5.1 (2001), 47-61 (pp. 60-61). Forsdick recognizes a mode of travel, referred to as the 'peripatetic mode', that is exemplified by pedestrian travellers; the final paragraphs of the article are intended to indicate that this mode is also relevant to contemporary French motorized journeys, but the treatment of motorized peripatetic journeys is consciously cursory. The relevance of this article to items discussed in this chapter will be specified throughout. See also below, 'Chapter Five: Walking Journeys'.

3.2 MOTORIZED JOURNEYS OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Despite claims that there are no unexplored regions left in the world, French travel writers continue to find pretexts for undertaking and representing long-distance, motorized, trans/inter-continental journeys. Drawing on motorized transport, and going where others have gone before, the 'grands arpenteurs de la planète'[14] discussed in this section foreground the exoticism of their own vehicles, transplanted from France into other cultures, and/or the exoticism of transport and infrastructure found abroad.

The removal of French vehicles from their familiar domestic contexts is a recurrent feature of long-distance motorized travel texts. Attention is given both to the vehicle's reception abroad, and to the vehicle's (in)ability to cope with the driving conditions encountered. Forsdick has recently highlighted the perceived exoticism of the 2CV as thematized within dedicated 'récits de voyage en 2CV'. However, this theme is not restricted to 2CV travelogues; Françoise and Michel Franco explore the deserts of Libya in an old 'UMM', which, despite being a Portugese brand, has a 'moteur Peugeot' – and the vehicle causes mirth among Libyan children who are accustomed to seeing tourists in expensive, sophisticated cars:

> Des grappes d'enfants rigolent à la vue de notre véhicule. Hocine nous traduit un peu gêné: les gamins trouvent que votre voiture est vieille et bien rouillée. [...] Il est vrai qu'ici, à Derj, ils en voient passer des 'touristes', [...] alors forcément, c'est pas notre équipage qui va les impressionner... et puis il est vrai aussi que bon nombre de véhicules libyens croisés jusque-là sont de belles voitures, neuves, modèles de luxe.

The 2CV remains paradigmatic, nevertheless, as F. and M. Franco explicitly align their vehicle to the 2CV, signalling its 'son aigu de tôle creuse genre 2CV'.[15]

In other texts, the exoticism of non-Western transport and infrastructure is in focus. Ella Maillart, for instance, conceives of Asia as a place in which she can benefit from 'la possibilité de comparer l'Europe à une société non mécanisée'. Even when faced with evidence of the infiltration of technology, she clings to her image of Asia as premodern, whilst recognizing the contradictions inherent in her opinion: 'Bien qu'un téléphone eût annoncé notre arrivée et bien que les entrailles d'une vieille

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[14] Jean-Didier Urbain, 'Les Catanautes des cryptocombes – Des iconoclastes de l'Ailleurs' *Nottingham French Studies*, 39.1 (2000), 7-16 (p. 7).

[15] Françoise and Michel Franco, *Chercheurs de météorites* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi Editeur, 2001), p. 9; pp. 32-33; p. 10.

Ford passent au coin du jardin, je me sentais en plein Moyen Age. La vie coulait doucement, paraissant immuable.'[16]

Just as Maillart claims to travel in search of alternatives to global conflict – 'pour trouver ceux qui savent encore vivre en paix' (p. 37) – and looks to Asia as the site of greater tranquility, half a century later Sébastien Marre travels in search of experiences to inspire peace and harmony: 'Tel est le sens de ce voyage. Je souhaite montrer que la diversité humaine est une richesse plutôt qu'une source de conflits. [...] La seule voie qui nous mènera à la paix.'[17] Like Maillart, Marre holds particular preconceptions about transport and infrastructure in the cultures that he intends to visit, and exoticizes the absence of strict timetabling within public transport services abroad: 'Nous quittions l'Europe mais également les horaires à respecter. Libres de gérer notre temps comme nous le désirions et comme nous le souhaitions' (p. 30). Similarly, during the journey, transport systems continue to provide a source of exoticism. In some cases, the effect is to promote the host country as culturally superior to Europe – 'Prenons les bus, par exemple. Le réseau est largement équivalent à ce que nous pouvons trouver en Europe. Mais la différence est dans le service' (p. 47). Marre goes on to describe the human touches added to bus journeys in order to make them more pleasant, including the frequent offering of cups of tea. However, in other examples, transport characteristics are taken as a comment on the inferiority of host cultures: 'Un voyage indien classique: un bus antédiluvien complètement rempli de bagages et de personnes à la limite du déraisonnable' (p. 146). Here, the age and overcrowding of the bus is associated with primitivity and irrationality.

On the one hand, French travellers who are dependent on foreign transport innovate by calling French mechanized society (including transport) into question and evaluating the more wholesome alternatives that might be found elsewhere. Marre reacts against the rushed, stressful nature of transport in France:

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[16] Ella Maillart, *La Voie cruelle: deux femmes, une Ford vers l'Afghanistan* (Paris: Payot, 1991), p. 309; p. 232. Maillart conforms here to Saundra Hybels's model of a masculinist approach to travel. Hybels claims that the male traveller specifically seeks places characterized by the absence of Western technologies. See Saundra Hybels, 'Travelling the World: Does Gender Make a Difference?', in *Travel Essentials: Collected Essays on Travel Writing*, ed. by Santiago Henriquez (Las Palmas: Chandlon Inn Press, 1998), pp. 100-110 (p. 100).

[17] Sébastien Marre, *Rencontres et réalités au Proche-Orient: Deux jeunes sur les routes du monde* (Paris: Yves Michel, 2000), p. 22.

> Les contraintes sont moindres que chez nous certes, mais surtout, le temps semble respecté comme une donnée de la vie. [...] Courir ne sert à rien... [...] En France [...] il nous faudra faire avec ces horaires de métro rigides, ces visages obscurcis par le stress. (p. 98)

On the other hand, it is notable that Marre and his contemporaries take measures to ascribe additional purpose to their long-distance motorized travel projects. Marre's work may be subtitled 'Deux jeunes sur les routes du monde', but he has chosen to supplement the interest of this subject by creating a mission for the 'deux jeunes', which is to meet people on the journey and ask them to write down their thoughts about the new millennium. Similarly, Françoise and Michel Franco do not merely cross the Sahara desert in an ageing, low-cost, second-hand jeep: they personalize their journey by making it into a quest for meteoritic remains. It seems likely that contemporary travel writers who are intent upon travelling afar and relying on everyday motorized transport recognize a need to enhance the originality of such projects by adding an interesting extra dimension – or else, as in the case of Nicolas Bouvier, simply to renounce all claims to originality: 'Que le voyageur d'aujourd'hui, qui vient après tant de monde, se présente avec la modestie qui convient, et n'espère étonner personne.'[18] Earlier twentieth-century travel writers, by contrast, could perhaps rely on the inherent interest of the long-distance motorized journey.

In this respect, twentieth-century French motor journeys off the beaten track invite consideration of two overlapping theories of contemporary travel: the conscious provision of an alibi to legitimize a venture that may otherwise appear to be decadent; the use of oppositional/unorthodox travel practices to negotiate spaces 'off the beaten track' for the sake of refreshing exhausted possibilities.

According to Franck Michel, the interpersonal encounter is a popular, and appropriate, alibi for all non-coerced travellers (including tourists) since the twentieth century. Consciously echoing Glissant's claim that, in a prediscovered world, human encounters give meaning to travel, Michel theorizes travel as a set of practices geared towards encounters with alterity, in which human alterity is or should be privileged: 'Le voyage doit d'abord être une rencontre s'il veut rester un voyage. [...] Le motif premier de tout voyage.'[19] This alibi is clearly visible in Marre's travelogue. For the reception of *Chercheurs de météorites* and *La Voie cruelle*, Urbain's more general recognition of processes of self-legitimation is more appropriate; the search for,

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[18] Nicolas Bouvier, *L'Usage du monde* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2001 [1963]), p. 373.
[19] Michel, pp. 57-66.

respectively, meteoritic remains and peace, can be inscribed within a paradigm of self-justification in an activity that may be conflated with empty or hedonistic practices of tourism: 'La légitimation du voyage est un souci permanent; et avec l'expansion des mobilités de loisir, ce souci, quoi qu'on en dise, est d'autant plus vif qu'on s'approche du *vide* présumé de l'univers des *vacances*.'[20] In the works of Cornet and Lochon, and F. and M. Franco, an overlap with Urbain's paradigm of the 'anticonformiste' traveller is arguably apparent; this type of traveller, according to Urbain, adopts unconventional travel practices for the sake of novelty: 'Ce type de voyageur "hors des sentiers battus" s'inscrit dans la logique d'un certain antivoyage. Par esprit de contradiction, il déritualise son voyage et expérimente.'[21] Urbain argues that the outcome of such attempts to contrive unorthodox journeys is that the unusual itinerary is inevitably integrated into a new orthodoxy of travel. Forsdick's study of 2CV journeys would indicate that, for Cornet and Lochon, this proved to be the case: as a result of Citroën's institutionalization, in 1957, of round-the-world 2CV travel, this approach to travel rapidly became banal.

In the opening paragraph of this section, it was stated that twentieth-century French travel writers 'continue to find pretexts for undertaking and representing long-distance, motorized, trans/inter-continental journeys'; the search for a pretext is largely prominent in the texts considered in this section – even Bouvier, who renounces the search for a pretext, registers that he is implicated in practices that may seem banal, and exemplifies nonetheless an oppositional strategy to motorized travel by recontextualizing a Fiat Topolino in practices for which it is not a conventional choice of vehicle. There are, however, further problematics to be considered: motorized transport has been theorized as non-conducive to the interpersonal encounter, to intercultural contact, and to receptivity to the world outside the vehicle; the alibis identified among these authors would all appear to privilege these. After a general consideration of another set of approaches to motorized travel in twentieth-century French travel writing, the chapter returns to a detailed investigation of the problematics involved in each case.

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[20] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 44. See also Jacques Meunier, *Le Monocle de Joseph Conrad*, 2nd edn (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1993), pp. 11-13, and Amirou, p. 18.
[21] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 63.

3.3 EXPLORATIONS OF FRENCH TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Domestic motorized journeys of the type discussed in this section – vehicle-based explorations of national transport infrastructure – are a late-twentieth-century development that would appear to converge with wider sociological and anthropological interest in marginalized, proximal spaces: 'On parle de plus en plus de l'anthropologie du proche.'[22] The rise of urban studies has been theorized as a response to the perceived exhaustion of exoticism in the Southern hemisphere:

> L'ethnographie de proximité [...] est finalement une invitation au voyage dans un monde connu, voire *trop* connu – ou du moins considéré comme tel. Il découle de cela que l'inconnu affronté par cette ethnologie n'est pas celui des grands voyages exotiques, celui, absolu, du jamais-vu, mais celui, relatif, du méconnu, du perdu de vue – celui du déjà là et, tout simplement, du déjà-vu.[23]

If the project of illuminating misunderstood or neglected urban spaces is an acknowedged source of legitimacy for travelogues focusing on commuter routes such as the Route Nationale 7, the Autoroute du Sud, and the RER-B line, in order to explore these spaces, it has proved necessary to negotiate non-normative approaches to the use of mass transit systems. Normative use, according to Maspero, privileges displacement, at the expense of travel:

> Tant pis pour le voyageur. L'espace n'existe plus que sous la forme de morceaux choisis. On ne voyage plus, en région parisienne. On se déplace. On saute d'un point à l'autre. Ce qu'il y a entre, c'est l'espace-temps indifferencié du trajet en train ou en voiture; un continuum gris que rien ne relie au monde extérieur.[24]

This characterization of commuter displacement as an imperceptible transfer from departure point to destination indicates that theories of 'vitesse absolue' may be of relevance even to the moderate speeds involved in rationalized mass transit systems. It is argued that absolute speed – the logical limit of acceleration – could result in the elision of displacement, such that departure and arrival are simultaneous:

> [Il s'agit] d'une vitesse absolue qui risque d'effacer l'espace et d'anéantir le voyage lui-même. Saint-Pol-Roux avait déjà proposé cette distinction en liant 'l'accouplement du départ de

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[22] Marc Augé, *Non-lieux: introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), p. 15.
[23] Urbain, p. 247.
[24] François Maspero, *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), p. 22. See note 1 above.

> l'arrivée'. 'La Vitesse,' continue-t-il, 'ne serait-ce pas une Evaporation?', une abolition du voyage géographique.[25]

Even though it is clearly important to avoid homogenizing relative speeds and hypothetical maximum speed, 'vitesse absolue' may be a useful reference point in discussions of motorized displacement, where the only differential appears to be the time lapse involved between departure and arrival.[26] If the speed and enclosure associated with rationalized commuter networks result in the reduction of experiences of displacement to a 'continuum gris que rien ne relie au monde extérieur',[27] this is non-negotiable to the extent that transport technologies and systems in France are regulated by restrictions of speed and itinerary that are outside the control of the individual travelling subject.

In order to reclaim bland, perfunctory displacements as travel, French travel writers have demonstrated reliance on strategies of repetition and atomization – that is, the breakdown of trajectories into much smaller units. The techniques of repetition and atomization all arguably achieve a similar effect of expanding the time dedicated to a particular journey; Lothar Baier theorizes this in *Pas le temps! Traité sur l'accélération* as 'temps décompacté'. Referring specifically to the example of Cortázar and Dunlop's *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*, Baier identifies the expansion of temporality that is achieved by breaking up the journey into multiple stages:

> Ce texte parle du temps, d'un laps de temps qui connaît un allongement épique extraordinaire: une simple excursion en voiture se transforme en un sujet d'épopée qui fait éprouver au lecteur une toute nouvelle façon de vivre le temps.[28]

Also with reference to *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*, Urbain notes, without analysis of the implications of motorized transport for travel, that atomization is analogous to deceleration: 'Par l'atomisation du trajet, la *lenteur* provoquée remplace la durée des longs parcours.'[29] The specificity of transport modes would seem, however, to be significant. Passenger air travel, for instance, does not seem to permit much manipulation in this respect, and, correspondingly, journeys in commercial

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[25] Paul Virilio, *Esthétique de la disparition* (Paris: Galilée, 1989), p. 122.
[26] See Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher', p. 53.
[27] Maspero, p. 22.
[28] Lothar Baier, *Pas le temps! Traité sur l'accélération*, trans. by Marie-Hélène Desort and Peter Krauss (Paris: Actes Sud, 2000), p. 95.
[29] Urbain, 'Les Catanautes des cryptocombes', p. 12.

aircraft have not formed the basis of innovative works of travel writing in French. Although transport speeds are regulated, equally, within French road and rail systems, these have proved amenable to strategies of interruption and repetition.

Having indicated key approaches to the reappropriation of commuter displacements as travel, and, in the previous section, the legitimation of long-distance car journeys, it is now necessary to return to this chapter's primary corpus for a detailed consideration of the specific characteristics of travel under these conditions.

3.4 CONTEMPORARY MOTORIZED TRAVEL: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TRAVELLING SUBJECT

In theoretical studies of travel, the use of motorized transport has been associated with particular levels of corporeal and mental (in)activity, and these associations inform a number of oppositional behaviours discussed in later chapters of this thesis, notably the decision to travel on foot. The objective of the present section is to summarize key theorizations relating to the implications of motor transport use for the travelling subject, and to demonstrate how such issues are reflected, problematized and/or renegotiated by twentieth-century French travel writers who rely on, rather than reject, such transport.

Fussell has referred to the beginning of mass air travel in 1957 as 'an interesting moment in the history of human passivity', but passivity appears to be a paradigm for theorizations of motorized land-based travel also.[30] Theories of the passivity of motorized transport are problematized, however, by competing theoretical emphasis on the unprecedented autonomy of the car driver – itself relativized by claims that road traffic systems constrain any such autonomy. These points will now be expanded.

The physical passivity of motor transport use has been critiqued in France since the 1930s.[31] In a series of aphoristic observations about mechanized displacement, Saint-Pol-Roux foregrounds the physical immobility inherent in the use of associated transport technologies: he defines automobility as 'immobilité qui se

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[30] Fussell, p. 45. Note that Augé has observed that the SNCF recognize a difference between active travellers and passive passengers: 'Significativement, ceux qui sont encore des voyageurs pour la SNCF deviennent des passagers quand ils prennent le TGV.' Augé, p. 135.

[31] See Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher?', p. 53.

déplace'.[32] This basic definition continutes to be accepted in the current millennium, as Cronin demonstrates, with reference to Borer:

> The paradox is that the increased velocity of the modern age, the acceleration of movement, leads to more and more advanced degrees of inertia. The passenger seated in a train, a car, an airplane [...] is going faster and faster but is moving less and less. Alain Borer claims that in the age of Armstrong, 'la figure du voyageur est désormais l'immobilité'.[33]

According to the contemporary Anglophone travel writer Ian Frazer, motorized transport is the most appropriate choice for travel writers, for the specific reason of its effortlessness: 'I don't believe you should ever do anything that's so hard that it makes your reader tired.'[34] However, it is not to be supposed that non-Anglophone travel writers who rely on motorized transport do so uncritically; In *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*, Julio Cortázar finds that rest breaks provide a welcome interruption to the non-corporeal experience of motorway travel:

> Les aires de stationnement sont le lieu et l'heure de la vérité, ou la vie continue d'avoir deux bras et deux jambes tandis que la fausse vie délaisse les robots de l'autoroute et qu'ils gisent immobiles, morts, dans leur silence et leur impuissance.[35]

Although motorized transport use is ordinarily associated with physical passivity, the motor car, in particular, has been theorized as the means to independent travel, suggesting potentially higher levels of mental activity and agency on the part of the travelling subject.[36] However, the autonomy associated with cars has also been

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[32] Saint-Pol-Roux, *Vitesse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), p. 22. Paul Morand is also already aware of the paradox of mobile immobility in the context of 1930s air travel: 'Devant lui, derrière lui, les voyageurs dormaient déjà. Assoupis, leur quiétude immobile contrastait avec l'élan de l'appareil.' Paul Morand, *Flèche d'Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1932), p. 30.

[33] Alain Borer, 'L'ère de Colomb et l'ère d'Armstrong', in Le Bris, ed., *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 17-40 (p. 37); quoted in Cronin, p. 152. Note that Baudrillard problematizes this conception of motorized travel by theorizing a specific form of muscular wear and tear that results from the very effortlessness of driving: 'Il y a un événement, ou une innervation, spécial à ce genre de voyage, et donc un type spécial de fatigue. Comme une fibrillation de muscles striés par l'excès de chaleur et de vitesse, par l'excès de choses vues, lues, traversées, oubliées.' Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1986), p. 15. A precedent for this idea is to be found in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Vol de nuit*. In this early-twentieth-century aviation narrative, the paradoxical engagement of the body is thematized, for instance, in references to the pilot's impression of 'travail mystérieux d'une chair vivante'. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Vol de nuit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1931), p. 21-22.

[34] Ian Frazer, 'Carving Your Name on a Rock', in Zinsser, ed., *They Went: The Art and Craft of Travel Writing*, pp. 29-56 (p. 35).

[35] Julio Cortázar and Carol Dunlop, *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute ou un voyage intemporel Paris-Marseille*, trans. by Laure Guille-Bataillon (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), p. 70.

[36] See Wolfgang Sachs, *For Love of the Automobile*, trans. by Don Reneau (California: University of California Press, 1992), p. 98. The motor car has also been associated, more specifically, with the expansion of women's possibilities for independent travel. See Sidonie Smith, *Moving Lives*, p. xi.

relativized. Jack Sargeant argues that the realities of road congestion have always annulled the car's promise of freedom:

> Cars remain the ultimate realisation of individual affirmation. [...] Cars are the greatest enablers of freedom; to drive is to engage in the promise of the open road. Except that such visions are not – and never have been – true. [...] Other people always get in the way. [...] Even as driving emerged as a possibility of the taste of freedom, its potentialities were checked in slow-moving, maximum-stress fender-to-fender jams.[37]

Similarly, Paul Virilio argues in 'Speed and Politics' that the development of individual motorized transport has been constrained from the outset by governmental measures to regulate speed:

> This great automobile body has been emasculated, its road holding is defective and its powerful motor is bridled. Just as for the laws on speed limits, we are talking about acts of government, in other words of the political control of the highway, aiming precisely at limiting the 'extraordinary power of assault' that motorisation of the masses creates.[38]

Virilio goes so far as to claim that in the West, 'the reign of autonomous mobility of the household car is giving way to "high-speed mass transit systems"'.[39] This suggests that the role of the driver is gradually being factored out. Accordingly, Victor Scardigli identifies a general contemporary tendency towards automation in transport: 'Purifier l'homme-utilisateur de ses imperfections, fonder un réseau social universel où tous communiquent avec tous, sans conflit d'intérêt.'[40] However, this chapter's primary corpus suggests that even before the implementation of measures that further automatize transport and restrict speed, car travel is inherently passive. Travelling outside the regulated context of Western infrastructure and traffic laws, Bouvier, for instance, signals the passivity of the driving experience: 'Aucun besoin d'intervenir; la route travaille pour vous.'[41]

If the default characteristic of motorized travel appears to be passivity, vehicular breakdown, or *panne*, is found to have the effect of disrupting this pattern. Forsdick has analysed the importance of *panne* in the specific context of 2CV

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[37] Jack Sargeant, 'Squealing wheels and flying fists', in *Autotopia: Cars and Culture*, ed. by Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), pp. 312-14 (p. 312).
[38] Paul Virilio, 'Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology', trans. by Mark Polizzotti (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 27. Quoted from translation as French version unavailable.
[39] Paul Virilio, 'Continental Drift', in *The Virilio Reader*, ed. and trans. by James Der Derian (Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 183-85 (p. 192). Quoted from translation as French version unavailable.
[40] Victor Scardigli, *Un anthropologue chez les automates: de l'avion informatisé à la société numérisée* (Paris: P.U.F., 2001), p.224.
[41] Bouvier, p. 57.

journeys in terms of impact on the rhythms of travel, and in terms of opportunities for resourcefulness on the part of the traveller:

> When deceleration reaches its limit, the vehicle grinds to a halt and breaks down. [...] Breakdown brings contingency back into travel and disrupts established itineraries; it undermines the image of the traveller as sovereign individual, but at the same time allows him to turn misfortune into episodes of ingenious escape.[42]

It would appear that the theme of *panne* is a recurrent feature in French travel writing texts concerned with motorized road transport. An early example is to be found in the opening paragraph of Maillart's *La Voie cruelle*: 'S'il ne fait pas plus chaud demain lorsque je vous conduirai à la gare, l'auto risque fort d'avoir une panne: elle n'est plus capable de résister à de si grands froids.'[43] In other examples, *panne* results in the reinscription of corporeality into experiences of motorized travel, as the hapless traveller is required to get out of the vehicle and push. Thus, the passive driving of Bouvier and his travelling companion is regularly alternated with moments of physical exertion: 'En même temps, nous poussions comme des forçats.'[44] The overlap between motorized travel and pedestrian travel is often made explicit, as Bouvier exclaims at one point, 'Au bas de la seconde rampe le moteur s'étouffa. Il n'y a vraiment que les voyages à pied!' (p. 353) and Marre, travelling in the 1990s, recaptures such an experience as a result of antiquated transport facilities abroad: 'Une nouvelle crevaison en guise de bienvenue. Les véhicules sont tellement délabrés que les pannes sont fréquentes. Cette fois-ci, c'est notre service taxi. [...] Nous ne savons pas où nous sommes, on est complètement perdus. Alors, nous marchons.'[45] Beyond the predictable, serviced terrain of French motorways, French travel writers therefore dismantle dichotomies of fast, fluid, corporeally passive journeys on the one hand, and slow, unregulated, physically strenuous journeys on the other.

In 'Chapter Five: Walking Journeys', attention will be given to pedestrian travel writers who critique motorized transport for reasons including the assumed physical effortlessness of such transport, in comparison with displacements on foot. To the extent that motorized journeys only become physically demanding when the driver has to leave the vehicle and walk, the incidence of *panne* does not wholly

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[42] Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Culture*, pages undetermined.
[43] Maillart, p. 21.
[44] Bouvier, p. 263.
[45] Marre, p. 57. Forsdick has commented on the shift from motorized to pedestrian travel in Emmanuel Poirier's 1997 film *Western*. See Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher', p. 50.

undermine the assumed relationship between motorized transport use and corporeal passivity. Opponents of motorized transport also criticize motor vehicles on the grounds that the travelling subject, enclosed within a car, train, or aeroplane, gains only a very superficial perception of the world outside the vehicle. The theoretical basis of this argument, and the responses of French travel writers, will now be considered.

The curtailment of perceptions that is associated with the use of contemporary motorized transport technologies (during their periods of normal functioning) has been articulated by Maillart, in conjunction with other issues of corporeal and mental passivity: 'Je n'aime pas rouler, et sur une autostrade encore moins: cela me transforme en un automate abêti qui ne peut qu'écouter le ronron du moteur. Milan était proche, mais de notre "billard" on ne voyait rien, pas même les champs.'[46] Maillart acknowledges the motor car's effect as a barrier, and refuses to be denied full multi-sensory perception: 'Nous ne voulions pas davantage permettre à la vitesse de construire un "mur" isolant entre nous et la vie des alentours – bruits de voix, odeur. [...] Ce voyage serait le nôtre et non celui de la voiture' (p. 56). Maillart does not make explicit her exact strategy for overcoming the car's enclosing effect; however, she demonstrates awareness of the limitations that car travel may pose to perception.

In the context of motorized travel, visual perceptions in particular have attracted critical attention. In the mid to late twentieth century, comparisons between the windscreen and the cinema screen are particularly common, and are anticipated by Saint-Pol-Roux's assertion – 'Fauteuil d'auto: fauteuil de cinéma' – which also conveys the passivity of the experience in each case.[47] Kristin Ross has analysed the cinematic aspects of the motorized traveller's perceptions; drawing on Wolfgang Schivelbusch's definition of panoramic perception, she argues:

> The automobile and the motion it creates become integrated into the driver's perception: he or she can see only things in motion – as in motion pictures. Evanescent reality, the perception of a detached world fleeting by a relatively passive viewer, becomes the norm, and not the exception it still was in the nineteenth century. [...] Rather than representing driving, film is used to represent the kind of perception, the blurred sensation, that film and driving have brought about.[48]

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[46] Maillart, p. 42.
[47] Saint-Pol-Roux, p. 25. Sidonie Smith provides a useful survey of theories of automobility and perception: see Smith, pp. 169-71.
[48] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonisation and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1995), pp. 39-40.

The notion of cinematic perception in motorized travel continues to be advanced by the most recent French travel writers. Pascal Vercken, for example, observes: 'Lorsqu'on roule en auto, le paysage c'est le film fuyant, mobile, des choses qui se déplacent sur l'écran du pare-brise.'[49]

If it is the general consensus that motorized transport privileges visual perception, there is a need to address the implications of relative speeds for the superficiality of such perceptions. Contemporary travel writing demonstrates that users of motorized transport can effectively decelerate and suspend displacements in order to perceive more detail. Lothar Baier refers to *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute* as the first non-cinematic representation of manipulated temporality – 'Jusqu'ici, seul le cinéma savait jouer sur le tempo et produire des ralentissements surprenants; Carol Dunlop et Julio Cortázar montrent dans leur livre que la littérature peut [...] introduire des ralentissements';[50] however, the basic relationship of deceleration to perception is also illustrated much earlier by Bouvier in *L'Usage du monde*:

> L'agrément dans ces lents voyages en pleine terre, c'est – l'exotisme une fois dissipé – qu'on devient sensible aux détails, et par les détails, aux provinces. Six mois d'hivernage ont fait de nous des Tabrizi qu'un rien suffit à étonner.

Bouvier's text provides a particularly useful example of this relationship as it includes illustration of the other extreme – that is, the loss of detail when travelling at higher velocities: 'La vie nomade est une chose surprenante. On fait quinze cents kilomètres en deux semaines; toute l'Anatolie en un coup de vent.'[51]

Other writers have given attention exclusively to perceptions gained at high velocities. Unable to decelerate the progress of the commuter train he takes every Thursday, François Bon uses the technique of repetition in order to increase his perception of detail on the route concerned: 'Récurrence et répétition: chaque semaine, même minute, surgissement d'une même image, trop brève pour être retenue. [...] Le train ne s'arrête pas. Se préparer chaque semaine pour noter un détail

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[49] Pascal Vercken, *Sur la Nationale 7* (Paris: Zulma, 2000), p. 53.
[50] Baier, p. 99.
[51] Bouvier, p. 235; p. 130. Compare Boorstin, p. 103: 'My passage through space was unnoticeable and effortless. The airplane robbed me of the landscape.' Air travel, in Boorstin, is the paradigm case for the loss of perception in transit, but cars and motorways are also described by Boorstin as 'chief insulating agencies' (p. 118) and 'the climax in homogenizing the motorist's landscape' (p. 119).

supplémentaire.'[52] Bon identifies particularities of perceptions from a fast-moving train, which, he opines, make the traveller yearn to see and retain more:

> Cette fascination même que voir depuis le train provoque, par les effets de compression de la vitesse, par cette illusion surtout d'un monde dont on est le provisoire voyeur d'une intimité par l'arrière offerte, surgirait simplement le vieux rêve d'une proximité de la représentation mentale aux choses, proximité peut-être amplifiée par le fait même que cesse si vite le rapport visuel qu'on en a, qu'il faut retenir, qu'on a vu si peu le détail mais qu'on a été aspiré soi dans cette envie de mieux voir, envie de retenir, et le prodigieux sentiment d'évidence à quoi atteint ce monde qui ne vous demande rien, vous laisse si tôt repartir. (p. 84)

By contrast, in *Amérique*, Jean Baudrillard eschews familiarity and valorizes the superficial impressions gained at speed:

> Ce travelling ne souffre pas d'exception: lorsqu'il bute sur un visage connu, sur un paysage familier ou un déchiffrement quelconque, le charme est rompu: le charme amnésique, ascétique et asymptotique de la disparition succombe à l'affect et à la sémiologie mondaine.[53]

Caren Kaplan problematizes Baudrillard's idealization of pure travel on the grounds that it generates 'stereotypes and generalisations'.[54] In fact, Baudrillard's representation of high speed is in conscious alignment with the theoretical perspectives of Paul Virilio, who privileges disappearance: 'La vitesse de transport ne fait que multiplier l'absence, voyager pour oublier.'[55] Kaplan critiques such a standpoint as being conducive to irresponsible Orientalist and anti-feminist representation.

It is important to note, however, that the gaze of the high speed traveller is not necessarily engaged in interpreting superficial impressions of the outside world: whilst travellers may thematize the particularities of perception at high speeds, it is also the case that, in passenger displacements, the traveller may not always be looking outside – and even if he/she is, the image seen may simply be the reflection of the inside of the vehicle, including the traveller him/herself. The potential of contemporary transport technologies for detaching the travelling subject's focus from the outside world is crucial to understandings of the specificity of travel writing texts concerned with motorized as opposed to non-motorized displacements, and this will be considered in the following section in relation to the interpersonal dimensions of

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[52] François Bon, *Paysage fer* (Paris: Verdier, 2000), p. 9.
[53] Baudrillard, p. 15.
[54] Kaplan, p. 75.
[55] Virilio, *Esthetique de la disparition*, p. 72.

motorized transport use. To conclude the present section, two works of travel fiction, Morand's *Flèche d'Orient*, and *Transports*, by Rémi Cassaigne, are presented for the illustration, across a broad chronological period, of high speed travel and introspection.[56]

In *Flèche d'Orient*, the protagonist notices, on the one hand, that air travel creates a new vantage point and vision – 'Ce qui, si longtemps, occupa les hommes et leur fit un oeil de miniaturiste [...], tout cela, en avion, disparaît. Une nouvelle planète nous est offerte' – but on the other hand, he is able to exercise selectivity with regard to sight, and can choose to ignore the world below: 'Non, je ne regardais pas par la fenêtre. Je lisais.'[57] In Rémi Cassaigne's fictional TGV travelogue, the traveller-narrator's observations frequently return to his own reflection in the train window: '*Noir, ombre, lumière, mon reflet. [...] Voici une zone de pavillons aux toits de tuile et des bois, un tunnel plus long: mon reflet semble flou, redoublé, vu comme à travers une eau courante.*'[58] Cassaigne's *Transports*, in particular, seemingly epitomizes the condition that is lamented by Boorstin in his reflections on contemporary travel, tourism and transport: 'Whether we seek models of greatness, or experience elsewhere on the earth, we look into a mirror instead of through a window, and we see only ourselves.'[59] In the following section, further consideration is given to competing theories of introversion, abstraction and sociability in motorized travel.

3.5 MOTORIZED JOURNEYS: IMPERSONALITY, INTROVERSION, SOCIABILITY

In 'Chapter Five: Walking Journeys', it will be demonstrated that proponents of pedestrian travel typically associate motorized transport with deliberate or incidental isolation. This viewpoint is corroborated by certain studies of motor vehicle use: Andrew Cross, for instance, claims that driving, in particular, is 'about being by oneself, alone in a vast landscape but alone with ease'.[60] The equation of motorized

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[56] The travelogues considered in this chapter do not feature equivalent representations of the self-reflexive gaze. However, Sidonie Smith has considered the association between rail travel and withdrawal from the outside world. See Smith, pp. 128-31.
[57] Morand, p. 40; p. 11.
[58] Rémi Cassaigne, *Transports* (Paris: Denoël, 2002), p. 90.
[59] Boorstin, pp. 124-25.
[60] Andrew Cross, 'Driving the American Landscape', in *Autotopia*, pp. 249-58 (p. 258).

transport with solitude is, however, contested by a number of scholars and travel writers. In this section, consideration will be given first to ways in which motorized travel may indeed appear to be an impersonal experience; theories and representations of the sociability of motorized travel will then be discussed.

In order to assess the alleged impersonality of contemporary motorized transport, two associations are of particular relevance: the association of motor vehicles with non-places; and the association of such vehicles with experiences of interiority and abstraction. Marc Augé argues that an integral feature of contemporary society is the existence of non-places, which are designed to be passed through, and contain no organic society. Within this definition, Augé includes contemporary means of transport and their associated infrastructural routes and buildings, as well as hotels and shopping centres. According to Augé, 'Les non-lieux médiatisent tout un ensemble de rapports à soi et aux autres qui ne tiennent qu'indirectement à leurs fins: comme les lieux anthropologiques créent du social organique, les non-lieux créent de la contractualité solitaire.'[61]

Much contemporary travel literature is concerned with the representation of non-place. Cassaigne, for example, emphasizes the artifice of the TGV network, in which the traveller is greeted by inhuman synthesized information announcements – '"Voie A, le TGV 6613 à destination de Lyon va partir..." La voix artificielle dissout dans l'air.'[62] In *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*, Maspero laments, specifically, the dehumanization of an environment that has been designed to accommodate contemporary transport networks:

> Pour gagner à pied Le Relais bleu, il faut passer sous l'autoroute. [...] La négation totale de toute humanité, le bout de l'horreur, une horreur mesquine, la plus angoissante solitude qu'ils aient connue depuis le début de leur voyage, la mort grise et nue.[63]

Regretted by Maspero, dehumanized spaces are actively desired by Baudrillard, who, in *Amérique*, claims specifically to seek out the non-places of America: 'J'ai cherché l'Amérique *sidérale*, celle de la liberté vaine et absolue des *freeways*, jamais celle du social et de la culture – celle de la vitesse désertique, des motels et des surfaces minérales, jamais l'Amérique profonde des moeurs et des mentalités.'[64] This

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[61] Augé, *Non-lieux*, pp. 118-19.
[62] Cassaigne, p. 19.
[63] Maspero, p. 274.
[64] Baudrillard, p. 10; author's italics.

emphasis opens him up to Kaplan's allegations of 'antihumanist postmodernism'. Kaplan argues that 'the theorist/traveler assumes he can escape cultural formations by displacing himself from the familiar'.[65] With regard to the association of defamiliarization, displacement, and antihumanism, it may be significant that Baudrillard privileges continuous, rather than syncopated, displacement: 'Quelque chose de la liberté de circulation dans les déserts se retrouve ici. [...] Les *freeways* [...] répondent idéalement au seul plaisir profond, qui est celui de circuler.'[66] It would appear that Baudrillard is consciously echoing Virilio, who specifically associates antihumanist attitudes with the valorization of uninterrupted mobility for mobility's sake:

> N'aller nulle part, voir tourner en rond dans un quartier désert ou sur un périphérique encombré, semble naturel au voyeur-voyageur. Par contre, s'arrêter, stationner, sont des opérations déplaisantes et, même, le conducteur déteste aller quelque part ou vers quelqu'un: visiter une personne ou se rendre à un spectacle lui paraît un effort surhumain.[67]

Since other primary texts considered in this chapter importantly thematize interruptions, Kaplan's allegations are not necessarily relevant to all contemporary French motorized journey travelogues.

Baudrillard's exoticization of dehumanized places revolves around the paradigm of the desert as non-place: 'Car la forme désertique mentale grandit à vue d'oeil, qui est la forme épurée de la désertion sociale. La désaffection trouve sa forme épurée dans le dénuement de la vitesse.'[68] The desert recurs within the literature of contemporary motorized journeys as a context in which the traveller experiences complete solitude. Françoise and Michel Franco illustrate the possibility for isolation accordingly: 'Nous avons effectué un parcours de 1200 km en huit jours et n'avons pas vu âme qui vive, ni traces fraîches de véhicules, ni subi de contrôle. [...] Mais il y a tellement d'endroits ou vous ne rencontrerez personne...'[69]

Conflicting attitudes appear with regard to whether motorized travel within deserts, isolated regions and non-places is experienced as a time of reflection or of oblivion. To some theorists, such travel is characterised by internal silence. In this

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[65] Kaplan, p. 81.
[66] Baudrillard, p. 54.
[67] Virilio, *Esthétique de la disparition*, pp. 74-75.
[68] Baudrillard, p. 11.
[69] F. and M. Franco, pp. 29-30.

respect, Augé, for instance, finds that car users are analogous to inanimate road markings:

> [The motorway's yellow lines] never make any mistakes, but [they have] nothing to say. And we too, silent, without regard for the impassive profiles of the drivers who pass us in the opposite lane, on the other side of the yellow line, we drive from one town to another without thinking about anything.[70]

This image would seem to be consistent with postmodernist theories of travel as disappearance, voiced both by Baudrillard and by Virilio, and anticipated by Saint-Pol-Roux's observation that 'On ne voyage que pour s'oublier'.[71] However, an alternative interpretation offered is that of motorized travel as a meditative experience, in the sense of enhanced awareness and interiority as opposed to oblivion. Thus, Andrew Cross theorizes monotonous car journeys as a privileged set of conditions for contemplation:

> Not that driving itself is meant to be that interesting. [...] A lot of time is spent travelling roads that change only imperceptibly. [...] Somehow effortless. And it is while floating through ... that you can exercise your deepest thoughts and most wonderous [*sic*] adventures.[72]

The association of motorized travel and increased interiority and introspection is found in travelogues throughout the period: Maillart, for example, describes her long-distance car journey as an interplay between travel in the physical world, and inner travel – 'cette alternative qui, pendant tout le voyage, me faisait aller et venir du monde objectif au monde subjectif.'[73] The inner journey is presented as a process of enlightenment, rather than a retreat into oblivion, and gives rise to breakthroughs and landmark events in its own right, as Maillart notes, for instance, 'un grave moment de [s]a vie intérieure qu'[elle] venai[t] de traverser' (p. 360). More recently, Cortázar and Dunlop have defined their exploration of the *Autoroute du Sud* as an inner experience: 'ce mois hors du temps, ce mois intérieur.'[74] Evidence would suggest, therefore, that the motorized journey can permit a shift of focus further into the self, rather than

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[70] Marc Augé, 'Roundabouts and Yellow Lines', in *Autotopia*, pp. 293-95 (p. 295).
[71] Sain-Pol-Roux, p. 37.
[72] Cross, pp. 252-53.
[73] Maillart, p. 159.
[74] Cortázar and Dunlop, p. 272.

dulling awareness in general along the lines of Saint-Pol-Roux's diagnosis that 'la vitesse mécanique nous produit l'effet d'une piqûre anesthésique'.[75]

Although contemporary transport technologies and infrastructure can allow solitary travel experiences in which contact with other people is minimal or non-existent, it is important to recognize that motorized vehicles have been used in the twentieth century by travellers for whom social interaction is a priority. In the first place, vehicles themselves provide a space in which several people can travel simultaneously: this aspect of vehicular travel gives rise to the possibility of interaction either with known companions, or with strangers encountered within a vehicle or associated transit zone. In *Across the Lines*, Cronin theorizes the train, specifically, as a site of 'language interaction':

> In the case of train journeys, [...] there is frequently a displacement from language interaction without to language interaction within, where the means of transport itself becomes as much a privileged point of language contact as the destination.[76]

Cronin's analysis of train compartments seems to be equally applicable to other enclosed forms of transport. In travel literature, the lack of communication between co-travellers within vehicles is often thematized; Maspero, for example, comments on the silence of RER passengers by parodying SNCF information signage:

> A minuit, dans le dernier train venant de Paris, le wagon est encore plein, il règne un grand silence fait d'absence et de fatigue. [...]
> LA CONVERSATION SE FAIT AUX RISQUES DU VOYAGEUR.
> LA SNCF DECLINE TOUTE RESPONSABILITE.
> L'USAGE DE LA PAROLE EST INTERDIT PENDANT L'ARRÊT DU TRAIN.[77]

In this way, the RER train is firmly assigned to the category of non-place, in which, according to Augé, relations are mediated by texts which assume a generalized user: 'Ainsi sont mises en place les conditions dans des espaces où les individus sont censés n'intéragir qu'avec des textes sans autres énonciateurs que des personnes "morales" ou des institutions [...].' For Augé, the presence of co-travellers does not counteract the fundamental solitude of the passenger, who is 'seul mais semblable aux autres' –

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[75] Saint-Pol-Roux, p. 30.
[76] Cronin, p. 118.
[77] Maspero, p. 93.

Augé offers the example of the air passenger, who, although seated in a cabin packed with other travellers, conceives of himself as being on his own: 'Pendant quelques heures (le temps de survoler la Méditerranée, la mer d'Arabie et le golfe du Bengale), il serait enfin seul.'[78]

There remains a need to address the question of interaction with specific travelling companions. It was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter's primary corpus that a significant number of travel writers travel in pairs. In some cases, the phenomenon of travelling together has been explored in terms of its impact on existing human relationships. For Marre, co-travel has provided a foundation for a lasting relationship with 'Dorothée': 'Nous vivons aujourd'hui ensemble et notre périple de cinq mois en Proche-Orient a scellé nos vies d'une façon unique et particulière.'[79] Similarly, an important dimension of Cortázar and Dunlop's journey is the opportunity it provides for the travellers' sexual explorations as a couple, which Dunlop represents as being intimately linked to the project of motorway travel; the motorway becomes a metaphor for their fusion – 'L'autoroute, c'est moi, toi nous' – and, as such, the journey is conceived as infinite: 'Nous ne quitterons pas l'autoroute à Marseille, mon amour, ni ailleurs.'[80]

Within representations of motorized travel with a particular companion, however, it emerges that such travel frequently results in mutual silence among acquainted co-travellers, which may be interpreted as a non-verbal rapport, or may align the experience of these travellers with those of the anonymous occupants of non-places. Thus, Cornet and Lochon travel silently together through an empty expanse, individually preoccupied with the condition of their car:

> Nous devons maintenant nous contenter de faire du vingt-cinq à l'heure pour éviter de nouvelles catastrophes. Horizon toujours vide. Nous découvrons l'horreur de l'horizontalité. Nous ne parlons pas. Parler de quoi? Une seule chose nous préoccupe: les pneus tiendront-ils? Et il ne sert à rien de discuter là-dessus.[81]

Similarly, Nicolas Bouvier and Thierry Vernet find that they are sometimes left without anything to say to one another en route, and drift off into their own private reflections:

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[78] Augé, *Non-lieux*, p. 121; p. 127; p. 13.
[79] Marre, p. 23.
[80] Cortázar and Dunlop, p. 218. Note that Dunlop's death is imminent.
[81] Jacques Cornet and Henri Lochon, *Deux hommes, 20 CV, deux continents* (Paris: Pierre Horay, 1954), p. 130.

> La fin du jour est silencieuse. On a parlé son saoul en déjeunant. Porté par le chant du moteur et le défilement du paysage, le flux du voyage vous traverse, et vous éclaircit la tête. Des idées qu'on hébergeait sans raison vous quittent; d'autres au contraire s'ajustent et se font à vous comme les pierres au lit d'un torrent.[82]

In this respect, the presence of a travelling companion does not alter the association, discussed above, of motorized travel and individual contemplation.

Saint-Pol-Roux suggests that high speed travel involves a selfish focus: 'Devise de la vitesse: MOI D'ABORD!', and there does seem to be a pattern of self-absorption or vacuity among some travellers who are reliant on contemporary transport technologies.[83] However, it is clear that the choice of motorized transport over corporeal modes of displacement does not necessarily preclude interpersonal encounters: social interaction with strangers has an important role both in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* and in *Rencontres et réalités en Proche-Orient*. Marre makes this prioritization of sociability particularly explicit:

> *Ce voyage aura été une découverte de la réalité du monde, de la réalité de soi, des autres... et de ma compagne, Dorothée.*
> *Nous avons traversé le Proche-Orient en bus. [...] Nous avons rencontré des Irakiens, des Palestiniens, des Kurdes. [...] Ce voyage, profondément humain, nous a transformés et a changé notre vision du monde.*[84]

In both texts, we are reminded that travellers may alternate motorized displacements with pedestrian explorations of particular localities, creating additional opportunities for encounters. Similarly, Cortázar and Dunlop discover the humanity of the motorway by interrupting their vehicle's progress and stopping in parking areas: 'L'essentiel: les CHOSES cherchent leur place, s'arrêtent et de ces choses se mettent à descendre des ETRES HUMAINS qui, dans la course implacable de l'autoroute, n'existaient qu'en théorie.' However, in *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*, observation takes precedence over encounters, and the authors retain anonymity: 'A tous les inconnus des parkings, dont le sourire ou le geste amical a ajouté plus de lumière encore à la toile de fond de nos journées.'[85]

American car travelogues have been theorized as being structured around the interpersonal encounter: according to Andrew Cross, 'More often than not, [...]

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[82] Bouvier, p. 57.
[83] Saint-Pol-Roux, p. 53.
[84] Marre, p. 9; author's italics.
[85] Cortázar and Dunlop, p. 68; p. 10.

narratives generated from "the road" evolve around encounters between people. They are usually less about actually driving than about the consequences of the drive.'[86] Cross contrasts this with the reality of driving long-distance in America, in terms suggestive of the impersonality of non-place:

> The reality is more likely to be a road trip spent meeting few people and encountering situations that are in fact rather mundane. [...] Little reason to communicate with others outside the car, only the occasional exchange when filling up with petrol and buying a coffee and donut. (pp. 250-51)

Although Sébastien Marre succeeds in meeting people, he acknowledges that the majority of encounters are subject to the social dynamics of touristic/consumer exchange:

> La plupart des contacts que nous avons se font avec les personnes liées au tourisme. Les échanges que je peux avoir avec un restaurateur ou un hôtelier ne sont pas fondés uniquement sur la rencontre et l'échange mais aussi sur un service et le paiement de ce service.[87]

This suggests interrelationships between choices of transport, accommodation and subsistence in travel: travellers choosing to use normative modes of transport (motorized vehicles) also tend to make use of other facilities associated with the general tourist. In this sense, through their choice of mechanized transport and commercialized accommodation, travellers may align themselves with the tourist or general consumer. In the light of MacCannell's analysis of degrees of authenticity within travel in *The Tourist*, it is perhaps to be expected that the alignment of travel with touristic and consumer practices should have consequences for the nature of interpersonal encounters within journeys.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The next parts of this thesis address and problematize the works of French travel writers who privilege embodiment as a means to authentic experiences of travel. This chapter concludes with a comment on embodiment and the specificity of French representations of motorized travel.

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[86] Cross, pp. 250-51.
[87] Marre, p. 45.

According to Simone Fullager, masculinist travel focuses on the point of arrival, whereas feminist travel concentrates on displacement. It is argued that displacement is a time of greater embodiment and receptivity: 'To be moved is to be affected, to be open to the reverberations of affect through the body. This openness requires a relation to otherness that is not aimed at holding the world still, object like.'[88] Fullager adopts Cixous's ideal of 'embodied motion' (p. 66) but it is notable that Fullager implies that passive displacements – 'to be moved' – can fulfil this criterion. French literature concerned with motorized travel problematizes Fullager's ideals of receptive, feminist, journey-focused travel: *Amérique*, Baudrillard's high speed travelogue, which thematizes displacement rather than arrival, provides a disembodied account and reveals an objectifying gaze. On the other hand, those travel writers who thematize interruptions to displacement, or focus on arrival at a series of destinations, seek out and demonstrate the embodiment and receptivity to otherness to which Fullager ascribes value. From such accounts, motorized displacement emerges, precisely, as a time of reduced embodiment and openness, and it is mainly by interrupting that displacement (or replacing it with slower, non-mechanized movement) that French travel writers are able to perceive and respond to difference.

Although Fullager presents motion as feminist, much twentieth-century thought about motion has focused on the masculinist implications of motorized transport.[89] In particular, attention has been drawn to the equation of speed with power, and the consequent desirability of fast, impressive vehicles – 'Speed may be destructive but it is also a powerful source of prestige for what the development theorist Susan George has called the "fast castes."'[90] American representations of the car in particular have consolidated the association of acceleration and virility. Drawing on examples such as Kerouac's *On the Road*, Wolfgang Sachs has theorized the prosthetic importance of the automobile in the popular imagination as follows:

> With the force of acceleration the motor propels the forces of the ego as well; that is why masculine fantasies and feelings of omnipotence crystallise about the automobile. A 'lame' vehicle that does not jump off the line when the light changes awakens impotence, even castration anxiety.[91]

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[88] Simone Fullager, 'Narratives of travel: desire and the movement of feminine subjectivity', *Leisure Studies*, 21 (2000), 57-74 (p. 67).
[89] See, notably, Kaplan, and Sidonie Smith.
[90] Cronin, p. 114.
[91] Sachs, p. 115.

In many contemporary French travel literature texts, mechanized travel lacks this aggressive symbolic function and is associated with greater humility. Certain writers openly contest the centrality of the car to the journey. This occurs throughout the period, with Maillart, for example, declaring: 'Ce voyage serait le nôtre et non celui de la voiture', and Vercken emphasizing that the car is merely instrumental:

> Dans le mot 'voyage', ce qui compte le moins c'est l'auto. Car la route n'est pas faite, comme on croit, pour rouler. Elle est faite pour le regard curieux. C'est la raison pour laquelle toutes les autos sont munies de fenêtres.[92]

Rather than using powerful vehicles as prosthetic devices that endow the traveller with superhuman capacities, many French travel writers efface the materiality of mechanized vehicles by representing them anthropomorphically or in terms of non-aggressive animals, in the manner that Cortázar and Dunlop represent their Volkswagen Combi van as a harmless pet with its own name and personality: 'Fafner [...] est a présent un docile éléphant [...], ses quatre grosses pattes caouchoutées. Aucun doute que Fafner est le troisième explorateur de l'aventure.'[93] A variation of this strategy is the representation of motorized displacements in human and animal terms that undermine the vehicle's power. Maillart, for instance, describes her journey in terms of a snail's progress: 'Comme un escargot, nous nous traînâmes sur la piste d'une petite vallée.'[94]

The predominance of ageing, inexpensive vehicles within the French 'genre littéraire voyage en automobile' seems to be connected to a non-materialistic approach to travel that mirrors pedestrian travellers' reversion to lives of greater simplicity, as will be discussed in this thesis in 'Chapter Five: Walking Journeys'.[95] Nicolas Bouvier demonstrates the compatibility of motorized transport with such aims by declaring in *L'Usage du monde*, within the context of a motorized journey: 'La vertu d'un voyage, c'est de purger la vie avant de la garnir.'[96] In making this claim, Bouvier is alluding in particular to the prospect of human encounters, and this is a notion that will be found to be of significance in the chapters of this thesis that follow.

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[92] Maillart, p. 56; Vercken, p. 7.
[93] Cortázar and Dunlop, p. 68.
[94] Maillart, p. 59.
[95] The category of 'genre littéraire voyage en automobile' is coined by Vercken, p. 41.
[96] Bouvier, p. 30.

Part Two: Returns to the Body

CHAPTER FOUR: TRAVEL, TRANSVESTISM AND TRANSSEXUALITY

4.1 TRANSVESTISM AND THE TRAVELLING SUBJECT

> Ils sont, par leur pratique volontaire de l'insu, outre la preuve d'une évolution récente dans les manières du voyage, les pionniers d'une exploration différente et, de ce fait, les découvreurs d'un nouvel exotisme.[1]

Cross-dressing and disguise, both within and outside the context of travel, are established literary themes of transnational and transhistorical importance, but in the contemporary period, they potentially gain new significance, both as a strategy for counteracting the perceived exhaustion of travel practices, and as a figuration of wider sociocultural interest in border crossing. 'Border crossing,' according to the North American scholar of Transgender Studies Jay Prosser, 'has become *the* trope for the end of [the previous] millennium.'[2] As Jean-Didier Urbain suggests, the reconfiguration of appearance – through disguise, or posturing – is one of a number of overlapping approaches to travel that are based on secrecy and the transgression of boundaries, and geared towards the discovery of 'un nouvel exotisme' that does not depend on large-scale geographical displacement.[3] In many cases, indeed, these travel practices are focused on the exploration of familiar, local spaces, and are therefore categorizable as 'voyages dans l'immédiat', or 'vertical travel', which has been usefully glossed by Cronin as 'temporary dwelling in a location for a period of time where the traveller begins to travel down into the particulars of place either in space (botany, studies of micro-climate, exhaustive exploration of local landscape) or in time (local history, archaeology, folklore)'.[4] Vertical travel is an appropriate frame of reference for various contemporary travel practices.[5] The present chapter is concerned specifically with travel writers who deliberately manipulate their outward identity, either with or without recourse to additional, related strategies such as the scaling down of geographical displacement, or the use of particular means of transport. The types of identity manipulation under consideration are as follows:

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[1] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 104. Unless otherwise stated, further references to Urbain in this chapter are to *Secrets de voyage*.

[2] Jay Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations: Transsexual Travelogues', in *Reclaiming Genders: Transsexual Grammars at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. by Kate More and Stephen Whittle (London: Cassell, 1999), pp. 83-114 (p. 83).

[3] See Urbain, p. 29; p. 104.

[4] Cronin, p. 19.

[5] See for instance Ridon, 'Un barbare en banlieue'.

a) Transvestism, perceived as temporary and reversible. This category includes both gender-focused[6] transvestism, in which the travelling subject is disguised[7] as a member of the opposite sex, and sociocultural transvestisms, in which any aspect or aspects of the subject's identity may be altered, for example: nationality, ethnicity, religion, occupation, class, marital status or sexuality.
b) Transsexualism, involving the permanent reassignment of gender identity through surgical and hormonal intervention.

It is intended that transvestism will be understood potentially to include both visual and non-visual manifestations of the identities concerned: costume, physical appearance, name, language, behaviour, attributes, possessions and lifestyle may all be subject to reconfiguration.[8] Transsexuality will be treated in this chapter as a separate phenomenon[9] of which the relevance to the critical study of travel and travel writing is a matter of current academic inquiry.[10] Superficial, reversible sex changes for the sake of travel will be assigned to the category of gender-focused transvestism rather than to that of transsexuality.

This chapter marks, therefore, a departure from the preceding chapter's focus on modes of transport, but it explores the inscription of corporeality into travel, by considering a range of travelling subjects who manipulate discernible identity, including their own bodies, and who, broadly speaking, emphasize personal immersion and

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[6] Current dictionary definitions of 'transvestism[e]' confine usage of this term to gender-focused cross-dressing, although there is no etymological basis for this restriction. 'Transvestism[e]' has also been used to describe instances of cross-dressing without a gender-identity element: see Roland Barthes, 'Pierre Loti : *Aziyadé*', in *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* suivi de *Nouveaux essais critiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1972 [1953]), pp. 170-187 (p. 180).

[7] The term 'disguised' is used here advisedly, as in some cases it may seem inappropriate to emphasize the transvestite subject's intention of dissimulation over and above, for instance, intrinsic or private enjoyment of cross-dressing. Roland Barthes does interpret transvestism as disguise, foregrounding the deception that arises from its practice: 'Les travestis sont des chasseurs de vérité: ce qui leur fait le plus horreur, c'est précisément d'être *déguisés*.' Barthes, p. 171.

[8] Since the etymology of 'transvestism' indicates that costume is an integral part of this practice, there is a strong case for confining the term to visual aspects of identity manipulation, and theorizing identity manipulations without a dress component as metaphorical transvestism, or else, where appropriate, the less specific phenonomenon of 'disguise'. This chapter opens up 'transvestism' to include non-visual symptoms on the basis that in the examples to be discussed, such symptoms accompany visual symptoms as part of a coherent identity transformation that encompasses various elements, including, but not restricted to, physical appearance.

[9] Note that L. Sullivan, for example, avoids homogenizing gender-focused transvestism and transsexuality in L. Sullivan, *Information for the Female-to-Male Cross-Dresser and Transsexual*, 3rd edn (San Francisco: Janus Information Facility, 1990).

[10] See Prosser, and section 4.5 below.

immediacy of intercultural contact, whether with people or places,[11] as opposed to corporeal detachment through accelerated displacement. This chapter also differs from preceding and following chapters in terms of originality of primary corpora: key writers of transvestic[12] travel literature include Pierre Loti, Alexandra David-Néel and Isabelle Eberhardt, who are already familiar subjects of critical inquiry within existing studies of French-language travel literature.[13] Thirdly, whereas it is suggested in the introduction to this thesis that literary interest in fundamental corporeal modes of transport would seem to be a local phenomenon, particular to contemporary French metropolitan cultures, the present chapter considers transvestic travel as a well-established[14] and international[15] theme within travel literature, if not within theoretical studies of travel.

Primary texts for discussion in this chapter represent a broad chronological period from the last decade of the nineteenth century to the first decade of the twenty-first century. The choice of early-twentieth-century texts largely overlaps with the corpus of primary travelogues discussed by Urbain in relation to issues of travel, physical disguise and secrecy.[16] Pierre Loti's *Aziyadé* (1893) is a crucial reference point in twentieth-century French studies of transvestism, and prefigures other approaches discussed in this chapter. Three early-twentieth-century travelogues examined by Urbain are discussed here. *Un voyage oriental*, by Isabelle Eberhardt, gives an account of Eberhardt's travels in the '*Sud oranais*' in the first decade of the twentieth century, disguised as an Arab male; ethnocultural and gendered transvestisms are central to Eberhardt's experience. Alexandra David-Néel's *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa* (1927) charts David-Néel's journey to Lhassa, under the assumed identity of a (female) Tibetan beggar: this involves ethnic and sociocultural, but not gendered, tranvestism. Maryse Choisy's 1929 travelogue, *Un mois chez les hommes*, is a less familiar work, also discussed by Urbain in *Secrets de voyage*. Choisy travels to Mount Athos and uses gendered transvestism in order to gain access to an all-male religious community.

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[11] Transvestism of the travelling subject can coincide with other important corporeal aspects of travel within a text. Alexandra David-Néel, *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa* (1927) is a notable example of an account of travelling on foot and in disguise. See Smith, pp. 34-56, for an integrated approach to issues of walking and disguise in the context of early-twentieth-century female travel writers including David-Néel and Eberhardt.

[12] 'Transvestic' is used in this chapter to describe texts and phenomena concerned with transvestism as problematized above. Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York : Routledge, 1992) offers a precedent for this usage, which differs from more specific definitions which gloss this term as being indicative of sexual gratification arising from gender-based transvestism.

[13] See, for example, Urbain.

[14] Pierre Loti's oeuvre provides numerous late nineteenth-century works of transvestic travel literature, of which *Aziyadé* (1893) is a classic example, commented on by Barthes et al.

[15] See, for example, Günter Wallraff, *Ganz unten* (1985) and John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me* (1961).

[16] See Urbain, p. 445.

The other major transvestic travel writer considered in this chapter is Marc Boulet, who barely receives comment in *Secrets de voyage* but is listed in Urbain's bibliography of 'voyageurs de l'immédiat'.[17] Boulet remains entirely unacknowledged by scholars of travel writing, and yet his steady output of transvestic travelogues from the 1980s to the present, and the appearance of a dedicated anthology of extracts in 2001, suggests that his recent practices of transvestic travel have enjoyed success as a French publishing phenomenon.[18] This chapter examines *Dans la peau d'un Chinois* (1988), *Dans la peau d'un intouchable* (1994), and the 2001 anthology, *Dans la peau d'un...*. Boulet's Chinese and Indian journeys involve specific ethnic and sociocultural transvestisms, but a wide range of variant transvestic practices are represented in the anthologized texts, including, for example, disguise as a psychology student, in 'Dans la peau d'un psy', and as a Muslim, in 'Dans la peau d'un musulman'.[19]

In *Secrets de voyage*, Urbain aligns transvestic travel with transsexual experiences, making passing references to *Le Saut de l'ange*, Maud Marin's 1987 autobiographical account of her surgical sex change from male to female. Urbain groups Marin's autobiography together with Choisy's transvestic writings as undifferentiated instances of 'le travesti[sme] sexuel', without analysing or commenting on issues of intergenericity.[20] This is consistent with Urbain's interest in travel as a coherent sociological, cultural and anthropological phenomenon, and his use of a variety of literary and non-literary sources for the illustration of diffusive themes.

It is proposed in this thesis that the intersection between transsexual narratives such as *Le Saut de l'ange* and transvestic travel writing would benefit from further scrutiny, and that contemporary theoretical interest in transgenderism could provide a relevant framework for the contextualization of late-twentieth-century transvestic travel writing. The final section of this thesis is therefore dedicated to the consideration of two contemporary French subjective narratives of sex change – *Le Saut de l'ange*, and a previously unexamined work by Andréa Colliaux, *Carnet de bord d'un steward devenu hôtesse de l'air* (2002). Colliaux, like Marin, underwent hormonal reassignment and vaginoplasty in order to assume female identity.

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[17] See note 16 above.

[18] This is consistent with Urbain's observation of the coincidence of 'la fièvre éditoriale actuelle des récits de voyage' and 'la publication de certaines aventures oubliées, méconnues ou insolites' which, Urbain claims, testify to a 'montée en puissance dans le public d'un goût que satisfont les tribulations et les périples obscurs d'occultes voyageurs' (p. 92).

[19] *Dans la peau d'un*, pp. 13-53 and pp. 275-303. Another anthologized text, 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé', has already been discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

[20] Urbain, p. 227.

This chapter will begin with an overview of existing resources for the critical reception of transvestic travel writing. The sufficiency of such resources will then be evaluated in the light of the thematic and metacritical content of key examples of twentieth-century French transvestic travel writing.[21] Related theoretical material emerging from disciplines within the social sciences will be drawn upon to address aspects of the primary corpus that seem to be neglected by the literary-critical methodologies already available. Finally, the relationship between transsexual autobiography and transvestic travel literature will be considered, with a comment on possible thematic and conceptual overlap with postcolonial travel literature.

4.2 TRANSVESTIC TRAVEL WRITING IN FRENCH: RECENT CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Important contributions to this area of study have been made by Roland Barthes, Marjorie Garber and Jean-Didier Urbain, all three of whom put forth understandings of transvestism in travel contexts as having both strategic and non-strategic aspects. Roland Barthes, in his analysis of Loti's thematization of transvestism in *Aziyadé*, theorizes the shifting role of costume as disguise and as the means of fundamental identity change:

> Il se costume d'abord pour des raisons tactiques (en Turc, en matelot, en Albanais, en derviche), puis pour des raisons éthiques: il veut se convertir, devenir Turc en essence, c'est-à-dire en costume; c'est un problème d'identité; [...] ce qui est abandonné – ou adopté – est une personne totale.[22]

In this interpretation, strategic transvestism is antithetical to another type of transvestism involving conversion and becoming, itself subject to the problematization that costume and essence are not necessarily to be conceived of as distinct. Urbain, for his part, analyses transvestic travel practices in terms of *nécessité*, and he relates this to the phenomenon of the contemporary traveller's desire to achieve a status of *incognito*.[23] Garber's discussion of transvestic travel in *Vested Interests* similarly revolves around the question of necessity. Garber elaborates ways in which transvestism within travel is or is not confined to the role of 'logistical asset'.[24] In structuring their discussions of

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[21] As mentioned above, Loti's *Aziyadé* falls slightly outside this period but is linked intertextually as well as thematically to the other works discussed, and will therefore be included in this chapter.
[22] Barthes, p. 180.
[23] Urbain, p. 165.
[24] Garber, p. 326.

transvestic travel around the question of necessity, both Urbain and Garber identify pleasure as a competing motive to explain transvestic practice within travel.

Section 4.3 below addresses the theorization of strategic aspects of transvestic travel in relation to specific examples of tranvestic travel writing. Consideration is then given, in Section 4.4, to the other motives for and results of transvestic travel that emerge both from theoretical writings specifically regarding transvestism in travel, and from primary transvestic travel texts.

4.3 'RAISONS TACTIQUES': STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF TRANSVESTISM IN TRAVEL

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

As a context for the possible strategic advantages of transvestic travel, it is useful to consider Erving Goffman's observation that societies, cultures and communities comprise 'front regions' which are broadly accessible, and 'back regions', from which those perceived to be outsiders are denied access. Dean MacCannell has analysed this concept in the specific context of touristic experience, claiming that 'back regions' are valorized in the popular imaginary:

> In our society, intimacy and closeness are [...] thought by some to be morally superior to rationality and distance in social relationships, and more 'real'. Being 'one of them' [...] means, in part, being permitted to share back regions with 'them'. This is a sharing which allows one to see behind the others' mere performances, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are.
>
> Touristic experience is circumscribed by the structural tendencies described here. Sightseers are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the native. [...] The term 'tourist' is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences.[25]

In MacCannell's analysis, the valorization of 'back regions' leads to the argument that tourists are provided with 'staged authenticities' that gratify their desire for an intimate view of places and cultures. It is proposed in this section that the mythologization of 'back regions' – notional, intimate spaces of cultural authenticity – also informs readings of the practices of transvestic travel writers, and is key to current analyses of transvestic travel.

It is significant that Barthes theorizes Loti's transvestism as part of a confrontation of a notional *interdit* from which he is excluded: 'Ainsi de l'Interdit: [...] un enclos dont vous êtes exclu. [...] [Loti] affronte bien des interdits; [...] que d'enclos

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[25] MacCannell, p. 94.

dont il doit trouver la passe, en imitant ceux qui peuvent y entrer!'[26] The use of transvestism as a disguise enabling, 'en imitant ceux qui peuvent y entrer', the transgression of spatial, cultural and social boundaries, recurs in transvestic travel texts throughout the chronological period under consideration, reflecting contemporary fascination with out-of-bound 'back regions'. According to Urbain, this type of transvestism works by making the traveller invisible *as a traveller*:

> L'incognito installe le voyageur dans une situation inégalable d'acquisition de l'information. [...] L'intrus est imperceptible. [...] Grâce au subterfuge endotique – l'immersion de soi dans la culture d'autrui ou dans la peau d'un autre -, l'observateur, à l'abri de son personnage, non seulement trompe la vigilance de ses hôtes mais annule en eux la résistance instinctive à l'étranger.[27]

Within primary transvestic travel texts, there is widespread awareness of the status of *incognito* that results from 'subterfuge endotique'. For Alexandra David-Néel, invisibility is a recognized but unanalysed requirement for the achievement of the goal of entering Lhassa: 'Mon incognito, d'où dépendait la réussite de mon voyage.'[28] Isabelle Eberhardt, on the other hand, actually begins to theorize the ethnographic expediency of invisibility: 'Je puis passer partout inaperçue. Excellente position pour bien voir.'[29] The same paradigm of indispensable invisibility remains in evidence in Marc Boulet's late-twentieth-century accounts of transvestic travel, with the additional reflection that by obviating the curious gaze of the travellee, the invisible traveller incurs unparalleled solitude. Thus, disguised as an Indian beggar of the untouchable caste, Boulet's position as observer is unrestricted: 'Je scrute les autres et, eux, ils ne me voient pas. [...] Personne ne m'accoste. Incroyable. Jadis, on m'aurait harcelé vingt fois. Je suis invisible.'[30] At the same time, this invisibility, although ethnographically advantageous, is a source of sadness: 'Je regrette leurs regards. [...] Je suis si seul. Invisible. Pour les Indiens et les étrangers' (p. 91). The assertion of subjectivity differentiates Boulet's practices of transvestic travel from purely functional uses of ethnographic subterfuge. Nevertheless, the alignment with objective and documentary approaches to transvestic travel requires investigation, and prompts consideration of interdisciplinary theories of overlapping practices.

In section 4.3.2, a possible intersection with investigative journalism is considered. Where transvestism is practiced for the sake of access to locations and

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[26] Barthes, p. 183.
[27] Urbain, p. 176.
[28] Alexandra David-Néel, *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa* (Paris: Plon, 1927), p. 95.
[29] Isabelle Eberhardt, *Un voyage oriental* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1991), p. 138.
[30] Marc Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), pp. 86-89.

situations that would otherwise be out of bounds to the traveller, certain ethical issues arise, relating both to the deception inherent in such a strategy, and to the matter of transgressing physical and moral boundaries; such issues have received attention in Journalism Studies.

4.3.2 ETHICAL ISSUES IN STRATEGIC TRANSVESTISM

Travelling in disguise for the sake of ethnographic advantage is methodologically linked to the practices of undercover (investigative) journalism, surveillance and espionage, all of which rely on similar types of deception in order to access information and impressions that would otherwise be denied: 'Undercover work enables the UO [Undercover Operative] to observe and funnel out inside information that could be obtained in no other way.'[31] Urbain gives a cursory glance to ethical issues in undercover investigation, signalling 'l'immoralité présumée de l'insu, de l'exploration clandestine, et de l'observateur caché'.[32] Urbain's treatment of this topic is restricted to an argument that, since exploration involves deception irrespective of disguise or secrecy, it is necessary to relativize claims that undercover operations are particularly immoral. This perspective could benefit from further attenuation in the light of related interdisciplinary theories.

Within the field of Journalism Studies, more attention has been given to the ethical implications of assuming a false identity in this way. Jennifer Jackson, for instance, identifies the contradictions typically inherent in the practice of deception for the sake of uncovering truths:

> Reporting the truth is said to be 'at the heart of the journalistic enterprise'. What, then, if the truth can only be found out by deceptive stratagems? Is not lying an indispensable stratagem for investigative journalism? Only by posing, by pretending to be what they are not and to know what they do not, do journalists succeed in [...] securing the evidence they need to expose corruption and mischief.[33]

In her analysis of the ethics of lying for journalistic purposes, Jackson argues that although it may seem hypocritical to lie in order to uncover the truth, the deception can be morally permissible where the importance of uncovering that particular information is considered to be overriding. She advises that 'we should not lose sight of the fact that it is overwhelmingly typical for lies to be told in circumstances that do not justify their

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[31] Art Buckwalter, *Surveillance and Undercover Investigation* (Boston: Butterworth, 1983), p. 128.
[32] Urbain, p. 228.
[33] Jennifer Jackson, 'Honesty in investigative journalism', in *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media*, ed. by Andrew Belsey and Ruth Chadwick (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 93.

telling' (p. 110) – thus, the fact of being a journalist is deemed not to validate every deceptive strategy irrespective of the subject of investigation, but rather it is essential to discuss cases 'in all their specificity' (p. 110), applying strict criteria from the discipline of Moral Philosophy.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt to establish whether the particular information uncovered by disguised travel writers is important enough to override those same travel writers' moral obligation not to deceive. However, given that deception, be it actual or potential, is an inherent part of travelling in disguise, and given that deception within related practices of undercover investigation is currently being problematized, it is necessary to address the question of transvestic travel writers' awareness of such issues.

It is noticeable that Eberhardt, Choisy and Boulet all refer to themselves at times as journalists.[34] Louis W. Hodges claims that the statement 'I am a journalist' functions as a avowal of integrity and of commitment to the cause of informing the public: 'I am a journalist' [...] includes a difference in self-perception and in the individual's sense of responsibility. The person who has decided "to be a journalist" acknowledges a primary responsibility to the audience.'[35] Iteration of the fact of being a journalist may therefore have a self-justificatory purpose in transvestic travel texts. Marc Boulet, for instance, explicitly moralizes his deceptive behaviour in this way:

> Tromper les gens ne constitue pas une fin pour moi. Si je me masque, c'est pour mieux découvrir la vérité sur tel ou tel problème de société. La métamorphose est juste une technique d'enquête. Je suis un faux Alexis Gaulois, un *faux faussaire*, mais un vrai journaliste.[36]

Boulet directly engages with ethical issues in journalism, affirming that journalists are entitled to disguise themselves for the sake of uncovering the truth: 'Nous pensions que la recherche de la vérité autorise un journaliste à se déguiser, c'est-à-dire à piéger et à espionner. Cette pratique, consistant à se masquer pour mieux démasquer, n'est pas indigne, à mon avis.'[37] In contrast to Jennifer Jackson's argument in favour of a case-specific evaluation of moral justification in the practice of deception for the sake of journalism, Boulet's ethical stance homogenizes the practices of journalistic disguise as consistently permissible.

Apart from Boulet, the only other transvestic travel writer to demonstrate awareness of the morally problematic aspects of using deception in order to transgress

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[34] This is also the case in Wallraff, *Ganz Unten*, and Griffin, *Black Like Me*.
[35] Louis W. Hodges, 'Defining Press Responsibility: A Functional Approach', in *Responsible Journalism*, ed. by Deni Elliot (California: Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 20-21.
[36] Marc Boulet, 'Dans la peau d'un faussaire', in *Dans la peau d'un...*, pp. 247-58 (p. 255).
[37] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un...*, p. 10.

boundaries is Maryse Choisy, who provides, in the *avant-propos* to *Un mois chez les hommes*, thirteen consecutive statements opening with the anaphora 'Si Dieu n'eût point voulu que j'y aille [...]', culminating in the conclusion that since God did nothing to undermine the success of her transvestic journey to Mont Athos, God must have condoned her behaviour, and therefore so too must the reader – 'Le lecteur se montrerait-il plus sévère que Dieu?'[38] Choisy is arguably ironizing rhetorical conventions of self-legitimation in travel, rather than engaging in earnest with moral issues relating to the use of disguise.

In addition to the matter of deception, transvestic journeys could be considered ethically problematic in terms of the transgression of boundaries that they invariably entail. The violation of boundaries is open to interpretation as an act of colonialist and/or metaphorically sexual violence and appropriation.[39] This subject has received attention within recent studies of cultural contact in Victor Segalen's *René Leys*, concerning the sexual and imperialist implications of a desired 'pénétration chinoise' in the form of access to the 'citadel of the Forbidden City'.[40] Problematic discourses of transgression and unauthorized appropriation are present in the transvestic travel texts under consideration – Maryse Choisy's prefatory comments in *Un mois chez les hommes* unambiguously reveal pleasure in sexualized exploitation of place: 'Mais il y a une autre volupté dans ce voyage: [...] la volupté du dépuceleur.'[41] Such comments coexist uneasily with her remark, on the following page, that in a previous book she wanted to examine the subject of prostitution from a non-exploitative position – 'Ni des yeux de consommateur, c'est-à-dire des yeux d'homme. [...] Il fallait voir les filles avec des yeux d'honnête femme' (p. vii).

Sara Mills has recently refuted traditional critical assumptions that women travel writers are immune from colonialist and sexually exploitative discursive tendencies.[42] Isabelle Eberhardt categorically aligns her travel motive with that of cultural appropriation – 'J'ai voulu posséder ce pays' – and performs the transgression of spaces posited as closed and intimate: 'Comme tout ce qui est marocain, la petite cour qui environne [...] a des airs de dignité et de mystère...'; 'Mais, pour distinguer toutes ces

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[38] Maryse Choisy, *Un mois chez les hommes* (Paris: Les Editions de France, 1929), p. xiv.
[39] This is an extensively theorized aspect of travel literature. See, notably, Pratt.
[40] See William Burgwinkle, 'Veiling the Phallus: French Modernism and the Feminization of the Asian Male', in *Gender and Culture in Literature and Film East and West: Issues of Perception and Interpretation*, ed. by Nitaya Masavisut, George Simson and Larry E. Smith (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 29-39.
[41] Choisy, p. vi. See also Maryse Choisy, *Un mois chez les filles: reportage* (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1929).
[42] See Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991).

choses cachées, il faut se faire admettre dans les *zaouïya*, y vivre, y acquérir quelque confiance.'[43]

Marc Boulet's late-twentieth-century transvestic travel accounts display discursive continuity with early-twentieth-century material, presenting unauthorized access as a penetration: 'C'est une région interdite aux étrangers et pour y pénétrer, je dois me déguiser en Chinois.'[44] His emphasis on literal sexual appropriation also links his late travel accounts to the travel-as-sexual-conquest paradigm of Loti's *Aziyadé*. Boulet subscribes to the view that romantic and sexual involvement is a necessary part of 'getting to know' a country: 'Mais j'avais toujours estimé qu'il fallait avoir aimé les femmes – ou les hommes – d'un pays pour le connaître. Ainsi me suis-je intéressé aux Chinoises.'[45] One transvestic travel project resembles sexual tourism, as it specifically involves exploring the Philippino bridal industry by posing as a prospective purchaser of a young bride.[46]

4.3.3 TRANSVESTISM, GENDER AND VULNERABILITY

In section 4.3.2 above, ethically-problematic aspects arising from transvestic travellers' tendencies to violate spatial, cultural and social boundaries were shown to include the frequent implication of the transvestic traveller in metaphorical and literal acts of sexual violence and/or appropriation. Conversely, it may be argued that the traveller is also a potential *victim* of violence. Theoretical work on issues of travel writing and gender suggests that biologically female travellers have an additional motive for reconfiguring their outward appearance: the maximization of personal safety.[47] With the exception of gender transvestisms undergone for entry into single-sex communities, such as that of Maryse Choisy in *Un mois chez les hommes*, the aim of gender dissimulation in travel is unlikely to be that of assimilation into travellee cultures. Instead, gender-focused transvestisms involving the adoption of an outward identity as male can ordinarily be supposed to function as a self-protective strategy; making the prior observation that 'women traveler-writers cannot help but be aware of their own physical vulnerability', Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan theorize 'a tactic available to women [...] traveler-writers: [...] the masking of their sexual being – that allows them to move more freely in a male-dominated world'.[48]

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[43] Eberhardt, p. 205; p. 82; p. 69.
[44] Marc Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un Chinois* (Paris: Barrault, 1988), p. 20.
[45] Marc Boulet, *Ma famille chinoise: A Pékin, dix ans après* (Paris: Seuil, 1998), p. 20.
[46] See Boulet, 'Dans la peau d'un fiancé', in *Dans la peau d'un...*, and, in this thesis, Chapter Two below.
[47] See, for instance, Holland and Huggan, p. 113. See also Smith, pp. 34-56.
[48] Holland and Huggan, p. 121.

Holland and Huggan provide examples of Anglophone travel writers who 'try to draw attention away from themselves as women travelers by pretending to imitate men, both in their attitudes and styles of dress' (p. 117), but they posit a scale of variable transvestism within which Isabelle Eberhardt appears as an extreme case, since she actually 'pos[es] as a man' (p. 118). Whilst the critical acknowledgement of issues of gender and vulnerability within travel is salutary, it seems likely to be of only limited relevance to the corpus of French-language transvestic travel texts, since Eberhardt and Choisy are apparently the only examples of French female travellers disguised as men, and both of these subjects detach themselves from proto-feminist travel issues by 'othering' women through generalizing statements which perpetuate stereotypical conceptions of women as too frivolous to be concerned with the possibility of travel:

> La femme est un être décoratif, musical, même quand c'est une commère qui gueule Porca Madona. [...] La femme est un être amusant, même quand elle dit des bêtises.[49]

> Les femmes ne peuvent me comprendre, elles me considèrent comme un être étrange. Je suis beaucoup trop simple pour leur goût épris d'artificiel et d'artifices. [...] Quand elle cessera d'être un joujou, [la femme] commencera une autre existence.[50]

Questions of vulnerability and safety are, if anything, effaced within texts such as *Un voyage oriental*, although it is probable that Eberhardt's use of gendered transvestism was at least partially a self-protective strategy as theorized by Holland and Huggan. Holland and Huggan find, however, that the thematization of hardship and adversity is a recurrent feature of travel literature texts, and they link this tendency to what they theorize as 'travel writing's propensity for self-congratulation' (p. 122) – it may perhaps be speculated that since Eberhardt's transvestism makes things easier for her in her travels, to draw attention to the details and extent of this facilitation would be to undermine her own resourcefulness and resilience as a traveller.

In fact, it would appear that the obverse of the self-defensive strategy outlined above is a far more frequent feature of transvestic travel texts: that is, the choice of transvestism adds, rather than removes, a challenge to the personal safety of the travelling subject. Typically, the Western traveller forgoes the security and privileges attached to his/her default 'home' situation and embarks upon a transvestic travel project which, on the one hand, allows insider access and the journalistic and ethnographic

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[49] Choisy, pp. 173-74.
[50] Eberhardt, p. 169.

advantages discussed in 4.3.1 above, but on the other hand represents voluntary exposure to adversity and danger.[51]

The thematization of the traveller's increased vulnerability is a factor that draws together primary texts concerning a wide range of transvestic practices, across the whole of the time period considered, and in the literatures of other countries. Thus, Loti's costume is introduced in *Aziyadé* as potentially 'fatale',[52] and Marc Boulet, writing in 1994, deliberately chooses the most adverse situation he can think of:

> Je me suis engagé à me métamorphoser en intouchable indien, [...] l'un des êtres les plus indigents de la planète. [...] Ma femme, Gloire, et mes parents disent que je suis fou de projeter cette expérience, que je vais y laisser ma peau. [...] Comment les contredire?[53]

Boulet's voluntary embrace of danger follows in the footsteps of Günter Wallraff's hazardous exploration of racism in Germany in *Ganz Unten*, which is acknowledged as a source of inspiration in the introduction to *Dans la peau d'un* .... The North American writer John Howard Griffin, who provides an unacknowledged precedent to Boulet's experiments with semi-permanent artificial skin pigmentation, also sets up a precedent of extreme danger in transvestism, as his attempts to pass as an African-American made him the object of abuse, blackmail and death threats. The association between transvestic travel project and personal vulnerability is so pervasive in the oeuvre of Marc Boulet that on the one occasion that Boulet's transformation does not result in increased danger, he comments on the exceptionality of this state of affairs: 'Pour une fois, je tiens un rôle de "rêve". Je jouis d'une existence matérielle supérieure à celle du vrai Marc Boulet.'[54]

Increased vulnerability in transvestic travel can also be generated by the danger of discovery, and the thematization of guarded secrets of disguise aligns texts with Urbain's secret travel paradigm in *Secrets de voyage*: 'Cette quête d'un plaisir ambivalent, d'un bonheur lié à la maîtrise de l'invisibilité de soi mais aussi, corrélativement, à la peur d'être démasqué, une angoisse qu'alimente le risque permanent du flagrant délit d'imposture.'[55] Urbain does not support this point with detailed examples of the discursive and thematic presence of such a 'peur d'être démasqué', but Alexandra David-Néel's *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa* provides an extremely useful illustration of this model of secret travel. David-Néel reiterates the

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[51] See David Le Breton, *Passions du risque* (Paris: Métailié, 2000), pp. 9-15, for an analysis of the valorization of risk and danger in the twentieth century.
[52] Pierre Loti, *Aziyadé* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1893), p. 12.
[53] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, pp. 7-10
[54] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un...*, p. 303
[55] Urbain, p. 174

importance of maintaining her *incognito*, eschewing interpersonal encounters and avoiding discovery throughout the narrative, providing constant updates on the safety of her secret. The paranoia attached to discovery suffuses the text – 'Et ce piéton qui semblait flâner le long du chemin n'avait-il pas bien l'air de nous épier?...' – but the likely consequences of discovery are never made clear.[56] The reader is left with a sustained impression of David-Néel as an bold and intrepid adventurer just because David-Néel keeps alluding to a danger that may be only hypothetical.

The thematization of survived vulnerability might be a manifestation of what Holland and Huggan describe as 'travel writing's propensity for self-congratulation'. It may be possible further to theorize this feature with reference to anthropological perspectives on contemporary attitudes to danger. According to David Le Breton, in societies in which safety and abundance are perceived to be the norm, there is a tendency to valorize survival and the deliberate pursuit of danger: 'La recherche du risque et sa valorisation ambiguë et récente, dans une société pourtant hantée par la sécurité, est certainement l'un des traits les plus significatifs de la modernité.'[57]

According to Le Breton, deliberate engagement in high-risk activities of any kind is a response to feelings of stagnation, dissatisfaction and emptiness: the subject embraces an increased likelihood of death 'pour se sentir enfin exister' (p. 17), since 'l'approche de la mort produit un sentiment d'identité renouvelé' (p. 13). Pierre Loti's state of mind prior to embarking upon a fatal transvestic journey is presented in terms suggestive of the feelings outlined above: 'Je retombe sur moi-même; je ne retrouve plus au dedans de moi que le vide écoeurant et l'immense ennui de vivre.'[58] Similarly, Marc Boulet, writing approximately one century later, commits himself to a period of extreme vulnerability as an *indien intouchable* as a response to feelings of being stuck in a rut and divorced from intense experience:

> A Paris, je tourne en rond comme un poisson rouge dans son bocal. [...] Je veux savourer une nouvelle aventure, exister à cent à l'heure, que chaque minute de cette métamorphose reste gravée dans ma mémoire jusqu'à ma mort.[59]

Since Boulet makes it clear that his *métamorphoses* are commissioned and are undertaken partly in the hope of capturing the public imagination – 'j'écrirai un livre, qui sera publié et m'apportera peut-être la richesse et la célébrité' (p. 7) – it is to be assumed

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[56] David-Néel, p. 67.
[57] Le Breton, p. 14
[58] Loti, p. 14
[59] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, p. 10

that Boulet's choices of transvestism reflect the contemporary exoticization of vulnerability and danger within popular culture in general.

As a final observation within this section it may be added that the potential of gender-focused transvestism to achieve equivalent effects within transvestic travel literature is questionable. If female gender identity is accepted as a position of relative vulnerability in travel, as compared with male gender identity, then espousing female identity could increase vulnerability in the same way as the cultural transvestisms discussed above. Michel Vieuchange's 1930 account of travelling in the disguise of an Arab woman is the only primary French example of this device. Marc Boulet, who has undergone, to date, several *métamorphoses*, conspicuously omits gender-focused transvestism. Jean Baudrillard's postmodern theorization of gender suggests that perhaps gender-focused transvestism is becoming increasingly obsolete as a source of diverse experience, due to the levelling of gender differences and the prevalence of androgyny: 'Mais le problème plus générale est celui de l'indifférence, liée à la récession des caractéristiques sexuelles. Les signes du masculin inclinent vers le degré zéro, mais les signes du féminin aussi.'[60]

However, if experimental gender-focused transvestism seems to have disappeared from transvestic travel literature produced by heterosexual French subjects, this may also be because the politicization of gender issues and the growth of Gender Studies as an academic discipline has shifted the representation of gender-bending into another context.[61] This subject is returned to in section 4.5., after a discussion of non-strategic aspects of transvestism in travel.

4.4 NON-STRATEGIC USES OF TRANSVESTISM IN TRAVEL WRITING

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

In section 4.3 above, it was demonstrated that transvestism within travel has been theorized as having specific strategic purposes. Transvestic practices fulfil these

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[60] Baudrillard, *Amérique*, p. 49.

[61] Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott provide a relevant introduction to the discipline of Gender Studies in *Gender: A Sociological Reader*, ed. by Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (London: Routledge 2002). They signal the importance given to gender as a key concept in sociology since the early 1970s, the shift from sociological to cultural analyses of gender in the 1980s and 1990s, and the discipline's progressive change of emphasis from issues of gender-based inequalities in the family and workplace, to questions of the constructedness and fluidity of sex and gender. According to Jackson and Scott, the following texts are particularly important and influential contributions to the late-twentieth-century study of gender identities: Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (London: Hutchinson, 1984); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); and Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).

purposes by reconfiguring the relationship between traveller and travellee. Theoretical studies of transvestism and travel would suggest also that the fact of altering perceptible identity has further implications for the travelling subject him/herself.[62] In particular, current critical inquiries into the subject of transvestic travel de-emphasize the pragmatic dimensions of travelling in disguise, and draw attention to the question of the intrinsic pleasures of costume and role-play. Jean-Didier Urbain exclaims: 'Et tout ce "cinéma" pour quoi? De plus en plus évidemment pour le plaisir.'[63] Marjorie Garber catalogues biographical evidence to suggest that Eberhardt's cross-dressing was enjoyed for its own sake as well as being a 'logistical asset'.[64] However, examples of explicit declarations of enjoyment of transvestism are hard to find in primary transvestic travel texts. With reference to Pierre Loti, Denise Brahimi conjectures: 'Mais dans son cas du moins, comment ne pas croire à un plaisir plus grand encore que la nécessité?'[65] In practice, Loti's expressions of the pleasure of transvestism would appear to be quite understated, and mitigated by other anxieties, as this example in *Aziyadé* demonstrates: 'Loti trouve qu'il n'est pas mal en effet, et sourit tristement à cette toilette qui pourrait lui être fatale.'[66] Since the authors themselves do not seem directly to foreground the *plaisir* underlined by Brahimi and Urbain, such an emphasis on *plaisir* may be first and foremost a matter of interpretation and/or speculation on the part of these critics, as is demonstrated by Garber's argument concerning the motivations of Isabelle Eberhardt: '[Eberhardt's] letter reveals what it seeks to conceal: "I swear to you, *it's not for the pleasure of dressing up as a man.*"'[67]

If the pleasure of transvestism is more likely to be implicit than explicit in the transvestic travel text, there does on the other hand seem to be evidence of displeasure explicitly experienced by the transvestic subject with regard to prior identity, regardless of the desirability or otherwise of the adopted identity. This is expressed in particularly emphatic terms by Maryse Choisy in *Un mois chez les hommes*, by way of introduction to her account of altering her body in order to assume an appearance of male identity:

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[62] See Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), pp. 150-159. Ricoeur's central argument in this work is that just as physical identity affects self-other relations, it is also the site of selfhood – the self's manner of being in the world.
[63] Urbain, p. 172.
[64] Garber, p. 326.
[65] Denise Brahimi, présentation du recit de P. Loti, *Au Maroc* (Paris: La Boîte à documents, 1988 [1989]), p. 16, quoted and italicized by Jean-Didier Urbain in *Secrets de voyage*, p. 167.
[66] Loti, p. 12.
[67] Garber, p. 327.

'Moi, j'ai voulu sortir de mon moi. Etre autre. N'importe qui! N'importe quoi! Mais plus moi, quelle volupté. Entrer dans une autre peau, quoi.'[68]

The metaphor of entering another skin is highly suggestive of the corporeal basis of the transformation and the transition in question, and Marc Boulet echoes this usage in the title to his 2001 anthology of transvestic travel experiences: *Dans la peau d'un...*. Choisy's introductory statements, quoted above, announce an escapist intention focused on departure from the self ['mon moi'] towards a new embodied location ['dans une autre peau']. The idea of movement into embodied locations is also present in Boulet's title. The displacements implied here raise the question of whether transvestism itself could amount to literal travel.

In the first place, it would seem that changes to the body can, with the support of contemporary feminist innovations in the discipline of cultural geography, be theorized as literal geographical displacements. Contemporary cultural geographers are calling into question dualistic thinking that sees the body as necessarily separate from its surroundings and are retheorizing relationships between 'internal' and 'external' space. In a study entitled *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*, feminist geographer Robyn Longhurst makes a case for the full integration of the human body into considerations of what constitutes physical space. She argues that the insides and outsides of bodies have a material reality and exist as actual physical locations. Therefore, on account of its physical reality, any displacement inside or on the surface of the body and its fluids and solids should be considered as actual geographical displacement instead of being marginalized within geography or dismissed as theoretical. She theorizes geographers' neglect of such bodily realities as being deliberate and political in intention and effect, as it seems to her that such neglect perpetuates masculinist conceptions of knowledge which create antithetical associations between fluidity and irrationality, and solidity and rationality.[69]

Such innovations, therefore, endorse new cartographies that acknowledge the material reality of bodies and their existence as actual physical locations by integrating them within understandings of geographical space. The expanded definitions of geographical displacement enabled by these developments within geography are mirrored, to some extent, by Holland and Huggan in *Tourists with Typewriters*:

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[68] Choisy, pp. iii-iv.

[69] Robyn Longhurst, *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1-2. Longhurst also provides a useful bibliography of related studies of the body's relationship to geographical space.

> The body itself constitutes its own private geography. [...] *Meatless Days*, as a travel text, traces the movements within the body as it acts upon, and is acted upon by, the various environments that surround it.[70]

Within this type of geographical framework, it should be possible to consider, for example, the alleged double mastectomy of Maryse Choisy in *Un mois chez les hommes* as a literal change of corporeal self-location – and indeed, Choisy herself construes body as location in her use of displacement discourse to designate the reversal of her transvestism, entitling the relevant chapter 'Retour à la femme'. However, the application of such theoretical opportunities to the other available transvestic travel texts would be of very limited usefulness, since alterations to the body are typically less drastic than in Choisy's text, and of a purely superficial or trivial nature, such as the adoption of costume, the temporarily dyeing of skin and hair (Boulet and David-Neel), or the decision to grow a moustache (Boulet and Wallraff). Although theoretically possible, the interpretation of these surface modifications as geographical displacements would in most cases involve overstatement of the subjects' actual perception of their bodies as geographical locations.

Irrespective of issues of geographical diplacement, Choisy's above-quoted attestation of the fulfilled wish to be other – 'être autre' – raises the question of whether transvestism can be theorized as literal travel as defined, for instance, by Jean-Didier Urbain and Franck Michel in *Désirs d'ailleurs*. Urbain's preface to *Désirs d'ailleurs* would seem to permit such an application. Urbain insists that large-scale geographical displacement is not an essential component of travel, preferring instead to gloss travel as follows: '*Voyager, c'est devenir autre*'; '*Voyager, c'est changer d'histoire de vie avant même de changer de lieu.*'[71] These two definitions would appear to be highly appropriate to transvestism, where this is understood to involve the alteration of the self.

However, it is essential to consider the extent to which transvestism may be found to result in 'becoming other' ['devenir autre'], as this would indicate the scope of travel experiences constituted by transvestic intent and practices.

4.4.2 TRANSVESTISM AND IDENTITY

In his analysis of Loti's *Aziyadé*, Roland Barthes remarks with possible irony: 'On sait bien que le vêtement *n'exprime* pas la personne, mais la constitue.'[72] With reference to Barthes' essay, Edward J. Hughes highlights Loti's apparent belief that adopting another

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[70] Holland and Huggan, p. 129. See Sara Suleri, *Meatless Days* (London: Collins, 1990).
[71] Jean-Didier Urbain, 'Préface', in Michel, pp. 5-10 (pp. 7-9); author's italics.
[72] Barthes, p. 181; author's italics.

cultural identity is simply a matter of donning the appropriate costume, and Hughes critiques Loti for being misguided and superficial in his attempt to adopt a different identity: 'For Loti: "J'entrais en vêtements européens par la grande porte, et je sortais en Turc par l'impasse". [...] What is arresting in Loti is the surface banality of this almost automised and improbable possession of otherness.'[73]

Subsequent French writers of transvestic travel accounts seem to share with Loti an assumption that it is possible convincingly to manifest diverse social, cultural, ethnic and gendered identities by modifying physical appearance and, where relevant, by learning requisite foreign languages. In some cases, transvestic travellers uphold Barthes' observation by expressing the belief that they have succeeded not merely in passing as another, but in becoming that other. This section examines individual attitudes to the possibility of becoming other, as revealed by representations of self-transformation through transvestism.

Writing in 1927, Alexandra David-Néel is complacent about the claim that putting on a costume, adopting a Tibetan child as an accessory, and darkening her own face with cocoa powder should be more than enough to convince onlookers that she is a Tibetan beggar as opposed to a white, upper class Parisian woman, to the extent that she is genuinely shocked when people of Tibetan ethnicity suspect her to be a European:

> Ainsi, en dépit de la peine que j'avais prise de me poudrer avec du cacao mélangé de braise pilée, malgré mes jolies nattes de crin de yak, je ne ressemblais pas suffisamment à une Thibétaine. Que pouvais-je inventer de mieux?[74]

David-Néel's crude attempts to darken her skin tone are evocative of the cultural cross-dressing taking place at the near-contemporaneous Exposition Coloniale de Paris of 1931, in which white people painted their faces with boot polish and exhibited themselves as black African subjects.[75] The caricatural effects of such performances, which essentialize ethnocultural groups in terms of stereotyped notions of skin colour, are currently being critiqued from postcolonialist perspectives. Whilst David-Néel's attitude towards ethnocultural difference is easy to historicize within colonialist contexts, the transvestic techniques of a Marc Boulet in the postcolonial context of the 1980s and

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[73] Edward J. Hughes, 'Cultural Stereotyping: Segalen Against Loti?' in *Reading Diversity: Lectures du divers*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and Susan Marson (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French and German Publications, 2000), pp. 25-38 (p. 34).

[74] David-Néel, p. 71.

[75] See Siobhán Shilton, 'Journeys between Cultures, Journeys within Cultures: understanding travel and exile in Ousmane Socé and Azouz Begag', in *Travel and Exile: Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. by Charles Forsdick ([n. pl.] : Association for the Study of Caribbean and African Literature in French, 2001), pp. 31-54 (pp. 31-33).

1990s do not seem so very far removed from the essentialist approaches of early twentieth-century examples. Like David-Néel and Loti, Marc Boulet works on the assumption that ethnocultural identities are obtainable and that it is just a matter of taking steps to eliminate superficial differences. In the following extract, Boulet consults his dermatologist about acquiring an 'Indian' complexion:

> - Combien de jours me faudra-t-il pour ressembler à un indien?
> - [...] Pour obtenir un ton chocolat comme les indiens, il faudrait peut-être vous induire d'une solution au nitrate d'argent. [...] Pour devenir indien, ça peut être utile.
>
> Il me demande alors quel type d'indien je compte imiter. [...] Volontairement, je ne lui raconte pas que je me déguiserai en intouchable et en mendiant. [...] Je ne veux pas devenir indien [...] pour réaliser un coup ou un exploit. Cette aventure, c'est une affaire entre les pauvres et moi.[76]

From this extract, it is clear that Boulet is taking it for granted that replication of 'Indian' appearance is, in the first place, perfectly feasible. Further, in the remarks of both Boulet and his dermatologist, there is noticeable slippage between the idea of looking like an Indian, and that of becoming Indian: terms denoting resemblance/imitation are alternated with 'devenir', as if these concepts are interchangeable.

Transvestic travel texts emerge as a site of exploration of the relationship between appearance and identity for the individual concerned, as the effect that surface alterations have on individual subjectivity receives comment within these texts. In Barthes' analysis, transvestism, including Loti's disguise in *Aziyadé*, is geared towards the gaze of the other who believes in the image presented by the transvestic subject:

> La personne n'est rien d'autre que cette image désirée à laquelle le vêtement nous permet de croire. [...] Le but du transvestisme est donc *finalement* (une fois épuisée l'illusion d'être), de se transformer en object descriptible – et non en sujet introspectible.[77]

However, the 'illusion d'être' would seem to be a much more pervasive aspect of transvestic travel texts than Barthes suggests.

David-Néel is an exception to this observation. Her transvestism serves the sole purpose of disguise: transformation of private identity is clearly not a goal, as she retains the sense that her outward identity is merely a performance that is required in order to achieve her objective of entering Lhassa: 'Ce qui était le plus fatiguant et devenait même parfois pénible à l'excès dans l'existence que je menais, c'était le rôle qu'il me fallait constamment jouer pour ne pas trahir mon incognito.'[78]

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[76] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, p. 15.
[77] Barthes, p. 183; author's emphasis.
[78] David-Néel, p. 158.

David-Néel mentally maintains self/other positionality with regard to Tibetans – she conveys the sense that the travellee culture to which she pretends to belong is external to her, by making comments and observations from the point of view of an outsider, as in the following exclamation: 'Etrange peuple et étrange pays!' (p. 152). However, she invites the reader to consider her to be entirely capable of becoming Tibetan, as she includes comments by her adopted Tibetan son that attest her potential for transformation: 'Vous avez pris la mentalité du personnage que vous jouez' (p. 310). This remark is presented as a reproach and a matter of regret: implicit in the portrayal of resistance to identity transformation is the attitude that David-Néel's own prior identity is culturally superior to that of the performed identity, an attitude that is articulated by David-Néel's adopted son, and not refuted by David-Néel herself.

Other transvestic travellers present their transvestism as actualization, rather than performance, of the chosen identity transformation. This implies a process of becoming an other to the self that existed prior to the transformation. The idea of othering oneself with regard to a prior self is present in Jean-Didier Urbain's theorization of travel generally – he claims that travel involves becoming conscious of 'soi comme un autre ou [...] soi comme l'autre de l'autre'[79] – and in transvestic travel specifically, to the extent that he notes a modification both of 'relations à la société et au moi d'origine'.[80]

The othering of the self with regard to itself is clearly demonstrated by Boulet in *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*: physical 'metamorphosis' leaves Boulet with a sense that his prior self is dead, as he looks into a mirror and experiences himself as a stranger to himself:

> Je regarde. Un Indien à la peau noir chocolat vêtu d'un lungi et d'une chemise sales avec un foulard pisseux autour du cou et des cheveux de jais hirsutes me dévisage. [...] Je ne le reconnais pas. Comment croire que c'est moi? [...] Il ne subsiste rien de Marc Boulet. [...] La métamorphose est trop parfaite et une grande tristesse m'envahit, comme si Marc Boulet était mort. [...] Je n'existe plus. A trente-deux ans, je viens de renaître comme un être virtuel.[81]

Boulet's reaction to his reconfigured physical appearance is counter to Ricoeur's theory that identity is not determined by the body's continuing resemblance to itself, but to the persistent awareness that the body is attributable to a particular self:

> L'appartenance de mon corps à moi-même constitue le témoignage le plus massif en faveur de l'irréductibilité de l'ipséité à la mêmeté. Aussi semblable à lui-même que demeure un corps – encore n'est-ce pas le cas: il suffit de comparer entre eux les autoportraits de Rembrandt –, ce

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[79] Urbain, in Michel, p. 7.
[80] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 177.
[81] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, pp. 82-83.

> n'est pas sa mêmeté qui constitue son ipséité, mais son appartenance à quelqu'un capable de se désigner lui-même comme celui qui a son corps.[82]

When Boulet looks at his costume and his newly-dyed skin and hair, he does not claim merely to see somebody closely resembling a person of Indian ethnicity, but actually to see *un Indien*. The conflation of (supposed) physical resemblance and authentic identity in evidence here indicates one apparently transhistorical aspect of transvestism in travel literature since the late nineteenth century, as Barthes identifies the same process in Loti's *Aziyadé*: '[Loti] veut se convertir, devenir Turc en essence, c'est-à-dire en costume; c'est un problème d'identité; [...] ce qui est abandonné – ou adopté – est une personne totale.'[83] Accordingly, Maryse Choisy, writing in 1929, manifests a similar belief that surface change equals changed identity: 'Il est vraiment curieux à quel point l'habit fait le moine. Une moustache à la Charlot, des lunettes à la Harold Lloyd [...] m'ont donné l'âme d'un homme.' Choisy then triumphantly reiterates her new identity as male, based on alterations to her physical appearance: 'Je suis un homme! Voyons, *je suis un homme UN HOMME*!'[84]

The pervasive equation of appearance and reality in such contexts invites a postmodernist reading of transvestic travel, involving Baudrillard's theory of the *simulacre*. In *Simulacres et simulation*, Baudrillard deconstructs the difference between simulation and reality:

> Simuler n'est pas feindre: 'Celui qui feint une maladie peut simplement se mettre au lit et faire croire qu'il est malade. Celui qui simule une maladie en détermine en soi quelques symptômes. [...] La simulation remet en cause la différence du 'vrai' et du 'faux', du 'réel' et de l''imaginaire'. Le simulateur est-il malade ou non, puisqu'il produit de 'vrais' symptômes?[85]

Following Baudrillard's logic, it could be argued that if Marc Boulet, for example, has acquired 'true symptoms' of a simulated identity, then that identity is not unambiguously fake. Theorization of transvestism as simulation is to be problematized, as Jean-Didier Urbain interprets the transvestism types present in travel literature as 'dissimulation'[86] of the traveller's position as external observer – and Baudrillard claims that dissimulation is distinct from simulation, and involves a pretence: 'Dissimuler est feindre de ne pas avoir ce qu'on a. [...] Donc, feindre, ou dissimuler, laissent intact le principe de

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[82] Ricoeur, p. 155.
[83] Barthes, p. 181.
[84] Choisy, p. 14; p. 24.
[85] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation*, p. 12.
[86] Urbain, p. 176.

réalité: la différence est toujours claire, elle n'est que masquée.'[87] Nonetheless, the categorization of specific cases of transvestism as simulation or dissimulation is assisted by the presence of affirmative or negative discourse surrounding the performed identity change: Maryse Choisy, for instance, having reconfigured her appearance, affirms that she *is* a man, rather than claiming that she is *not* a woman.

Baudrillard makes the further point that the present age is characterized by hyperreality – the '*précession des simulacres*'.[88] The concept of hyperreality may be of relevance to Marc Boulet's late-twentieth-century transvestic simulations of ethnocultural identities. In particular, it is noticeable that Boulet's principal works of transvestic travel writing, *Dans la peau d'un Chinois* (1988) and *Dans la peau d'un intouchable* (1994), as well as the 2001 anthology *Dans la peau d'un...*, all use front-cover photography in order to foreground Boulet's simulated identities in isolation from any images either of his previous appearance as a white Parisian, or of 'real' Indian or Chinese individuals with whom he might be compared. There is therefore a deliberate avoidance of the juxtaposition of images of 'before' and 'after' appearances, or of authenticity and imitation; instead, a single image of the 'metamorphosed' Marc Boulet is offered as the sole sign of the ethnocultural identity concerned.[89] This decontextualization of the 'copy' is highly suggestive of Baudrillard's observation that in the age of hyperreality, the supposed imitation is divorced from any original, authentic source object: 'L'ère de la simulation s'ouvre donc par une liquidation de tous les référentiels. [...] Il ne s'agit plus d'imitation, ni de redoublement, ni même de parodie. Ils s'agit d'une substitution au réel des signes du réel.'[90] An argument could therefore be made that Boulet's postmodern transvestic travel texts, by suppressing such points of reference, reinforce the *précession des simulacres* that has been diagnosed by Baudrillard as a feature of postmodernity.

Another symptom of Boulet's homogenization of simulated and 'real' ethnosocial identities is the persistent use of the 'nous' form to dismantle self-other positionality within the travellee culture and posit the metamorphosed self as a

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[87] Baudrillard, p. 12.
[88] Baudrillard, p. 10.
[89] *Dans la peau d'un Chinois* features a photograph of Marc Boulet in Chinese costume, holding up a Chinese passport, seated in front of a Chinese temple with no other people in the background. *Dans la peau d'un intouchable* features a photograph of Marc Boulet, costumed, with dyed skin and hair, squatting on a street, eating rice with his hands. Again, there are no other people in full view. On the front cover of *Dans la peau d'un...*, five labelled head-and-shoulders photographs of Marc Boulet in various disguises are provided in isolation.
[90] Baudrillard, p. 11.

performative member of that culture:[91] 'Nous, les mâles chinois, nous buvons et nous fumons. Ce sont nos seules distractions.'[92] The adoption of the point of view of the insider is, on the one hand, a consequence of the self-transformative aspect of transvestism; on the other hand, Boulet clearly interprets this as a strategic advantage within travel. Whereas in early twentieth-century examples of transvestic travel literature there is an implicit objective of *gaining access* to 'back regions' and intimate knowledge, Marc Boulet, explicitly following in the tradition of Wallraff, subscribes to the view that, for optimum knowledge of a culture and for the most authentic experience of that culture, it is necessary to have not only the strategic position of an insider, but also to experience everything from the insider's point of view. This opinion is articulated, for example, in the first section of *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*: 'Pour l'étudier, connaître la vérité, je dois devenir intouchable' (p. 10).

The association of intimacy, insider experience and truth is consistent with Dean MacCannell's analysis, quoted in section 4.3.1 above, and this would perhaps shed light on the emphasis of *Editions Bernard Barrault* in their marketing of *Dans la peau d'un Chinois*: the promotional statement on the back cover of this work includes the following points, which could reflect popular valorization of the veracity of intimate, 'lived' experience: 'Il est devenu Chinois. Il nous révèle sans exotisme la Chine et son peuple au quotidien. [...] Nous fait partager l'intimité [...]. Un voyage étrange mais toujours vrai.' Although Boulet categorically and uncritically asserts that 'pour découvrir la réalité d'une société, il faut s'y immerger',[93] the viewpoint that the insider's perspective is the optimum perspective for the traveller has been contested within twentieth century travel literature and theory. Notably, Todorov problematizes this attitude in his diagnosis of the fifth type of traveller – *l'assimilé*:

> Sa connaissance risque de devenir la simple reproduction de celle qu'ont d'eux-mêmes les habitants du pays; or, comme le suggère Segalen, on peut viser plus haut que le remplacement de la domination du *je* par celle du *tu*, de la déformation ethnocentrique par le stéréotype local.[94]

Boulet would appear neatly to conform to this description of the assimilated traveller: *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, for example, opens with the intention of escaping 'la déformation ethnocentrique', as Boulet lists clichés of Indian society and then declares:

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[91] A crucial reference point in discussions of performative identities is Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). See, in particular, pp. 171-90.
[92] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un Chinois*, p. 43.
[93] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un...*, pages unnumbered.
[94] Todorov, p. 381.

'Autant d'images d'Epinal, de visions exotiques que la métamorphose en intouchable indien balayerait sans doute' (p. 7). As the account progresses, Boulet reveals himself to be absorbing one local stereotype after another. Thus: 'J'ai tout de suite remarqué le teint chocolat de cette femme. J'ai acquis cette habitude indienne de définir les gens à la couleur de leur peau' (p. 148).

Boulet's self-immersive approach to travel could be theorized, then, as ethnographically *dis*advantageous. It is apparent that Boulet's experiences of *métamorphose* realize Segalen's theory that adaptation leaves the traveller less receptive to the full experience and perception of a place, since it annuls the sense of diversity:

> Étiologie. Cause: inadaptation au milieu.
> Développement. Son éphémérisme. Elle disparaît par l'adaptation au milieu.[95]

Boulet states explicitly that his ethnocultural assimilation has quickly made him indifferent to the daily realities of his situation: 'Voilà dix jours que je suis indien, et la nouveauté de cette existence a disparu. Totalement. Je ne remarque même plus la dureté du macadam quand je m'allonge dessus.'[96] On the other hand, in 'Dans la peau d'un musulman', Boulet reveals that he considers himself to benefit from the ethnographic advantage of the outsider, as he quotes and comments on Michaux's familiar affirmation of the cognitive superiority of the 'passant aux yeux naïfs', with the following deduction: '*Faire le ramadan alors que je ne possède aucune attache avec les musulmans, voilà bien l'occasion pour moi de vivre une huitième et excitante métamorphose.*'[97] This strongly suggests that Boulet anticipates dual benefits derived from the combination of one-off, initial unfamiliarity and subsequent, irreversible adaptation.

Emerging from these models of self-transformative transvestic travel is a decidedly binary conception of cultural identity which polarizes two positions of self and other, and does not conceive of any liminal or hybrid space between. Marc Boulet, for example, understands his identity change as a straightforward crossing from white to Chinese: 'De plus, *depuis que je suis Chinois*, les femmes se comportent différemment à mon égard. *Quand j'étais blanc*, les regards que je lançais aux jeunes filles m'attiraient leurs sourires discrets.'[98] There is thus no exploration of the possibility of cultural syncretism; rather, the transvestic travellers either steadfastly retain the positionality of

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[95] Segalen, p. 39.
[96] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un intouchable*, p. 151.
[97] *Dans la peau d'un...*, pp. 276-77; Boulet's italics.
[98] Boulet, *Dans la peau d'un Chinois*, p. 43; my italics.

'Other' – as in the cases of David-Néel and Eberhardt – or aspire to naturalization into the role of the 'Same' for the duration of the journey.[99]

However, the primary corpus of transvestic travel literature in French remains limited in terms of the number of individual authors actually contributing towards this area, so it is unsurprising that not all thematic possibilities have been exploited so far. Jean-Didier Urbain's comment on the universality of transvestism indicates that this area of travel literature has scope for being widened: 'Consciemment ou non, à des degrés divers nous sommes tous des transvestis, volontaires ou non, costumés par notre culture, habillés par les modes et les habitudes ou déguisés par goût.'[100] The final section of this chapter considers the literature of transsexuality in particular as an overlapping area with potential to widen the primary corpus of transvestic travel literature.

4.5 TRAVEL WRITING AND TRANSSEXUALITY

4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the discipline of Transgender Studies, North American scholar Jay Prosser has given critical attention to the 'pervasiveness of the journey trope in transsexual writings'.[101] In 'Exceptional Locations: Transsexual Travelogues', he specifically addresses the question: 'What is specific about the notion of the journey or transition to transsexuals and why do some autobiographies border on travelogues?'[102] Prosser's primary observation is that transsexual autobiographers emphasize the 'truism about autobiography as a journey into the self'.[103] He elucidates the travel trope in autobiography as follows: 'Writing the life, the trope evidences, inscribes it as a journey: a trajectory in which episodes lead toward a destination' (p. 116). This device, it will be noticed, is presented as being applicable to autobiography in general, irrespective of transsexual content.

As well as the prevalence of the 'life is a journey' trope, Prosser also identifies certain travel-related features specific to the autobiographies of transsexual subjects. These features are presented in support of a general argument that there is, generically, a blurring of boundaries between transsexual autobiography and travel writing. From

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[99] For a recent discussion of cultural syncretism, see Alex Hughes, 'Policing Intercultural Encounters: Adventures in Beijing', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 11.4 (2003), 427-42.
[100] Urbain, p. 231.
[101] Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 117.
[102] Jay Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations: Transsexual Travelogues', p. 88.
[103] Prosser, *Second Skins*, p. 116. See also de Certeau, p. 171.

Prosser's analysis, it is possible to extract at least four key observations which could form the basis of a schema of significant travel-related elements in the transsexual autobiographical text. Since this chapter section is concerned specifically with the characteristics of French-language transsexual autobiography, it is necessary to supplement Prosser's survey of exclusively English-language examples with a suitable French primary corpus. This chapter section will therefore apply Prosser's central observations to two French texts that fall within this category: *Le Saut de l'ange*, and *Carnet de bord d'un steward devenu hôtesse de l'air*.

4.5.2 THE TRANSSEXUAL AS METAPHORICAL TRAVELLER

On the basis of late-twentieth-century English-language texts including Raymond Thompson's *A Girl's Journey to Manhood*, and Duncan Fallowell/April Ashley and Nancy Hunt's *Odysseys*, Prosser remarks that writers of transsexual autobiographical accounts consciously present themselves as metaphorical travellers – they 'explicitly cast the transsexual life as a journey'.[104] The autobiographies of Marin and Colliaux are thoroughly consistent with this observation. On two occasions, Marin designates the transgendered subject as a metaphorical traveller – individually, when she states: 'Je vais poser mon bagage, voyageur fatigué, je vais me reposer à l'étape' – and collectively, in the comment that 'transsexuels, intersexuels, nous sommes des voyageurs inlassables'.[105] Accordingly, Colliaux introduces her autobiography with the following dedication: 'A Maud, à Simone et à mes soeurs qui ont fait ou feront le même voyage.' Colliaux also reflects on her own sex change as a private, inner journey undertaken: 'Le voyage que j'ai entrepris est personnel, intérieur, intime, et ne peut se partager avec personne'.[106]

An additional device present in the Colliaux text is the occasional juxtaposition of obviously travel-themed song lyrics, including a Jacques Brel fragment - 'Porter le chagrin des départs/ Brûler d'une impossible fièvre/ Partir où personne ne part' (p. 150) and another song with the lines 'Je n'ai jamais suivi vos routes/ J'ai voulu tracer mon chemin/ Pour aller plus haut, aller plus haut' (p. 71). By integrating such lyrics into the main body of her account, Colliaux further reinforces a sense of conscious self-identification with travellers.

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[104] Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations', p. 91.
[105] Maud Marin, *Le Saut de l'ange* (Paris: Fixot, 1987), p. 100; p. 119.
[106] Andréa Colliaux, *Carnet de bord d'un steward devenu hôtesse de l'air* (Paris: Michel Lafon, 2002), page unnumbered; pp. 146-47.

4.5.3 TRANSSEXUAL NEGOTIATIONS OF BINARIES, BOUNDARIES, AND TERRITORIES IN BETWEEN

Prosser's own interpretation of transsexual autobiography theorizes transsexual subjects as travelling within a metaphorical space between gender boundaries: 'I suggest that in fact transsexual autobiography's key function is to narrate this "territory between", to document the move between gendered locations.'[107] This argument occurs within the context of contemporary theoretical interest in discourses of border-crossing which in themselves offer a conceptual link between transsexuality and other forms of transit. Having observed that 'border crossing has become *the* trope for the end of [the previous] millennium' (p. 83), Prosser adds that 'the subject who has been elected to figure this transgression of boundaries is the transsexual' (p. 83). He states that transgenderism is symptomatic of postmodern rejection of binary identities in favour of 'an altogether more ambiguous and indeterminate condition' (p. 84). Marjorie Garber's similar argument relating to transvestism can also be applied to transsexuality and postmodernism: she argues that in transvestism, 'the binarism male/female [...] is itself put in question or under erasure' and that this is one among many instances of 'category crisis'; 'by "category crisis" I mean a failure of definitional distinction, a border that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another'.[108]

Prosser claims that he differs from existing perspectives on transsexual border crossing by insisting on the importance, within transsexual autobiography, of the stages in between becoming definitively one sex or the other. This is counter to the interpretation that transsexual autobiographers elide indeterminate transitional phases and present sex change as a direct shift from 'being unambiguous, albeit unhappy men, to unambiguous women. There is no territory between' (p. 91). Prosser illustrates the focus on transitional gender ambiguity with English-language examples.

Maud Marin's account complicates this analysis, since its starting point is an androgynous/hermaphroditic condition: the so-called 'sexe des anges'. At the outset, Marin's gender is not unambiguously male, but through sex change she achieves what she considers to be sexual determinacy as a female. The progression is therefore from indeterminate to determinate, rather than determinate-indeterminate-determinate as in Prosser's model.

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[107] Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations', p. 90.
[108] Garber, p. 16.

The argument that transsexual autobiography is concerned with the 'territory between' pre- and post-surgical sex change is in itself problematized by evidence of binary conceptions in the accounts of both Marin and Colliaux. Whatever the reality of sex change, Marin and Colliaux both reduce it to a division of binary selves by presenting the transsexual project as a question of killing one self so that another can be born. Colliaux says: 'Je veux tuer Bruno, afin que naisse Andréa' (p.77). Equally, Marin declares: 'Moi, je ferai mieux, je ferai vrai, je sortirai de moi, je serai veuve de l'autre, de celui que j'ai décidé de tuer' (p. 115). This discourse of self-destruction/fission is more in keeping with Urbain's interpretation of Marin's transformation as analogous to Loti's transvestic 'plongée suicidaire',[109] and emphasizes direct border crossing rather than transit zones in between.

Crucially, neither Prosser nor Urbain explicitly theorize the transgendered body as a site of literal geographical travel. Although Prosser hints at the spatiality of the body in coinages such as 'gendered location' and in the conflation of body and place as alternative 'somewheres' – 'There is a need to depart from somewhere (to get away from a specific body/place)' – he does not contextualize these comments within a geographical framework that posits the body as physical space.[110] It would therefore seem that the border crossings and in-between territories in question in Prosser's essay are intended as metaphorical. However, as with the transvestic practices discussed in section 4.4 above, it would seem that feminist innovations in cultural geography that reclaim the body as actual geographical place could equally be applied to notions of 'gendered location' in Prosser's essay, and thereby reconfigure these movements and territories as literal/geographical rather than metaphorical/abstract. Like Marc Boulet, Andréa Colliaux construes the body as location by representing dis-location – that is, she describes herself in terms of a consciousness that is looking at the body that contains it, and judging this body as a separate, exterior and inappropriate entity: 'La personne que j'avais en face de moi, lorsque je me regardais dans la glace, m'était inconnue; non, ce n'était pas moi, ce n'était plus moi' (p. 21). Sex change will therefore be an attempt to reconcile inner and outer realities – 'Pour que mon apparence extérieure soit en harmonie avec ce que je suis à l'intérieur' (p. 55). The division of inner and outer self and the changeability of the outer self, are consistent with interpretations of the body as alterable geographical location. It should therefore be possible to theorize the crossing of gender

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[109] Urbain, p. 178.
[110] Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations', p. 92.

boundaries, thematized in transsexual autobiography, as actual physical displacement. This would further consolidate the possible intersection with travel writing.

4.5.4 TRANSSEXUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND LITERAL TRAVEL

Even without making a case for the inclusion of trans-corporal movements within physical geography, Prosser's analysis identifies literal geographical travel as being a noticeable component of English-language transsexual autobiographies. According to Prosser, provisions for and legal restrictions on sex reassignment surgery are subject to national variation; as a result, transsexual subjects typically have to travel to another country in order to find a medical practitioner who is willing and able to perform the desired operation. 'From its beginnings as cultural phenomenon,' Prosser notes, 'transsexuality is linked with the trip abroad and the idea of foreignness.'[111] Prosser then illustrates this with various examples including Jan Morris's journey to Casablanca for this purpose. The argument is that the documentation of travel between clinics and hospitals in different countries can lend the transsexual autobiographical text the appearance of a travelogue.

The autobiographies of Marin and Colliaux would appear to be entirely consistent with this argument, as the itineraries of surgical sex change are a prominent feature of both texts. In the following exchange, Marin demonstrates how travel to sex reassignment clinics is a recognized, unofficial category of voyage:

> - Motif du voyage.
> - Je me rends chez un médecin.
>
> [...] Il sait, comme tout le monde le sait à la frontière. Je suis cataloguée: `Travelo allant se faire opérer chez un tel`. (p. 232)

Colliaux charts the details of her itinerary to Brighton in search of surgery: 'Demain, départ pour l'Angleterre par le train Eurostar de 8h 23' (p. 151); 'Comme j'ai hâte de prendre l`Eurostar, de faire le voyage Paris-Ashford-Hastings-Brighton' (p. 180). The narration of this itinerary obviously introduces elements of conventional contemporary travelogue into the autobiographical account.

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[111] Prosser, `Exceptional Locations`, p. 98.

4.5.5 TRANSSEXUAL IMMIGRATION

> A more appropriate analogical frame for the transsexual's writing of transition as a journey may be that of immigration: the subject conceives of transsexuality as a move to a new life in a new land, allowing the making of home, precisely an act of translation.[112]

Prosser's suggestion that it may be more appropriate to align sex changes with immigration rather than travel prompts a consideration of the different discourses of displacement present in transsexual autobiographical texts. That is, having established that the theme of the journey is prominent, it is useful to attenuate this observation by attempting more specific categorization of the types of journey in question. Whilst Prosser favours a single overarching categorization, it might be more appropriate to signal the presence of multiple, overlapping discourses of displacement which are subject to considerable problematization within the texts concerned.

The recognition of a discourse of immigration would nevertheless seem to be helpful, as there is considerable evidence of a desire to migrate towards a better life, on two levels: into the right body and into the right city or country. A 'désir d'ailleurs' is present in the two French examples, in exclamations such as Marin: 'J'aimerais vivre ailleurs, autrement' (p. 82), and in the preface to Colliaux's account which states that Colliaux 'ne rêvait que d'autres horizons, de départs pour de lointains ailleurs et d'envolées vers de purs sommets' (p. 10); these 'désirs d'ailleurs' are suggestive of immigratory intention as they occur within the context of expectations that the *ailleurs* in question would represent more tolerant and congenial milieux for the transgendered subject. Marin, for example, declares that she is migrating towards a more accepting environment: 'Je m'en vais vers l'autre monde, le seul qui m'accepte' (p. 119); Colliaux demonstrates similar reasoning in her idealization of Los Angeles as a queer-friendly metropolis: 'Quitter la France pour vivre à Los Angeles serait une solution de rechange, de toute évidence. Je mènerais une nouvelle vie, incognito, et tout pourrait recommencer, tout serait possible – ou presque' (p. 85).

Crucially, travel on both levels – to a new body and to a new city – is posited as a one-way journey, and this is a major difference from the transvestic travel writers considered in the first four sections of this chapter, who return 'home' to their prior embodied identities and prior home cities. Accordingly, it may be more appropriate to categorize *Le Saut de l'ange* and *Carnet de bord* as travel literatures, rather than travel writing, and to integrate such texts within discussions of literatures that thematize

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[112] Prosser, 'Exceptional Locations', p. 92.

immigration. However, it is significant that Marin and Colliaux apply metaphors of travel, not immigration, to their experiences of sex change. This serves to underline the reality that subjective definitions of travel do not always correlate with the specifications of travel writers and scholars of travel.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced a number of interdisciplinary theoretical resources – studies of journalism, postmodern cultural theories, anthropological studies and innovations in geography – to considerations of transvestic travel writing in French, and it has signalled previously unstudied, ongoing recourse to transvestic travel as a *contenu de voyage* in the late-twentieth-century travel writing of Marc Boulet. By investigating a case for the theorization of the body as an actual, alterable, geographical location, it has attenuated previous responses to tranvestism as a metaphorical journey in itself, suggesting instead that it could also, in some cases, be construed as literal travel.

Section 4.5 should additionally have elucidated, in a contemporary French context, the relationship of transsexual autobiography to travel writing. It is argued here that the extensive recourse of transsexual narrators to metaphors of displacement, as well as the thematization of journeys in search of surgery, indicates that transsexual autobiographies can be theorized as a literature of travel. The connection between transsexual autobiographies and travel literatures is further consolidated by geographical innovations – supported by the primary texts themselves – that sex change amounts to a change of embodied location. However, the nature of that change of location as a one-way journey differentiates transsexual autobiographies from transvestic travel writing, in which return journeys characteristically feature. Urbain's conflation of transvestic travel writing and transsexual autobiographies as analogous examples of gendered transvestism therefore requires attenuation in the context of a study of travel writing.

CHAPTER FIVE: WALKING JOURNEYS

Marcher, c'est vivre par corps, provisoirement ou durablement.

As for walking, you would have to be out of your mind. It would take forever.[1]

5.1 WALKING JOURNEYS: AN INTRODUCTION

Late twentieth-century interest in the phenomenon of walking is reflected by the appearance of a growing number of critical studies dedicated exclusively to the subject; these include anthropological works such as David Le Breton's *Eloge de la marche* (2000), and *Wanderlust*, by Rebecca Solnit (2000), as well as studies of walking in literature, notably Robin Jarvis's extensive thematic survey of walking, literature and Romanticism, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (1997). Charles Forsdick has signalled the 'focus on walking found in contemporary travel literature in French', but, aside from Forsdick's own contributions to scholarship in this area, the extensive thematization of the walking journey in late-twentieth-century French travel writing remains largely unexamined.[2] The objective of the present chapter is to expand understandings of the privileged status of pedestrian travel as a subject for contemporary French travel writing, through a comparative reading of selected walking journey travelogues, and interdisciplinary theories of potential relevance, including sociological and anthropological studies of walking, leisure, and the body; and contemporary geographical scholarship. In order further to elucidate the specificity of pedestrian travel, reference will also be made to theoretical and metacritical writings about competing, land-based, non-motorized means of transport – cycling and rollerblading. This marks a departure from existing scholarship, in which the contextualization of pedestrianism as a mode of transport is restricted to comparative analyses of motorized journeys.[3]

Forsdick has theorized late-twentieth-century practices of walking as a response to the 'end of travel' that depends on an 'esthetics of proximity' to reverse the perceived exhaustion of geographical space: 'Proximity reveals a degree of detail and underlines the inexhaustibility of the space in which travel takes place. It is, as a result, a

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[1] David Le Breton, *Eloge de la marche* (Paris: Métailié, 2000), p. 11. Further references to Le Breton in this chapter are to this text, unless stated otherwise; Ian Frazer, 'Carving Your Name on a Rock', in Zinsser, ed., *They Went: the Art and Craft of Travel Writing*, pp. 35-36.

[2] Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher: Uses of the Peripatetic in Contemporary Travel Literature in French', p. 50. Further references to Forsdick in this chapter are to this article unless stated otherwise.

[3] For example, in 'A quoi bon marcher', Forsdick discusses pedestrian travel in relation to the motor car

neguentropic – or anti-entropic – strategy.'[4] This point is usefully elaborated by Forsdick with an overview of several characteristics of pedestrian travel that differentiate it from normative, high-speed displacements – characteristics related to the status of the walker as a corporeally-active subject, moving at low speeds, without being enclosed by the walls of a vehicle.[5] The transgressive potential of the walker – who diverges from sociocultural norms of transport use – is also highlighted by Forsdick, in conscious alignment with the paradigm of clandestine travel that has been theorized by Urbain in *Secrets de voyage*. These important issues will receive further attention in the present chapter, in conjunction with an expanded corpus of primary texts and additional interdisciplinary theoretical resources. However, this chapter also approaches contemporary French walking journey travelogues from another, original angle: it is to be argued here that the status of pedestrian travel as a possible response to the 'end of travel' is complicated by the problematic intersection of walking journeys with popular contemporary French touristic and leisure practices – the *randonnée pédestre* and the *raid*. The apparent disruption of traveller/tourist binaries that is implied by the overlapping practices of travel writers and French holidaymakers will be investigated with reference to contemporary theories of leisure.

This chapter's discussion of the return to walking in contemporary French travel writing will be divided into four main sections, preceded by an introduction to a selected corpus of primary texts. The first section is concerned with the elucidation of the relationship of walking journey travelogues to their wider sociocultural context. Three subsections highlight, respectively, the rise of leisure practices of walking; contemporary valorizations of the body, exercise and physical self-nurture; and the rise of anti-urbanist, neo-naturalist and ecological ideologies in the late twentieth century. It is within this initial section that key issues of the corporeality of pedestrian travel are addressed.

The next section focuses specifically on a single aspect of pedestrian travel and embodiment: the privileging of olfaction in walking journeys. Forsdick has commented on the conduciveness of walking to multi-sensory perception, noting the centrality of olfaction to pedestrian travel;[6] the sovereignty of the gaze, which has been crucial to so

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[4] Forsdick, p. 56.

[5] Sidonie Smith has also commented on the privileged status of walking as a means of transport allowing intimate exposure to surroundings. See Smith, p. 32. Smith explores pedestrian travel in relation to Isabelle Eberhardt (pp. 34-44) and Alexandra David-Néel (pp. 44-56). She does not, however, register a contemporary resurgence of interest in walking, and she focuses exclusively on the specific combination of travelling on foot *and* in disguise.

[6] Forsdick, p. 58.

many theorizations of travel,[7] is undermined by walking journey travelogues, but the question of a theoretical framework for the analysis of smell in travel writing remains unexamined. In response to critical under-recognition of the problematics of representing smell in travel writing, this chapter negotiates a possible methodology for the study of travel writing and olfaction.

Having considered in detail a specific aspect of the sensory receptivity of the walking subject, the third section marks a shift in focus to another type of receptivity associated with pedestrian travel: the walker's openness to interpersonal encounters. The relative emphasis placed on interpersonal interaction in different practices of walking – the pedestrian travel of the travel writer, and the phenomenon of leisure walking – is considered, in order to elucidate the travel writer's choice to travel on foot. The fourth section of the chapter reassesses the specificity of pedestrian travel in the light of the competing claims of proponents of cycling, and theories of rollerblading – a new, hybrid, accelerated variant of walking that reconfigures the travelling's subject's relationship to space, whilst retaining the bipedalist position of walking.

5.2 WALKING JOURNEYS: SELECTION OF THE PRIMARY CORPUS

The primary corpus for this chapter is necessarily suggestive as opposed to exhaustive, as accounts of walking journeys undertaken by metropolitan French travellers are in abundant supply. The corpus of walking journey texts available includes both domestic journeys, in which a lone male traveller undertakes an extended walk within France, and walking journeys outside France, in which an individual traveller or a pair of travelling companions complete itineraries of impressive scale, spanning thousands of kilometres, often in extreme conditions such as the altitude of the Himalayas or the heat of the Sahara Desert.[8] From the vast number of walking journey accounts in print, a small selection of representative texts has been chosen for discussion in this chapter, as listed below.

Jacques Lacarrière's 1973 account of his pedestrian journey across France, *Chemin faisant*, has enjoyed considerable success as a publishing phenomenon and may have sparked a rise in the output of travelogues of domestic walking journeys since the late 1970s. S. Corinna Bille's 1957 travelogue, *A pied du Rhône à la Maggia*, has been

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[7] Mary Louise Pratt is paradigmatic here. See Pratt.
[8] For a discussion of the gendered aspects of walking, see Smith, pp. 32-56.

included as an example of a walking journey undertaken by a woman, and it also illustrates the difference in emphasis of a walking journey that pre-dates the 1970s rise of anti-urban ideologies and revalorization of corporeal experience.[9] Bernard Ollivier's *Longue marche* trilogy is included as an example of large scale individual exotic travel, giving the narration of a retired man's four-year walk from Istanbul to Xian, along the *Route de la Soie*. Alexandre Poussin and Sylvain Tesson's 1998 co-authored text, *La Marche dans le ciel*, charts a five-thousand-kilometre walk across the Himalayas, and represents exotic high-altitude walking journeys of scale undertaken with a travelling companion.[10] *La France par les petits bouts* by Jean-Michel Dagory (2001) is included as an example of a media-sponsored, televised, individual domestic journey along the Méridienne in France, and *On a marché sur la Méridienne* by Emmanuel de Roux (2001) is also discussed, in which the itinerary is superficially the same, but the emphases of the travel account are somewhat different.

Two additional texts, Yves Paccalet's *Le Bonheur en marchant* (2000) and Jacques Lanzmann's *Marches et rêves* (1988) are travelogues with a prominent essayistic element that also integrate guidebook-style advice for travellers.[11] These texts complement a number of issues arising within the other primary texts, and are crucial to understandings of the intersection between pedestrian travel writing and popular leisure practices, which is an issue in focus in the following section.

5.3 THE RETURN TO WALKING: SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXTS

5.3.1 THE RISE OF THE RANDONNEE PEDESTRE

> Je me prends à penser qu'il n'y a pas plus beau pays que le nôtre et qu'il est vain d'aller chercher ailleurs ce que l'on trouve chez nous. On dit qu'il y a quatre cent mille randonneurs en France. C'est déjà énorme. Mais il pourrait y en avoir quatre millions car entre la plaine et la montagne (la moyenne et les collines), les Vosges et l'Auvergne, la Savoie et le Périgord, la basse Normandie et la haute Provence, l'Ile-de-France et le pays cathare, la Bourgogne et le pays basque, tout, chez nous, incite à la balade.[12]

In the above quotation, Jacques Lanzmann makes a passing reference to the popularity of hiking in France. In 1983, La Documentation Française published a sociological study to account for the increased practice of the *randonnée pédestre* in France, *Chemins de terre*

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[9] See below, section 5.3.
[10] Note that this travelogue is treated by Franck Michel as representative of contemporary interest in walking. See Michel, p. 126.
[11] Lanzmann is another key primary source in Michel's discussion of walking, as in note 10 above.
[12] Jacques Lanzmann, *Marches et rêves* (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1988), p. 60.

– *Chemins de fer: pour une sociologie de la randonnée pédestre: étude sur les comportements sociaux des randonneurs pédestres*, by Odile Cointet-Pinell and Ferial Drosso. According to this study, *randonnées pédestres* suddenly became extremely popular in the early 1970s, and then witnessed an additional surge in popularity at the end of that decade. It is to be noted that *Chemin faisant*, Jacques Lacarrière's celebrated, apparently inaugural, account of a walking journey across France, appears in 1973, when *randonnées pédestres* are already well-established as a widespread national practice, and are about to benefit from a further increase in popularity. This indicates an unexpected reversal of the convention that mass practices of travel are preceded by the practices of the travel writer: the precursory status of the travel writer is apparently overturned in the context of late-twentieth-century walking journey travelogues.[13] The extent of overlap between the *randonnée pédestre* and pedestrian travel writing projects is as yet unexamined.[14] In order to elucidate the interrelationship of the travel practices of pedestrian travel writers and those of leisure *randonneurs*, theorizations of late-twentieth-century leisure – particularly Cointet-Pinell and Drosso's unique, exhaustive survey of hiking – may be a crucial point of reference. It is proposed that by evaluating the relevance of such theories as a methodological base for the reception of walking journey travelogues, it should be possible to locate the specificity of the approaches of travel writers.

In evaluating the motivations of practitioners of *randonnées pédestres* in late twentieth-century France, Cointet-Pinell and Drosso identify two far-reaching sociocultural developments which seem to be of particular relevance to walking journeys as featured in contemporary French travel writing. These developments can be summarized as follows: contemporary valorization of physical exercise and care of the body, as endorsed by medical milieux; and the rise of anti-urban ideologies since the late 1960s.

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[13] Compare Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, p. 75: '[Le voyageur] ne peut plus dire au touriste: "Je vais là où vous n'allez pas"; seulement: "Je vais là avant vous." Mais cette avance, toujours plus courte, est une différence de plus en plus mince.'

[14] Note the absence, in pedestrian travel texts, of disparaging comments about domestic facilities for the *randonnée pédestre*. This suggests recognition of a specific readership for the subgenre. See for instance Bernard Ollivier, *Longue marche*, p. 30: 'Si je sais à peu près pourquoi je marche, j'ignore pourquoi je me perds ici alors qu'il existe tant de sentiers balisés, reconnus, sécurisés, depuis les Alpes jusqu'à ma Normandie.'

5.3.2 LA VALORISATION DE L'EXERCICE PHYSIQUE[15]

Cointet-Pinell and Drosso find that the contemporary popularity of *randonnées pédestres* is fundamentally linked to the valorization of physical exercise in the late twentieth century. They note that French medical authorities consistently recommend walking for its benefits to health and well-being, and that this endorsement of walking is reinforced by the media: 'La marche est l'activité la plus souvent conseillée par le corps médical, relayé par les médias qui jouent et joueront de plus en plus un rôle incitateur' (p. 39). It is emphasized that physical effort is valued for medical as opposed to moral or spiritual reasons:

> L'exercice physique prolongé est au coeur de la pratique de la randonnée. Malgré la fatigue qu'il peut occasioner, cet effort est accepté, voire même très valorisé: non pas en vertu d'une 'morale de l'effort', [...] mais au nom des bienfaits immédiats et surtout différés qu'est censé procurer un tel usage du corps. (p. 50)

This is partly consistent with Rachid Amirou's claim that therapeutic value has always been paramount amongst explanations for leisure practices – 'Guérir l'âme ou le corps a été la suprême justification des déambulations et des plaisirs vacanciers.'[16] However, Amirou's thesis is that such leisure practices are ultimately equivalent to spiritual journeys of pilgrimage – that is, the valorization of physical difficulty *is* linked to a *morale de l'effort*:

> Quoi de plus plausible, en effet, que la fatigue ou l'épuisement pour signifier sa piété? On constate qu'une simple marche en montagne suggère l'idée d'une dépense qui rapporte, d'un épuisement qui permet de capitaliser ultérieurement des forces. La dépense physique apparaît ainsi comme un gage de piété touristique. (p. 99)

In practice, writers of walking journey accounts seem to avoid discussing their walk in terms of moral purification. Emmanuel de Roux explicitly rejects insinuations that his journey is a form of pilgrimage: 'Je ne me sens pourtant pas du tout dans la peau d'un pèlerin, fût-il laïque.'[17]

Crucially, Cointet-Pinell and Drosso interpret the focus on physical fitness as being part of a self-reflexive movement towards recuperating a body that is habitually neglected and effaced in day-to-day existence:

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[15] Odile Cointet-Pinell and Ferial Drosso, *Chemins de terre – Chemins de fer: pour une sociologie de la randonnée pédestre: étude sur les comportements sociaux des randonneurs pédestres* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), p. 50.
[16] Amirou, p. 97.
[17] Emmanuel de Roux, *On a marché sur la Méridienne: De la Mer du Nord aux Pyrénées* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 103.

> La pratique de la randonnée suppose donc une attitude réflexive et anticipatrice vis-à-vis du corps: à l'inverse de l'usage inconscient ou purement instrumental qui est en fait dans les gestes quotidiens, le corps est autonomisé, il devient objet de soins, d'attention et de prévision. (p. 51)

This analysis proves extremely useful to the critical reception of walking journey accounts, which characteristically thematize the walker's salutary return to corporeal experience and nurture of the body.[18] Time and again reference is made to the walking body as recipient of new attentions and the source of organic feelings of aliveness and well-being. This can occur as a celebratory revelation, as in the case of Poussin and Tesson who exclaim: 'Ça palpite fort en nos coeurs, la volupté de nos retrouvailles avec le corps nous envahit peu à peu.'[19] Bernard Ollivier, on the other hand, discusses his attitude towards his body in a self-aware, authoritative manner that demonstrates his consciousness of the physical implications of walking journeys. Ollivier's deliberate decision to make the body the object of attentions is explicit:

> Comme souvent les sportifs avant une épreuve importante, je suis [*sic*] concentré sur mon organisme. Une petite douleur intercostale, une autre au genou, une crampe au pied et je m'alarme, alors que je sais bien que ces manifestations sont au contraire la preuve que je suis en forme.[20]

Ollivier's alignment of long-distance walking with preparations for an arduous sporting event is consistent with André Rauch's theorization of the privileging of sport and physical prowess in late-twentieth-century French leisure and touristic practices; however, according to Rauch, an emphasis on training the body is not specific to walking, but characterizes various holiday activities including swimming and skiing.[21] In Rauch's analysis, the desire actively to experience the body during vacations is an understandable response to the effacement of corporeal experience in increasingly sedentary day-to-day lifestyles – 'les vacances doivent marquer ce retour à l'essentiel, [...] à la redécouverte des pulsions élémentaires, affectives et corporelles' (p. 10); however, the shift of focus onto body-maintenance is also arguably consistent with Baudrillard's theorization of a more generalized cultural paradigm of the cult of the body: 'Dans la panoplie de la consommation, il est un objet plus beaux, plus précieux,

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[18] Without specific reference to late-twentieth-century sociocultural norms of the cultivation of the body, or overlapping leisure practices, Forsdick has identified the importance of walking as an antidote to the effacement of corporeality in day-to-day life and in motorized travel. See Forsdick, pp. 56-57.

[19] Alexandre Poussin and Sylvain Tesson, *La Marche dans le ciel: 5000 km à pied à travers l'Himalaya* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1998), p. 24.

[20] Ollivier, p. 30.

[21] See André Rauch, *Vacances et pratiques corporelles* (Paris: P.U.F., 1988), pp. 10-11; p. 168.

plus éclatant que tous – plus lourd de connotations encore que l'automobile qui pourtant les résume tous: c'est le CORPS.'[22] This seems relevant to Emmanuel de Roux's emphasis: 'Ce qui m'importe, c'est d'abord l'entretien de mon corps, soudain devenu aussi précieux qu'une machine de luxe';[23] Lanzmann is even more explicit: 'A pied, parce que c'est retrouver la grâce tout en perdant sa graisse. [...] Se purifier.'[24] In this example, Lanzmann appears to be pandering to contemporary preoccupations with figure-maintenance and detoxification.[25]

Although walking seems to be open to interpretation as a narcissistic activity privileging a shift of focus onto the self and the cultivation of body-image, it is important to point out that there has been a tendency in the theorization and literature of walking journeys to insist that the walking subject is in fact focused on the outside world. In particular, David Le Breton maintains in *Eloge de la marche* that walking results in a state of receptivity and sensitivity to surroundings: 'La marche est une ouverture au monde.'[26] The walker's outward focus is described in the following extract:

> L'expérience de la marche décentre de soi et restaure le monde, inscrivant l'homme au sein de limites qui le rappellent à sa fragilité et sa force. Elle est une activité anthropologique par excellence car elle mobilise en permanence le souci pour l'homme de comprendre, de saisir sa place dans le tissu du monde, de s'interroger sur ce qui fonde le lien aux autres. (p. 63)

Consultation of primary texts leads to the conclusion that the focus of the walking subject is extremely variable in practice. To elucidate this, Emmanuel de Roux's account, *On a marché sur la Méridienne*, serves as a useful case study, demonstrating a range of typical factors affecting the focus of the walker's attention.

De Roux suggests that the walking subject is open to the world in the fundamental sense of being in it as opposed to being enclosed in a vehicle:

> De la fenêtre de mon compartiment [de train], je regarde le paysage défiler à toute vitesse [...]. En songeant que, demain, je serai de l'autre côté de la vitre, au milieu de ces arbres et de ces maisons vite oubliés parce qu'ils disparaissent en un instant.[27]

The walker's privileged position for observing surroundings seems to be derived from the fact of deceleration: 'Cette lenteur est aussi un atout. Sans même s'arrêter, le piéton a le temps d'apercevoir le petit détail, l'insignifiant parfois hautement significatif' (pp. 62-

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[22] Jean Baudrillard, *La Société de consommation*, p. 199.
[23] Emmanuel de Roux, p. 120.
[24] Lanzmann, p. 10.
[25] However, see below, section 5.3.3.
[26] Le Breton, p. 62.
[27] Emmanuel de Roux, p. 17.

63). However, certain aspects of the walking experience are found to diminish the walker's tendency or ability to focus outside the self. Physical discomfort and fatigue arising from physical exertion seem to dominate the walker's concerns: 'En réalité, on écoute d'abord son corps, la symphonie des muscles trop sollicités, le concert des menues douleurs en mineur, le grincement des articulations. [...] Ensuite, la fatigue venant, toute pensée cohérente est difficile' (p. 37). Adverse weather conditions are additionally found to inhibit outward focus: 'Engoncé dans ses vêtements de pluie, le marcheur se transforme en scaphandrier somnambule' (p. 38). Furthermore, monotony of environment seems to have a similar result: 'Du coup, je marche comme un métronome, la tête vide. Ennui.'[28]

Although Emmanuel de Roux periodically expresses displeasure at physical discomfort, it is to be recalled that his physical introversion is at other times presented in a positive light, as in the observation, quoted above, that his body is now being nurtured like a deluxe machine. It is therefore interesting to compare the 1957 walking journey account of S. Corinna Bille. Bille's travelogue serves as a useful case study demonstrating extreme introversion resulting from physical exertion. In Bille's account, such physical exertion is not simultaneously praised as being beneficial to personal well-being. Bille's account seems to be unaffected by the paradigm shift regarding the valorization of physical exercise in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

A pied du Rhône à la Maggia opens with an entirely negative presentation of the physical discomfort resulting from walking. The very first sentence illustrates this: 'J'entrevois ce départ, sa douceur et sa joie, séparé de moi maintenant par le souvenir douloureux de mes os et de mes muscles.' When Bille describes her experience of walking, she notes that the fatigue resulting from physical exertion not only sends her into a state of unobservant torpor, but also disconnects her from consciousness of her own body:

> Nous plongeons dans une torpeur qui nous fait devenir peu à peu herbes, insectes, morceaux de bois, terre. [...] Je ne suis pas encore redevenue moi-même, je ne sais pas très bien si ma main n'est pas une feuille de plantain et mes pieds deux mottes de sable.[29]

Physical immersion in the environment here results in feelings of synthesis with the given surroundings, and a resulting sense of alienation from the physical body. Moreover, Bille consistently demonstrates that the physical effects of walking also make

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[28] Emmanuel de Roux, p. 156. Cf. Maillart, p. 42: 'Je n'aime pas rouler, et sur une autostrade encore moins: cela me transforme en un automate abêti qui ne peut qu'écouter le ronron du moteur.'
[29] S. Corinna Bille, *A pied du Rhône à la Maggia* (Lausanne: Terreaux Lausanne, 1957), p. 29

her pay less attention to her surroundings: 'Je rassemble mes forces, je ne parle pas et c'est à peine si je donne un petit coup d'oeil éperdu à une renoncule des glaciers, à une parnassie tremblotante' (p. 30). This pattern of physically-induced introversion and fatigue culminates in the following example, in which Bille succumbs to general oblivion with regard both to her body and to the world around her: 'Moi, je me laisse tomber sur l'herbe, le sac dans le dos, et je savoure à nouveau un de ces instants si merveilleux où le voyageur fatigué perd conscience de son corps, du monde et de l'heure' (p. 40).

Bille's mid-twentieth-century travelogue contradicts contemporary emphasis on the walker's privileged position for an intimate exploration of surroundings, and serves to relativize such emphasis. By contrast, eulogies of walking are frequent in later walking journey travelogues, and the following section gives further consideration to the sociocultural context that may inform this pattern.

5.3.3 THE RISE OF ANTI-URBANIST, NEO-NATURALIST AND ECOLOGICAL IDEOLOGIES

According to Cointet-Pinell and Drosso, the increased popularity of the *randonnée pédestre* since the 1970s is also linked to the convergence of 'une accentuation de l'idéologie anti-urbaine, d'un fort courant écologique et néo-naturaliste, d'appuis politiques' (p. 126). Cointet-Pinell and Drosso claim that the contemporary appeal of this type of walking derives from its exoticism in the eyes of 'les couches moyennes et supérieures' (p. 51), to whom it appears as 'l'envers de la vie quotidienne, et d'une civilisation perçue dans ses aspects négatifs' (p. 47). They emphasize the *randonneur's* desire for deceleration and the freedom to control the pace of living: '"Aller à son propre rythme", "voir les choses à l'allure de l'homme" sont des formules qui reviennent comme des leitmotivs. S'inscrivant contre "l'accéleration" de la vie quotidienne, le randonneur aime à se reconnaître "un certain goût pour la lenteur"' (p. 51).

The *randonnée pédestre* is associated with spatial, as well as temporal freedom, and is said to represent an escape from urban enclosure – 'les espaces clos ou clôturés du domicile, du transport, du lieu de travail et même du jardin...' (p. 47). Finally, the third aspect of anti-urbanism to be expanded in Cointet-Pinell and Drosso's study regards political rejection of consumerist tendencies – 'une éthique de frugalité': 'Il s'agit de dégager son corps de l'assujetissement au confort matériel. [...] La randonnée serait aussi école de "déconditionnement" par rapport aux habitudes de consommation' (p. 51).

In contemporary theories of walking, there is considerable evidence of anti-urbanist, neo-naturalist, and to a lesser extent, ecological, ideologies. David Le Breton

links walking to nostalgia for an age preceding the advent of motorized transport: 'Une expérience antérieure à la technique, à un univers sans moteur, sans voiture, sans avion.'[30] He asserts that the decision to walk implicates a political stance: 'Elle est aujourd'hui, en principe, un choix, et même une forme délibérée de résistance à la neutralisation technique du corps qui marque nos sociétés' (pp. 96-97). In *Wanderlust*, Rebecca Solnit argues that walking is a refusal of enclosure, and is about being a body in the world, rather than inside a building or a car. She considers how urban planning is eroding outdoor space and constructing indoor shopping malls which are only accessible by car. All these developments supposedly conspire to make the human body seem anachronistic and inadequate, and walking is considered as a rejection of this process. Lanzmann's manifesto-like declaration of the virtues of walking foregrounds a return to a natural condition: 'C'est retrouver son instinct primitif, sa place, et sa vraie position. [...] Se purifier, retourner à l'originel.'[31] A reversal of the habits of consumerism is explicit and a questioning of the politics of the age of technology is implicit: 'Marcher, c'est perdre peu à peu tout ce que l'on a acquis de superflu. [...] C'est se mettre en question et en route dans un monde mécanisé' (p. 10). Yves Paccalet presents a moral argument for walking, characterizing it as the most natural and innocuous answer to all ills. In a section entitled 'L'innocence d'une drogue', Paccalet enthuses about the natural highs offered by displacement on two feet: 'La marche est une drogue. Délicieuse et sans danger. Elle provoque le plaisir sans la servitude'; 'La marche est une drogue licite, amicale, constructive.'[32]

Walking journey travelogues regularly reflect anti-urbanist thought, with particular emphasis given to the destruction caused by cars, and to the oppressively accelerated rhythm of urban life. The argument that walking is a more moral or natural alternative is usually present, explicitly or implicitly. Jean-Michel Dagory's appraisal of walking as a return to a calmer pace of life echoes Cointet-Pinell and Drosso's theory that walking is perceived as the opposite of the negative aspects of urban life. The focus is on temporal freedom and the desirability of deceleration:

> Pour moi qui suis citadin, stressé, speedé, HECé, ulcéré, avancer au rythme de l'homme qui marche, se calmer, jouir du temps qui s'écoule, c'est déjà un exploit phénoménal. [...] Il y aurait moins de grandes causes dramatiques si tout le monde prenait le temps de vivre.[33]

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[30] Le Breton, p. 53.
[31] Lanzmann, p. 10.
[32] Yves Paccalet, *Le Bonheur en marchant* (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 2000), pp. 185-90.
[33] Jean-Michel Dagory, *La France par les petits bouts* (Gordes: Le Relié, 2000), p. 36

Chemin faisant serves as a useful case study to demonstrate the range of anti-urban ideas typically present in walking journey accounts. Like Dagory, Lacarrière also meditates on the temporal change experienced whilst walking: 'Les heures du jour, vécues autrement qu'à Paris ou même à Sacy. [...] Je vis au rythme des saisons.'[34] For Lacarrière, notions of the acceleration of urban society are inextricably bound up with general anti-car sentiments concerning, above all, the threat that high speed poses to life. He reflects that 'vivre vite, c'est aussi mourir vite. Trop souvent, j'ai vu [...] leurs voitures écrasées [...] et le garagiste me disait chaque fois, avec le ton de la fatalité: "Ils ont voulu aller trop vite"' (p. 260). Lacarrière dramatically introduces the theme of destruction by cars in the plan of the 'Des Vosges à Alésia' phase of his journey on page 22: 'ANIMAUX ECRASES: LE MASSACRE DES ROUTES.' Dissatisfaction with the sociopolitical consequences of car culture is also indicated in the inclusion of a garage attendant's testimony of overwork: 'Il n'y a pas de Dimanche pour les autos, vous savez. [...] Pour nous pas de retraite' (p. 47). There is also evidence of anti-consumerist dimensions to Lacarrière's journey, as he describes in detail the extreme simplification of his material possessions, provisions and eating habits. Additionally, there is an immediate indication of nostalgic idealization of walking as an ancient, therefore natural, form of mobility:

> *Souvent, il m'arrivait le soir, au cours des premiers jours de cette longue marche, de contempler mes pieds avec étonnement: c'est avec ça, me disais-je, que nous marchons depuis l'aube des temps hominiens et que nous arpentons la terre.*[35]

The emphasis that late-twentieth-century pedestrian travel writers place on walking as a return to a natural, organic experience indicates a marked convergence with the motivations of French *randonneurs*: Cointet-Pinell and Drosso's schema for the reception of a popular leisure practice seems to be an appropriate framework for correspondingly anti-urbanist, neo-naturalist aspects of pedestrian travel writing. In section 5.4 below, a particular aspect of the perceived physical and psychological benefits of walking – the walker's receptiveness to sensory detail – will be investigated. Subsequently, in section 5.5, the chapter returns to considerations of the interrelationship of leisure practices and travel writing, with a discussion of characteristics that differentiate the pedestrian travel writer from mainstream *randonneurs*.

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[34] Jacques Lacarrière, *Chemin faisant*, 2nd edn (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 145.
[35] Lacarrière, p. 17; author's italics.

5.4 WALKING AND THE SENSES: FOREGROUNDING OLFACTION

Le nez, le premier organe du voyageur[36]

5.4.1 GENERAL

Whilst Cointet-Pinell and Drosso indicate that the popularity of *randonnées pédestres* is associated with a desired renewal of physical experience generally, in *Eloge de la marche*, David Le Breton makes the more specific point that the act of walking activates and stimulates all the senses. In the opening paragraph of his study, Le Breton signals the presence of multisensory involvement: '[La marche] plonge dans une forme active de méditation sollicitant une pleine sensorialité.' Le Breton goes on to explain the importance of this in the context of the visual bias of motorized, enclosed transport: '[La marche] ne privilégie pas le seul regard, à la différence du train, de la voiture qui instruisent la passivité du corps et l'éloignement du monde.'[37]

Examples of walking journey literature accord with Le Breton on the question of multisensory as opposed to exclusively visual experience, as attestations of engagement of the different senses are frequent and widespread. Yves Paccalet provides one among many illustrations of this: 'Chaque promenade est une musique de sons, mais aussi (voluptueuse confusion des sens) de parfums, de saveurs, de lumières, de perceptions tactiles.'[38]

Le Breton's discussion of sensory involvement in pedestrian displacements does not attempt to hierarchize the senses or emphasize any one sense in particular; rather, equal importance and interest seem to be attributed to each. It is therefore without theoretical precedent in the fields of anthropology and literary criticism that certain writers of walking journey accounts seem to single out the presence of olfactory experience as being especially worthy of comment. On their five-thousand-kilometre walk across the Himalayas, Poussin and Tesson claim and illustrate that the nose is the traveller's primary tool for orientation within and appreciation of his/her surroundings: 'Nous la retrouvons par le nez, le premier organe du voyageur, celui qui le précède.'[39] Similarly, Jacques Lacarrière expresses the opinion that domestic walking journeys are first and foremost an olfactory experience: 'Dehors, les arbres mouillés de pluie et la route luisante apportent, par la fenêtre ouverte, une odeur d'herbe grasse, de terre

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[36] Poussin and Tesson, p. 118.
[37] Le Breton, p. 11; p. 18.
[38] Paccalet, p. 31.
[39] Poussin and Tesson, p. 118.

brassée, de foin légèrement pourrissant. De nouveau je me dis: marcher en France, c'est cela.'[40] Since the diffusion in 1947 of André Siegfried's foundational paper 'Quelques aspects mal explorés de la géographie: la géographie des couleurs, des odeurs et des sons', there has been growing interest in France in the question of a 'géographie des odeurs'.[41] The work of contemporary French cultural geographers could provide a useful methodological base for the critical reception of olfactory representation in travel writing. The following problematics seem to be of particular relevance.

5.4.2 THE HISTORICO-CULTURAL STIGMATIZATION OF SMELL

In *Worlds of Sense*, Constance Classen traces the history of what she refers to as 'the olfactory decline of the West'.[42] From her analysis, it emerges that historically, the sense of smell has been subject to a negative and dismissive treatment in modernity. Classen demonstrates that French society in particular has attached a stigma to the sense of smell, which 'has suffered from an unremitting process of discrediting since the [eighteenth century]' (p. 15). The French geographer Jean-Robert Pitte comments on the contemporary rejection of olfactory experience – 'sa disgrâce locale et momentanée.'[43] He suggests that this might be linked to a fear of animality and a tendency to sanitize anything suggestive of it:

> Est-ce le si remarquable développement des odeurs et de l'odorat chez les animaux qui nous rend méfiants vis-à-vis de ce sens, nous incite à le considérer comme vulgaire et à le laisser largement en jachère? [...] L'époque actuelle est en délicatesse avec les odeurs. Dans les pays du 'Nord' [...] il faut être aseptisé, débarrassé de toutes les odeurs de vie et, éventuellement, masqué d'un parfum de marque. (pp. 8-9)

The stigmatization of smell and valorization of hygiene provide a useful context in which to read certain travel writers' emphasis on personal odour. Some examples of literature about walking draw attention to bodily smells arising from physical exertion. Sometimes this occurs only incidentally, and is offset by observations of other smells, including positive ones. For instance, Poussin and Tesson remark that their prolonged walking has made them very smelly: 'Les Russes accueillent chaleureusement les deux vagabonds puants (nous nous en apercevons à présent) qui font intrusion au milieu de leur

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[40] Lacarrière, p. 52.
[41] See André Siegfried, 'Un texte fondateur datant de 1947: La géographie des odeurs', in *Géographie des odeurs*, ed. by Robert Dulau and Jean-Robert Pitte (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), pp. 17-24 (p. 19).
[42] Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 15. See also Alain Corbin, *Le Miasme et la jonquille: L'Odorat et l'imaginaire sociale, XVIIIème-XIXème siècles* (Paris: Aubier, 1982).
[43] Jean-Robert Pitte, 'Introduction', in *Géographie des odeurs*, pp. 7-14 (p. 9).

bombance.'[44] In the case of Jacques Lanzmann, on the other hand, discussions of body odour are the full extent of the attention given to olfactory experience. Lanzmann dedicates an entire section of *Marches et rêves* to the question of 'Laver ou ne pas laver'. During walking journeys, he becomes aware of body odour, and this is the only odour mentioned in his work: 'Cela, malheureusement, ne suffisait pas à combattre la mauvaise odeur qui nous suivait pas à pas [...]. J'ai eu, cette fois-ci, l'occasion de vérifier que chacun de nous possédait son odeur spécifique.'[45]

Lanzmann's premise in this section is that the odour generated by walking should be suppressed as far as possible, lest it should detract from the visual pleasures of the journey: 'Rien n'est plus démoralisant que de traverser un paysage sublime suivi ou précédé d'une insupportable odeur secrétée par nous-mêmes' (p. 76). He follows this with advice about how many pairs of socks to take in order to maintain optimum hygiene.

Within contemporary theoretical work on smell, some attention has been given to the possible political implications of the denigration of human odours. In 'Imaginaire sensoriel du racisme. Odeur de l'Autre', David Le Breton explains how, within racist discourse, unpleasant odours are attributed to certain races and these supposed racially-specific smells are used as markers of alleged moral inferiority. A parallel phenomenon is found to occur in the context of social class, according to which it has been believed that people from under-privileged backgrounds have a distinctive smell which is offensive to 'superior' social classes.[46] In the late-twentieth-century walking journey literature studied, there is no evidence of smell being used to designate any individuals or groups of people as morally, socially or ethnically inferior.[47] Observations about personal odours are restricted to general comments about the walking subject. The question of how other people smell is avoided in these accounts.

If contemporary geographers of smell are correct in thinking that the stigmatization of olfaction reflects a desire to disassociate humans from animals, then this could make it problematic for the pedestrian travel writer to valorize the faculty of olfaction and/or insist on the importance of odours. A recurrent feature of walking journey travelogues is a eulogy of bipedalism and the superior status conferred on

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[44] Poussin and Tesson, p. 292.
[45] Lanzmann, p. 74.
[46] David Le Breton, 'Imaginaire sensoriel du racisme. Odeur de l'Autre', in *Anthropologie du sensoriel: Les sens dans tous les sens*, ed. by Colette Méchin, Isabelle Bianquis and David Le Breton (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), pp. 7-22 (pp. 7-22).
[47] This does not, of course, exclude the relevance of Le Breton's theory to earlier pedestrian journeys, such as Alexandra David-Néel, *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa*.

humans as a species because they stand on two feet. The fact of bipedalism is celebrated as a supremely human characteristic that has been responsible for the evolution of the human brain. David Le Breton expresses this belief in the opening section of *Eloge de la marche*:

> La faculté proprement humaine de donner du sens au monde, de s'y mouvoir en le comprenant et en le partageant avec les autres, est née du redressement de l'animal humain il y a des millions d'années. La verticalisation et l'intégration de la marche bipède ont [...] élargi à l'infini les capacités de communication et la marge de manoeuvre de l'homme sur son environnement et contribué au développement de son cerveau.[48]

Eulogists of walking and bipedalism foreground the virtues of the human condition and the superiority of humans over animals, so it would be unsurprising if they would prefer to gloss over the flip side of bipedalism – that is, the diminished capacity for sensory perception resulting from the same evolutionary processes that led to exponential intellectual growth.[49]

Interestingly, Yves Paccalet, whose work *Le Bonheur en marchant* contains the most elaborate and extensive praise of the bipedalist human condition, is also the only writer to confront the issue of human sensory inferiority compared with that of lower life forms.

> Je vois mal, j'entends mal, je sens mal.
> Je rate les meilleurs nectars de l'existence.
> Mon désespoir consiste à ne pas marcher sur six pattes comme l'insecte, et à ne pas sentir ce qu'il sent.[50]

In the above quotation, Paccalet's references to sensory experience are vague and abstract; in the following section, consideration is given to the problematics of verbalizing olfactory experience.

5.4.3 THE REPRESENTATION OF ODOUR: LINGUISTIC CONSTRAINTS

Geographical studies of smell highlight the lexical difficulties encountered when trying to describe odours. Jean-François Staszak says that the geographer who tries to describe odours does not have an adequate vocabulary on which to draw, compared with the vast lexical resources available for the notation of visual perceptions. He aligns the geographer with the traveller in this respect: 'Comme le voyageur, il décrit les régions en mettant l'accent sur ce qu'on voit (les paysages), se contentant de simples notations pour

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[48] Le Breton, pp. 11-12.
[49] See Forsdick, p. 49; Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Viking, 2000), p. 3.
[50] Paccalet, p. 90.

les bruits et les odeurs.'[51] Staszak lists the following aspects of smell which constrain the possiblity of effective description of olfactory experience:

> L'odorat est peu approprié par la raison (il passe d'ailleurs par l'hémisphère droit). Le lexique est très pauvre, et le discours sur les odeurs se réduit à d'imprécises évaluations quantitatives (ça sent fort), abuse des métaphores (parfums masculins *vs.* féminins) ou un renvoi plat à un produit odoriférant servant d'archétype (odeur musquée). (p. 51)

The difficulty of actually describing smells may be considered to manifest itself in walking journey accounts in various ways. It might, for example, be the reason why certain travel writers content themselves with very general statements about smell instead of attempting to differentiate between particular smells in their travel accounts. Yves Paccalet demonstrates such a tendency to express general excitement about the faculty of smell, and exclaims about 'parfums' and 'nectars' without going into any detail:

> Chaque balade m'est un bonheur du nez. Chacune a sa signature chimique. Chaque nectar me hisse à l'altitude du songe, dans cette stratosphère où ne subsiste que la meilleure partie de l'homme.
>
> Je renifle, je sniffe. Je m'emplis les fosses nasales et les alvéoles pulmonaires de nectars. Voici mes lignes de coke.[52]

Jacques Lacarrière, who attempts to include descriptions of smell in a detailed, consistent way throughout *Chemin faisant*, comments on the inadequacy of language for capturing odours: 'Ce cortège d'odeurs, de saveurs, qui vous suit jour après jour, l'arôme frais des souvenirs, comment les conserver autrement que par ces mots fanés?'[53] Attempts to describe specific smells do seem to rely on the methods identified by Staszak. Whereas Staszak speaks pejoratively of metaphors and comparisons as platitudes and distortions, Lacarrière, and Poussin and Tesson use such techniques uncritically, seemingly enjoying their own lyricism:

> À l'ombre des grands arbres, cela sent la barbe à papa, pas l'odeur acide de la résine du pin des landes, non! un subtile mélange de sucre, de miel et de confiture de fraises.
>
> Des odeurs de cuisine émanent de la maison, mêlées aux senteurs de goudron, de barques et d'eaux dormantes du canal. Ensuite [...] ce seront les senteurs sèches de la forêt, des ronces et des fougères.[54]

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[51] Jean-François Staszak, 'Pistes pour une géographie des odeurs', in *Géographie des odeurs*, pp. 49-59 (pp. 50-51).
[52] Paccalet, p. 32, p. 189.
[53] Lacarrière, p. 192.
[54] Poussin and Tesson, p. 118; Lacarrière, p. 24.

This section has examined specifically linguistic aspects of the representation of smells. In section 5.4.4 below, further problematics are discussed, with a focus on the potentially privileged status of travel writing as a site for the elaboration of olfactory experiences.

5.4.4 OLFACTORY PERCEPTIONS AND SUBJECTIVITY

The geographer Paul Claval puts forward the theory that smell has been neglected within geography because geographers have prioritized objective, scientific information, and the inherent subjectivity of olfactory experience would necessarily compromise geography's credibility as a scientific discipline. Claval uses this argument to explain the privileged status of visual data in geographical studies: 'La vue assure une prise plus objective et dont il est plus facile de parler avec précision que ce n'est le cas de l'odorat.'[55] Specifically, Claval explains that unlike sight, smell cannot be represented in an accurate, universally-comprehensible system: 'Les données de la vision sont réductibles à une échelle quantitative commune. Celles de l'odorat ne le sont pas' (p. 67).

It is of extreme interest that Claval is in favour of an interdisciplinary approach to olfactory geography, and suggests that travel literature might provide a more appropriate medium for the documentation and expression of the olfactory characteristics of place. He theorizes the traveller's freedom to focus on non-visual data as follows:

> Il semble que le voyageur qui rend compte de son expérience ne souffre pas des mêmes inhibitions [que le géographe]: il raconte une expérience vécue, il parle de lieux concrets et non de faits d'organisation de l'espace qui impliquent une certaine généralisation. Rien ne s'oppose à ce qu'il prête une égale attention aux [...] odeurs et aux goûts. (p. 59).

However, Claval's research on the olfactory content of French travel literature leads him to the conclusion that travel writers mirror the priorities of geographers and neglect olfactory experience in their travel accounts: 'On s'attendrait à trouver, dans les récits de voyage, une foule de notations destinées à nous faire participer à cette dimension essentielle de la diversité du monde. Elles sont rares: c'est cette observation qui motivait notre intervention' (p. 71).

Basing his research on nineteeth- and early-twentieth-century travelogues, Claval is apparently unaware of the widespread presence of olfactory descriptions in contemporary walking journey travelogues such as *Chemin faisant*. Claval speculates that olfactory descriptions are most likely to be found in the works of travel writers whose preoccupations are least geographical – 'dans les travaux plus impressionnistes de

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[55] Paul Claval, 'La littérature de voyage et la géographie des odeurs', in *Géographie des odeurs*, pp. 59-72 (p. 59).

gens soucieux de rendre sensible toutes les facettes de leur expérience des lieux', as opposed to 'chez les voyageurs dont les préoccupations sont proches de la géographie' (p. 71). There is some ambiguity here, but Claval is perhaps suggesting an opposition between objective/geographical and subjective/impressionistic travel accounts.

In practice, it would appear that, on the contrary, the systematic representation of smells in contemporary French travel writing examples aligns these travel writers with the producers of objective/geographical documents. To illustrate this argument, it is useful to consider the characteristics of *promenades olfactives*. The *promenade olfactive* is a geographical procedure for recording the olfactory characteristics of a place. The geographer walks through the selected area and attempts to record the smells he/she encounters. During this procedure, he/she tries to maximize objectivity by distancing him/herself from personal responses to the smells: 'L'observation naïve des formes se produit grâce à un effort personnel de l'esprit qui reste distant de ce qu'il observe, s'en détache et, de fait, s'extrait du monde pour y retourner ensuite.'[56] Transcriptions of *promenades olfactives* are generically fascinating for the researcher of contemporary travel literature, as they seem to simulate a *voyage dans l'immédiat*. Because the highly-detailed list of smells could only have been gathered by a person strolling through the area at leisure and without barriers to the environment, the fact that this *promenade olfactive* is a pedestrian journey is at all times inscribed into the text. On the other hand, the identity of the individual pedestrian is entirely effaced, due to the consistent use of impersonal grammatical constructions and the suppression of personal associations. This is illustrated by the following details extracted from a *promenade olfactive* carried out in the *quartier de La Huchette* in Paris:

> A l'odeur forte du mouton grillé s'ajoutent des senteurs de laurier et de thym provenant du mélange d'herbes dont les empilements de viande en tournebroche sont parsemés. [...] Des relents provenant des poubelles et de sacs de détritus sauvages agressent alors le piéton. (pp. 181-83)

In a lecture delivered to the Royal Geographical Society in 1914, Rudyard Kipling suggests that the traveller's perception of smells is, by contrast, deeply personal and guided by personal associations and evocations:

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[56]Lucile Gresillon, 'Le Paris qui sent les odeurs du quartier de La Huchette', in *Géographie des odeurs*, pp 179-208 (p. 189).

> I rank wood-smoke first [among significant odours in travel], since it calls up more, more intimate and varied memories over a wider geographical range to a larger number of individuals than any other agent we know.[57]

However, if we examine *Chemin faisant* as a case study of the systematic representation of olfactory experience in the travel text, it is striking that Lacarrière seems to strive towards a descriptive mode comparable to that displayed in geographical *promenades olfactives*; his priority seems to be to represent the smells objectively, rather than to delve into the emotional responses that they trigger for him personally:

> Le tout livré à la poussière, imprégné d'une odeur – que je retrouverai souvent en des lieux identiques – une odeur de cire rancie, de bois sec et de craie.
>
> Je frôle des fenêtres entrouvertes, [...] je côtoie des cuisines d'où vient une odeur de café et de linge mouillé, j'aperçois des visages embrumés, des gestes quotidiens.[58]

Subjective evaluation of the smells as positive or negative is generally avoided. The only noticeable difference to the description of smells in geographical documents is that here the presence of the walking subject is made explicit through the use of first person pronouns and verbs.

It may therefore be argued that within the lexical and conceptual limits identified by geographers concerning the depiction of olfactory experience, contemporary travel literature does exist as a source of objective, non-impressionistic descriptions of smells. Walking journey literature, when focusing on odours, mirrors the objective descriptive style found in geographical *promenades olfactives*. Contrary to the supposition of theorists, walking journey literature and geographical texts are able to converge, rather than diverge, when they are engaged in the representation of smell.

This section has accorded substantial attention to a previously under-examined aspect of pedestrian travel writing that is part of the more generalized condition of receptivity that is associated with walking as a mode of travel – a heightened state of responsiveness that Franck Michel, for example, has eulogized in *Désirs d'ailleurs*: 'La marche est propice à la découverte comme le désir est propice à l'ailleurs.'[59] In addition to theoretical emphasis on corporeal and sensory aspects of walking and receptivity, there has also been critical interest in the walker's openness to interpersonal encounters,

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[57] Rudyard Kipling, *Some Aspects of Travel: A Lecture Before the Royal Geographical Society* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1914), p. 11. Further smells are discussed in pp. 11-14. Note that this lecture is integrated into contemporary French geographical scholarship by the geographer Andre Siegfried. See André Siegfried, 'La géographie des odeurs', in *Géographie de odeurs*, pp. 17-24 (p. 21)

[58] Lacarrière, p. 26; p. 65.

[59] Michel, p. 127.

particularly outside the context of *randonnées pédestres*. The following section investigates the interpersonal dimensions of different practices of walking.

5.5 WALKING JOURNEYS: INTERPERSONAL DIMENSIONS

5.5.1 FOREGROUNDING THE INTERPERSONAL ENCOUNTER

The desire for interpersonal encounters is at the heart of the walking journey accounts of Lacarrière, Ollivier and Dagory. Lacarrière says that meeting people is the reason why one takes to the open road – 'Ce pour quoi l'on part sur les routes: découvrir, rencontrer des inconnus qui, pour un soir, cessent de l'être.'[60] Ollivier cites interpersonal encounters as his primary motive for travel: 'J'ai encore une appétence têtue pour les rencontres, les nouvelles têtes, les nouvelles vies.'[61] In line with Le Breton's theories of walking as receptivity and 'ouverture au monde', Ollivier claims that walking is the only true means of giving rise to such encounters in the context of physical displacement – 'le plus vieux mode de déplacement du monde est aussi celui qui permet le contact. Le seul, à vrai dire' (p. 23). The purpose of Dagory's walk is to visit primary schools across France and listen to what the children have to say: 'Tu es parti sur la route, seul, [...] demander ce qu'est la vie à ceux qui savent l'aimer mieux que toi.'[62] To emphasize the importance of these encounters, Dagory takes a stereotypical feature of travel – landscapes – and assigns it metaphorically to the children he meets en route: 'Ce périple, un voyage dont les paysages sont les enfants' (p. 47). Ollivier uses the same device, taking the touristic cliché of museum visits and replacing it with human encounters: 'Mon musée à moi, ce sont les chemins, les hommes qui les empruntent, [...] et une soupe, attablé avec des inconnus.'[63]

Such an emphasis on the interpersonal dimensions of walking is unaccounted for in sociological studies of the *randonnée pédestre*, and consitutes a fundamental point of divergence between related literatures, theories and practices. Theoretical perspectives on generalized practices of walking are however of some applicability to the travel writers studied. Le Breton schematizes walkers into two groups: solitary walkers and groups of walking companions. He theorizes the solitary walker as closed to contact generally: 'La marche solitaire a ses adeptes. [...] Le silence est le fond dont se nourrit le

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[60] Lacarrière, p. 263.
[61] Ollivier, p. 22.
[62] Dagory, p. 164.
[63] Ollivier, p. 23.

marcheur isolé.'[64] This is illustrated with the example of Rousseau, who is shown to resent and repel interruptions from people encountered en route. As far as group walking is concerned, Le Breton highlights safety as the main benefit of this, and alludes to the vulnerability of the solitary walker – 'Plût au ciel que jamais J. Lanzmann ne souffre lui-même d'une défaillance ou d'une boiterie' (p. 40). Le Breton states that within groups of walking companions, silence is necessary:

> Le silence partagé est une figure de la complicité. [...] Le sentiment de fusion avec le cosmos, de dissolution de toute limite relève d'un sacré intime à la merci du moindre bavardage. Il faut savoir se taire pour ne pas briser le vase infiniment fragile du temps. (pp. 56-57)

Cointet-Pinell and Drosso find that the overriding opinion of practitioners of the *randonnée pédestre* is: 'Marcher seul, sûrement pas.'[65] The necessity of companions for this type of walking practice is explained partly in terms of safety – 'c'est moins risqué d'être à plusieurs' (p. 53) – and partly in terms of sociability, 'un besoin d'échange' (p. 53). The vulnerability of the solitary walker is a recurrent theme in the travelogues of Lacarrière and Ollivier. It occurs to Lacarrière that if he has an injury, 'personne, en fait, ne viendrait jamais [le] chercher'.[66] Ollivier is also aware of this dangerous aspect of his journey: 'A plusieurs, on se soutient, on s'aide. [...] Dans la marche solitaire, il y a rarement une deuxième chance.'[67]

Lacarrière, Ollivier and Dagory, in undertaking solitary journeys, do not reflect David Le Breton's binaries of voluntary solitude and group solidarity: their solitude is, rather, a state of anticipation of new encounters. Far from being possessive of his isolation, Ollivier describes it as the hardest aspect of his travels: 'La plus grande difficulté dans la marche telle que je la pratique est l'affrontement de la solitude.'[68] This leads him, at times, to entertain 'l'espoir fou de trouver un compagnon de marche'.[69] Dagory claims that his appreciation of solitude is reliant on the paradox that it leads to contact – 'Paradoxalement, cette solitude te jette aussi vers les autres.'[70] Lacarrière demonstrates similar reasoning when he explains to a passer-by that the reason for his journey is 'pour pouvoir rencontrer des inconnus. Pour vous rencontrer, par exemple'.[71]

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[64] Le Breton, p. 38.
[65] Cointet-Pinell and Drosso, p. 52.
[66] Lacarrière, p. 120.
[67] Ollivier, p. 31.
[68] Ollivier, *Vers Samarcande: Longue marche II* (Paris: Phébus, 2001), p. 47.
[69] Ollivier, *Vers Samarcande*, p. 51.
[70] Dagory, p. 82.
[71] Lacarrière, pp. 202-03.

Although it is a key feature of the walking journey texts examined in this section, the walking subject's interaction and desired interaction with people met on the journey remains largely unexamined in theoretical writing about walking.[72] Within the walking journey texts themselves, there is some attempt to theorize the type of encounters arising from such journeys. Spontaneity and its temporal aspects emerge as a significant theme. Lacarrière states that the walker's relationship to time results in a condition of 'disponibilité singulière' (p. 145) with regard to the possibility of meeting people. This changes the rhythm of interpersonal encounters, which, in everyday urban living, are rigidly pre-organized in the form of fixed appointments.

> Il m'a fallu des semaines et des semaines, une fois de retour à Paris, pour me faire à un autre temps, un autre rythme, pour me réhabituer à ne plus rencontrer les autres – amis ou inconnus – que par des *rendez-vous*. (pp. 145-46)

Lacarrière also highlights the role of chance in determining spontaneous human encounters: 'Ce n'est pas seulement affaire de [...] disponibilité permanente. C'est aussi affaire de hasard et d'opportunité. Il faut "tomber" au bon moment [...] qu'un inconnu se sent prêt à parler avec un inconnu' (p. 184).

Within the field of anthropology, there has been considerable recent interest in the question of initial interpersonal encounters. Félicie Nayrou and Alain Rudy surmise that availability, chance and desire are necessary, intertwined conditions for the production of such encounters:

> On ne rencontre l'autre, la figure de son destin, que parce qu'on est 'en état' de le rencontrer. Finalement, la magie c'est peut-être cet enchevêtrement entre les ambiguïtés, les étranges jeux du hasard, et le clair-obscur du désir qui est au plus profond de nous.[73]

Ollivier confirms that he is satisfied with such encounters as are available to the pedestrian long-distance traveller. He concludes that these encounters, though fleeting, are equivalent to true friendships: 'Amitiés d'un jour, et pourtant fortes et solides comme si le temps les avait affermies. [...] L'amitié, l'amour, ne sont pas affaire de temps mais le résultat d'une secrète alchimie.'[74] For Lacarrière, however, the ephemerality of encounters on a walking journey are a source of regret and dissatisfaction – 'ces

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[72] In *Désirs d'ailleurs*, Michel introduces walking under the subheading, 'L'exemple de la marche: moyen d'accéder à soi et à autrui' (p. 125). However, in the main body of the text, the subject of interpersonal encounters is virtually ignored.

[73] Félicie Nayrou and Alain Rudy, 'Editorial', in *La Rencontre: Figures du destin*, ed. by Félice Nayrou and Alain Rudy (Paris: Autrement, 1994), pp. 9-13 (p. 10).

[74] Ollivier, *Longue Marche*, pp. 283-84.

rencontres trop brèves et superficielles [...] me saisirent à la gorge.'[75] The necessity of moving on as soon as he has met someone gives him the paradoxical feeling of being a 'passant pressé' (p. 81): 'Curieusement, malgré les lenteurs [...] de ce voyage, j'ai l'impression de tout traverser en vitesse' (p. 80). Dagory echoes this dissatisfaction with the transitoriness of encounters on the walking journey: 'C'est ça le plus dur du voyage: chaque jour, quitter un lieu, quitter des gens. [...] Pendant plus de quatre mois, que des amitiés de passage.'[76]

It is to be noted that in spite of some overlap with contemporary anthropological perspectives on spontaneous interpersonal encounters in terms of the interplay of openness to encounter, and of motivation and chance, the type of encounters featured in the given examples of walking journey literature lack the momentousness of those theorized by contemporary anthropologists. Félicie Nayrou, Alain Rudy and the contributors to *La Rencontre: figures du destin* focus their attention on specific encounters which are perceived as highly significant or even life-altering – 'l'irruption de l'autre qui va changer notre vie en y rentrant – amant, ami, passeur, pygmalion. [...] La rencontre qui va changer le cours des choses.'[77] Whilst Dagory, Lacarrière and Ollivier reiterate the value they place on encounters, they rarely highlight any particular encounter as being momentous; rather, there is a tendency to homogenize encounters and praise them in the abstract or as a list of names. Dagory is the most extreme example of this, as his narrative technique involves quoting the amusing insights of anonymous schoolchildren at frequent intervals within his travel account, for instance: 'Pour faire arbitre il faut avoir un sifflet, et pas trop envie de courir.'[78] The quantity of encounters and their consequent lack of differentiation is made explicit: 'C'est tout! Même pas une anecdote, juste une rencontre humaine comme j'en ferai des centaines sur la route' (p. 54). In each case, the phenomenon of experiencing spontaneous interpersonal encounters is provided as an alibi, but there is no attempt to single out any particular encounter as immensely significant in itself.[79] The issue of interpersonal encounters in pedestrian travel is explored further in section 5.5.2 below, with an emphasis on temporal exoticisms.

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[75] Lacarrière, p. 177.
[76] Dagory, pp. 94-95.
[77] Nayrou and Rudy, p. 10.
[78] Dagory, p. 22.
[79] Cf. Michel, p. 57: 'L'altérité: alibi ou passion?'

5.5.2 BEING OUT OF DATE AND BEING UP TO DATE: ENCOUNTERS, ANACHRONISMS AND CONTEMPORANEITY

David Le Breton states in *Eloge de la marche* that in the age of the motor car, the practice of walking suggests 'une forme de nostalgie ou de résistance' that seems to be 'un anachronisme dans le monde où règne l'homme pressé'.[80] The perception of walking as an anachronistic or even perverse practice has a noticeable impact on the presentation of interpersonal contact in the walking journey literature studied. Lacarrière, Ollivier and Dagory are all repeatedly confronted with attitudes of incredulity at the fact that they choose to walk, and the perceived *folie* of the walking subject is a frequent trope in these travel accounts. Ollivier regrets this assumption of madness and it causes him to be wary about informing strangers of his intention to walk: 'Ils ne doutent pas une seconde qu'ils ont affaire à un fou. [...] Je m'abstiendrai, désormais, d'annoncer mon entreprise à la légère.'[81] Lacarrière and Dagory, by contrast, turn the temporal exoticism of the walker to their advantage, by embracing it as a stimulus to interpersonal contact:

> Or, je me moque de passer pour fou. Je dirais même que cette idée me fait plutôt plaisir. Car une des raisons profondes qui me pousse à marcher, c'est entre autres d'affronter l'inconnu des rencontres, de provoquer des contacts chaque jour imprévus.
>
> A moi qui débarque d'une autre planète et qui suis déjà presque reparti, à moi, [...] irréel comme une bande dessinée, ils racontent tout.[82]

Since the anachronism of the walking subject arises from the attitude that walking is an outdated practice from bygone years, it is surprising to note that both Dagory and Lacarrière express their perceived exoticism in futuristic, science fiction terms. In the example just quoted, Dagory uses the metaphor of being an alien from outer space. Elsewhere he alludes to UFOs, describing himself as an 'objet marchant non identifié' (p. 65) in the eyes of the children he meets. Equally, Lacarrière conveys his perceived exoticism through a science fiction simile: 'Elles me regardaient [...] comme un astronaute débarqué de quelque astronef invisible' (p. 82). It is difficult to account for this decision to convey anachronism by inverting the expected temporal relationship, but it might perhaps be speculated that, in Lacarrière's case at least, this is part of a general denial of atavism. Lacarrière makes this attitude explicit in the following: 'Je ne me sens

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[80] Le Breton, pp. 14-15.
[81] Ollivier, *Longue marche*, p. 41.
[82] Lacarrière, p. 60; Dagory, p. 34.

nullement un passéiste. J'aime le monde qui m'entoure. Je n'éprouve pour lui ni crainte ni dégoût ni mépris.'[83]

In Bernard Ollivier's claim that 'le plus vieux mode de déplacement du monde est aussi [le seul] qui permet[te] le contact',[84] there seems to be an attitude of veneration towards the antiquity of walking, based on its possibilities for interpersonal encounters. It seems ironic, therefore, that in all the walking journey literature examined, a significant proportion of the contact featured is in fact interaction with car drivers and drivers of other vehicles. Time and again, the walking subjects' interaction with other people is found to take the form of incidents in which car drivers try to offer them a lift and are confused or even hostile when the offer is turned down. We are therefore confronted with any number of variations on the following incident in *Vers Samarcande*:

> Aller si loin à pied leur apparaît comme une douce folie. Personne, s'il est sensé, ne parcourt plus [*sic*] sept kilomètres à pied depuis l'invention de leur voiture. Le passager me désigne, du pouce, le plateau de la camionnette [...].
> - Monte.
> - Non, je préfère marcher.
> Les deux visages affichent une consternation sans nom.[85]

The cumulative impression given is that whilst walking provokes interpersonal contact, due to the behaviour of other road users, that contact tends to involve people using those means of transport that are popular in the given sociohistorical context. Even Rousseau, therefore, experiences an analogous situation with drivers of horse-drawn carriages – 'Quand on m'offrait quelque place vide dans une voiture, [...] je rechignais.'[86]

Although they practice 'le plus vieux mode de déplacement' and benefit from contact opportunities enjoyed by pedestrians since time immemorial, Ollivier and Dagory also interact with people by using contemporary communication technologies such as the Internet, email and mobile telephone. In this respect, their travelogues are as innovative as they are nostalgic, as they are among the first to integrate these means of communication. We therefore find Ollivier interrupting his real-time contact in Turkey with surf-time contact with his family and friends in France. He designates this as a return to civilization, and it is unclear whether the implication is that civilization is a question of access to multimedia, or whether civilization is something that is found in France, and accessed by the Internet whilst in another, non-civilized place:

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[83] Lacarrière, p. 171. Cf. Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyagés', p. 21: 'Aucune nostalgie, non, dans ces lignes. D'ailleurs le monde se prête encore à mille aventures, pour ceux qui les désirent.'
[84] Ollivier, *Longue marche*, p. 23.
[85] Ollivier, *Vers Samarcande*, p. 81.
[86] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions* (Paris: Livre de poche, 1972 [1789]), p. 242. Quoted in Le Breton, p. 38.

> Je profite de mon séjour dans la ville pour renouer avec la civilisation – communiquer par internet, entre autres, afin d'avoir des nouvelles de ma famille et de mes amis et de les rassurer sur mon sort. J'ai constaté que presque toutes les villes turques, mêmes moyennes, possèdent des 'cafés internet' où jeunes et vieux, passionnés de communication, se pressent.[87]

Given that Ollivier has supposedly undertaken a twelve-thousand-kilometre walk for the sake of genuine interpersonal interaction, it is interesting to note that here, he interprets local enthusiasm for the Internet as symptomatic of a passion for communication. If a hierarchy of real versus virtual contact is intended, it would be undermined by this statement.

The role of multimedia in Dagory's walking project raises further questions. Dagory is equipped with a mobile phone and a laptop computer, which enable him instantaneously to inform physically-absent persons of the trials and tribulations of his contact with physically-present persons. Dagory claims to have updated an online account of his journey on a daily basis at http://pieton.online.fr. Additionally, Dagory's journey was partially televised, with the result that those meeting him in person en route had already seen an earlier part of his journey on the television, or heard about him from somebody else who had watched it: 'Le premier bédouin rencontré sait ce que tu as avalé au petit déjeuner.'[88] From the point of view of the children Dagory meets, this televisation results in confusion between reality and virtuality, evocative of Baudrillard's theory of the *simulacre*, indistinguishable from the original article:[89]

> Durant toute la traversée, je lirai dans leurs yeux cette incrédulité, à la seconde où ils font le lien entre le vagabond boueux, croisé sur le chemin de tous les jours, et le piéton entrevu sur l'écran. La télé et la vie réelle, deux univers inconciliables...
> - Il y en a un autre qui fait la même chose que vous!
> - Ah?
> - Oui, je l'ai vu hier à la télé. [...]
> - Alors c'était moi!
> - Non, c'est pas possible. Lui, il était *dans* la télé... (p. 29)

The question of authenticity is further complicated by the performative nature of the televised part of Dagory's journey. The parts of the walk that were filmed seem to have been entirely staged: 'On m'a demandé de faire semblant de marcher, de repartir en arrière cinq fois de suite, on m'a photographié devant les thuyas de la cour de récré pour faire croire qu'on m'avait saisi en pleine rando' (p. 51). Dagory himself expresses his

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[87] Ollivier, *Longue marche*, pp. 93-94. See below, Chapter Seven: Science Fiction and Cybertravel, Part Two.
[88] Dagory, p. 149.
[89] See Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation*, p. 12.

recognition of the inauthenticity of representation, as compared with the reality of walking across France: 'Le sentiment de trahir ton aventure, de privilégier la représentation. La réalité est tellement autre...' (p. 51). Dagory's use of the written travel text to defuse distorted media representations is an interesting inversion of Ollivier's more familiar attempt to signal the difference between the Middle East as seen on television and as seen in 'real life' – 'Ce pays, dont l'image que nous renvoient les médias et singulièrement la télévision est en réalité peuplé de gens dont la gentillesse, le sens de l'hospitalité [...] sont sans équivalent.'[90] In each case, it is implied that there is an authentic situation that is distorted by multimedia representation, but demystified by the travel writer who witnesses it in real-time, being physically present on the scene.

The presence of such strategies for self-justification in recent pedestrian travelogues is surely significant. If late-twentieth-century walking journey travelogues, were already from the outset paralleled by a thriving domestic market for leisure practices of the *randonnée pédestre*, the prioritization of the interpersonal encounter seems an appropriate alibi to differentiate travellers from *randonneurs*, since Cointet-Pinell and Drosso stress that popular *randonnées* are group activities; however, if very recent pedestrian travel writers, such as Dagory, are resorting to further measures to assert the originality of their travels, this indicates that walking journey literature is acquiring status as a new orthodoxy of popular travel writing in French. The final section considers the extent to which competing body-powered modes of transport converge and/or diverge with pedestrian travel, in order to elucidate the specificity of walking, and evaluate whether the recent phenomenon of rollerblading is likely to be thematized by French travel writers in the near future.

5.6 SELF-PROPULSION AND SPEED: WALKING, CYCLING AND ROLLERBLADING

Although less striking than walking literature as a publishing phenomenon, cycling journey accounts have also enjoyed considerable popularity in France in recent years. Writers of cycling-related texts share many of the preoccupations expressed by practitioners of walking journeys, revealing distinct areas of thematic and discursive overlap between these alternative practices of non-motorized travel. However, the proponents of cycling single out speed as a major factor of differentiation from, and even

[90] Ollivier, *Vers Samarcande*, p. 109.

superiority to, displacement on foot. Claude and Françoise Hervé, authors of *Le Tour du monde à vélo* (1995), explain their decision to cycle as follows: 'A pied, la lenteur nous excède.'[91] They imply that their (noticeably anti-urban, neo-naturalist) travel criteria of 'changer radicalement d'existence', breaking with 'une société de consommation qu'[ils] refus[aient]' (p. 10), and practising 'une façon humble et non agressive d'aborder autrui' (p. 15), could equally be fulfilled within a walking journey, rather than a cycling journey. Cycling is chosen over walking because it is faster. Accordingly, in Paul Fournel's largely essayistic work *Besoin de vélo*, the bicycle is presented as a supplement that enhances human performance and efficiency, whilst continuing to offer a means of displacement that is natural and body-powered, yet superior to walking because capable of greater speed and distance:

> Le vélo est un engin génial qui permet à l'homme assis d'aller par la seule force de ses muscles deux fois plus loin et plus vite que l'homme debout. [...] Le vélo en soi est une forme de dopage. [...] Il est l'outil de la rapidité naturelle.[92]

The notion that greater efficiency of body-powered displacement is tantamount to the superiority of that means of displacement over walking, is also to be found in contemporary theoretical writing about rollerblade displacements, in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Rollerblading is significantly described as 'la meilleure façon de "réhumaniser les déplacements"'[93] on the grounds that it reconciles the desire to reinscribe corporeality into movement, with the desire for and practical convenience of relatively high speed. The rollerblader's efficiency is theorized as 'plus spectaculaire [than that of cyclists, drivers or motorcyclists], témoignant de la surpuissance du corps pur...'[94]

Theorizations of what may and may not constitute a 'natural' extension of the human body are in conflict. For example, Didier Tronchet relates to his bicycle as to a part of himself: 'Rentrant chez moi à pied, à la façon des amputés qui ressentent longtemps encore la présence de leur membre pourtant disparu, une partie de moi-même continuait de pédaler.'[95] Pascale Pargaman, on the other hand, claims that bicycles are separate from the body whereas rollerblades are a genuine extension of the body: 'Les

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[91] Françoise and Claude Hervé, *Le Tour du monde à vélo* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi éditeur, 1995), p. 11.
[92] Paul Fournel, *Besoin de vélo* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), p. 30.
[93] Yves Pedrazzini, 'L'asphalte et le hors-piste urbain', in *Glisse Urbaine: L'Esprit roller: liberté, apesanteur, tolérance*, ed. by Alain Loret and Anne-Marie Waser (Paris: Autrement, 2001), pp. 36-52 (p. 46).
[94] Pascale Pargaman, 'La tentation du Vendredi soir ou la fascination d'une quinquagénaire', in *Glisse Urbaine*, pp. 104-13 (p. 108).
[95] Didier Tronchet, *Petit traité de vélosophie: Le monde vu de ma selle* (Paris: Plon, 2000), p. 58.

rollers [...] sont comme un prolongement du corps et non un instrument extérieur comme le vélo, qui reste dans le registre des véhicules au même titre que les motos ou les voitures.'[96] Within the literature and theorization of walking, there is similar inconsistency regarding the criteria for 'natural' mobility. Jacques Lanzmann elevates walking because it dispenses with the need for appendages: 'C'est aller avec soi, sans autre recours que ses jambes et sa tête.'[97] Nevertheless, Lanzmann exercises selectivity with regard to which parts of an itinerary are worth the effort of walking, and he allows himself recourse to other means of transport in order to break off dull stages of walking journeys: 'Dépités par cette marche hachurée, [...] nous décidons de prendre la voiture et de rouler à la recherche de nouveaux lieux' (p. 54). Yves Paccalet escapes this particular type of self-contradiction by theorizing all forms of displacement as enhanced forms of walking:

> Il enfourchera son vélo, dont les pédales sont des pieds d'aluminium rotatifs. Plus tard, il voudra accélérer le mouvement. Il utilisera les jambes à moteur que nous avons inventées et baptisées 'moto', 'auto', 'bateau', 'hélicoptère' ou 'avion'. [...]
> *Homo sapiens* marche.[98]

Paccalet's metaphorical homogenization of mechanized and non-mechanized travel types is problematized, however, by the fact that the work as a whole presents, in minute detail, the specific pleasures and benefits of walking unaided on two feet, and is dedicated to people who are in his opinion physically incapable of any form of displacement that can be described as walking:

> J'aime conjuguer ce verbe [marcher].
> Je n'oublie pas que, pour certains, la conjugaison est impossible.
> Marcher... Au sein de notre espèce, sont privés de cette faculté [...] les vieillards grabataires et les infortunés paralytiques, paraplégiques ou amputés qu'un accident, la guerre ou la maladie ont frappés. Cet essai leur est dedié. (p. 25)

In the following chapter, contemporary renegotiation of walking issues by disabled people will be considered in detail. Within texts about walking, cycling and rollerblading, attempts to hierarchize modes of displacement prove to be a persistent source of self-contradiction and disagreement.

With regard to patterns of convergence and divergence between travel literature, theories and practices in the context of body-powered displacements, it is interesting to note that the convergent popularities of walking and cycling as subjects for travel writing

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[96] Pargaman, p. 108.
[97] Lanzmann, p. 10.
[98] Paccalet, p. 55.

can be accounted for theoretically. David Le Breton and Rebecca Solnit both theorize the practice of walking as being uniquely conducive to thought and reflection. Solnit claims that the pace of walking is in harmony with the pace of thinking and writing, and Le Breton uses a similar argument – that walking is 'un moment de prédilection pour la pensée'.[99] Le Breton testifies to empirical evidence that walking is intimately linked to writing. In a section entitled 'Ecrire le voyage', he describes Toepffer's interconnected practices of walking and writing: 'Le cheminement de sa plume sur le papier prend alors le relais de celui de ses pas sur les routes' (p. 95). Equally, Paul Fournel theorizes the speed of cycling as a unique complement to the practice of writing: 'La vitesse cycliste... Cette vitesse-là est la juste vitesse de mon regard. C'est une vitesse d'écrivain, une vitesse qui filtre et fait déjà le tri.'[100] This provides an interesting contrast to Jacques Lacarrière's comments on the literary composition of *Chemin faisant.* Lacarrière explicitly states in the introduction that in composing this travel account, he has manipulated time, events and details after the completion of the actual journey. There is therefore no question of 'une vitesse qui filtre et fait déjà le tri' in this context.

The absence of travel writing about rollerblade journeys is conspicuous, given that rollerblading has enjoyed phenomenal popularity in France since the late 1990s and has inspired periodicals, travel guidebooks targeted at *roller randonneurs*, and a collection of sociological essays, *La Glisse Urbaine* (2001). As a popular contemporary source of body-focused travel experiences, it is conceivable that rollerblading may spark innovations in French travel literature in the early twenty-first century. However, it can be inferred from existing theorization about the nature of rollerblading, that in direct contrast to cycling and walking, this is a practice unconducive to the creation of written travel accounts. Sandra Hueber compares rollerblading with walking, from the point of view of perception, sensation and associated thought patterns. She claims that whilst walking is intimately connected to intellectual awareness and activity – 'le temps de la marche est le temps de la pensée' – rollerblading is distinct from walking and results in a type of intellectual oblivion: 'Le roller ne marche pas, il "rolle". Il ne pense pas son déplacement, il l'interprète. Sa mobilité est un moyen de s'oublier.'[101]

Additionally, Hueber theorizes the specific implications of speed for the perceptions of the rollerblader, arguing that this speed of displacement results in a superficial, uncritical, exclusively visual apprehension of surroundings:

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[99] Le Breton, p. 65.
[100] Fournel, pp. 52-53.
[101] Sandra Hueber, '"T'es vraiment ailleurs que dans ce monde!"', in *Glisse Urbaine*, pp. 164-73 (p. 168).

> Le regard que pose l'homme à roulettes sur la ville est nécessairement superficiel du fait de la rapidité de son déplacement. En gagnant en volume, il perd en détail. En gagnant en impression, il perd en capacité d'analyse. [...] Il devient zappeur des spectacles de la vie urbaine. (p. 168)

The section subheadings in Hueber's essay, such as '*Comme dans un film*' and '"*T'es vraiment ailleurs que dans ce monde*"', are suggestive of image-focused, high-speed, motorized travel. Hueber's comment that rollerblading, whilst being a body-powered mode of displacement, gives the illusion of effortlessness – 'se déplacer [...] sans toucher le sol, sans avoir le sentiment d'un effort physique, sans penser' (p. 168) – further aligns rollerblade travel with image-focused, rather than body-focused travel paradigms. However, it will be seen in Chapter Seven that the representation of high-speed image-focused travel is by no means excluded from travel literature or restricted to film. Clearly, within a critical approach to travel texts focusing on body-powered journeys, there is a need to avoid homogenizing body-powered travel types, since the question of speed is an essential differentiating factor within this category of travel literature. In the following chapter, consideration is given to the radically decelerated movements of physically-disabled French subjects.

Part Three:
Rethinking Corporeality,
Rethinking Travel

CHAPTER SIX: TRAVEL AND DISABILITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As French writers and scholars of travel lament the 'end of travel' and reassert the primacy of corporeal modes of displacement, it is becoming more urgent than ever to relativize such tendencies in the context of physical disability and its implications for the French travelling subject. The presence of a physical impairment affects, at the very least, an individual's relationship to geographical space and physical surroundings – curtailing, in the most extreme cases, all unaided mobility. This raises the issue of an end of literal travel for the individuals concerned – an unacknowledged, unexamined counterpart to the rhetorical *fin des voyages* that is now a commonplace of contemporary thinking about travel. By extending consideration of the 'end of travel' to include also the end of literal travel, and by widening the analysis of embodied subjectivity to include disabled, as well as able-bodied, perspectives, a more attenuated understanding of contemporary French literatures and theories of travel should be within reach.

Critical resources for the exploration of issues of travel and disability are limited. Although 'disability studies' is now a recognized discipline, this is a recent development, associated primarily with English-speaking countries and medical scholarship.[1] The *Association des Paralysés de France* has nevertheless published a wide-ranging collection of essays focusing on a number of aspects of disability, including practices of travel, current French perceptions of disability, and the representation of disabled people in literature. *Déficiences motrices et handicaps*, together with *The Disability Reader*, provide a useful introduction to contemporary theories of disability. Additionally, Jean-Marc Bardeau's 1985 monograph, *Voyage à travers l'infirmité*, theorizes disability in late-twentieth-century France, drawing on the author's personal experiences of disability, and Serge Ebersold's *L'Invention du handicap – la normalisation de l'infirme* (1997) is a landmark study of the evolution of concepts of disability in a contemporary French context.

The limited extent of French theorization of disability is offset by the significant contributions of a small number of twentieth-century French disabled subjects who have

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[1] Britain and the United States are cited in particular. See Tom Shakespeare, 'Introduction', in *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. by Tom Shakespeare (London Cassell, 1998), pp. 1-6 (p. 1).

written about their first-hand experiences of being disabled. It has therefore been possible to select a small corpus of heretofore unexamined primary texts which shed light on contemporary issues of travel and disability.[2] Patrick Segal (b. 1947) emerges as the pre-eminent writer of personal experience of travelling in a wheelchair: throughout the 1970s through to the early 1990s he produced a series of autobiographical works tracing the evolution of his (im)mobility. In *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête* (1977) Segal uses a technique of alternating chapters, juxtaposing the account of his hospital-based rehabilitation following an accident resulting in paraplegia, with an account of his travels around the world in a wheelchair at a slightly later time period. In *Viens la mort, on va danser* (1979), *Le Cheval de vent* (1982) and *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...* (1990), Segal writes about subsequent journeys abroad which were undertaken both for therapeutic and journalistic purposes – culminating in the recovery of the use of his legs in the last work mentioned. *Condamnée à vivre* is Béatrice Coroller's 1988 account of her life since a serious car accident as a result of which she acquired tetraplegia. This text begins with a description of the car accident, and thereafter concerns itself with hospitalization, rehabilitation, enforced immobility, and displacements of extremely small scale only. Jean-Dominique Bauby's work, *Le Scaphandre et le papillon* (1997), introduced by the author as a collection of 'carnets de voyage immobile', gives an account of hospitalization following a cardiovascular problem that resulted in paralysis of the whole body with the exception of one eyelid.[3] Finally, Jacques Briod's 2001 *récit*, *Soudain un train*, collates the testimonies of a number of people in order to construct a biography of the life and worldwide travels of Gérald Métroz, a Swiss sports agent who lost both legs in a train accident when he was two years old.

The above-mentioned texts chart personal histories of disability and rehabilitation in which subjects progress towards normalization of mobility and lifestyle. Whilst there is usually no attempt on the part of the authors to prioritize the reception of these texts as travel literature,[4] the conceptual overlap between writing about losing and renegotiating literal mobility, and writing about losing and renegotiating the possibility of 'travel', demands investigation.

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[2] Urbain has made passing reference to Jean-Dominique Bauby's *Le Scaphandre et le papillon*, as stated in Chapter One of this thesis. See Chapter One, Section 1.6.9.

[3] Jean-Dominique Bauby, *Le Scaphandre et le papillon* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997), p.11.

[4] Bauby's description of *Le Scaphandre et le papillon* as 'carnets de voyage immobile' is the exception here.

6.2 TRAVEL AND DISABILITY: THEMATIC OVERVIEW

The following schema is proposed, which identifies four stages of experience addressed in this chapter's corpus of primary texts. For each of these stages, an outline is given of suggested links to specific travel issues to be discussed and relativized in further detail in the main body of the chapter.[5]

Stage 1: Becoming disabled

Where disability occurs in consequence of a motor vehicle accident, this can be considered in relation to the opponents of car culture in the previous chapter, whose claims of the destructiveness of mass mechanized transport do not necessarily reflect their own lived experiences of such transport, and may therefore be largely theoretical or rhetorical. By addressing mechanized transport from the point of view of motor vehicle accident victims, a number of texts may be considered as part of the legacy of car culture, as critiqued by certain contemporary French travel writers.

Stage 2: Being disabled

a) Disability initially, and sometimes permanently, results in confinement indoors, for instance in hospital. This amounts to the end of literal travel for the individuals concerned.
b) The fact of disability is found to transform the subject's experience of his/her home environment, resulting in an enforced 'voyage dans l'immédiat'.
c) Disabled subjects may have recourse to 'voyages immobiles', in which the immobilized individual imagines being in another temporal or geographical location, or imagines being in motion.

Stage 3: Rehabilitation/Overcoming disability

a) Rehabilitation sometimes involves journeys to therapy centres in other geographical locations all over the world.
b) Where rehabilitation emphasizes the mastery of physical challenges and the achievement of displacement targets, there is overlap with discourses and themes of corporeal travel types such as walking and cycling journeys.

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[5] Note that the argument of this chapter will not strictly follow the order of this schema, which is intended as an introduction to issues of travel in contemporary French disability literature.

c) Rehabilitation is sometimes presented as a metaphorical return journey to a normal, functional body.

Return to automobility

The disabled subject's (un)evolving relationship to mechanized transport is thematized and aligns these texts with the literature of motorized journeys, as well as providing another perspective on the critique of car culture as in Stage 1 above.

6.3 RETHINKING THE 'END OF TRAVEL'

> Pour un paraplégique, on est à l'âge de pierre.[6]

6.3.1 GENERAL

Although introduced in this chapter as an end of literal travel, disability paradoxically serves also to negate that other, prior 'end of travel': theories and literatures of disability suggest that, for the disabled subject, the rhetorical *fin des voyages* simply does not apply. Bypassed by the tourism and passenger transport industries, and accustomed to a life of confinement within hospital and domestic milieux, the disabled subject is theoretically in a position to continue to experience any displacement 'outdoors' as exotic. These issues form the subject of section 6.3.

6.3.2 QUESTIONS OF ACCESS

Frédéric Dumez's study of travel and disability reveals that the French disabled subject has yet to experience the expansion of tourism from minority to mass practice, due to the lack of provision, in France specifically, of travel agencies addressing the needs of the disabled. Dumez claims that specialized agencies are 'au nombre de deux ou trois en France', although they may be 'très nombreuses dans la plupart des pays anglosaxons'.[7] Similarly, whilst Daniel Boorstin can already in 1963 denounce the 'multiplication, improvement, and cheapening of travel facilities' as an over-facilitation of travel, French disabled subjects attest the continuing impracticability of displacements out of doors, using travel, transport and hospitality infrastructure that do not allow for wheelchair

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[6] Sigrid Baffert, *En roues libres* (Paris: Syros, 1999), p. 20.

[7] Frédéric Dumez, 'Voyager', in *Déficiences motrices et handicaps: Aspects sociaux, psychologiques, médicaux, techniques et législatifs, troubles associés*, ed. by Marie-Claire Sourdillon, and Franck Hourdeau (Paris: Association des Paralysés de France, 1996), pp. 460-63 (p. 462).

access.[8] In examples of literature featuring the displacements of wheelchair-bound persons beyond the confines of their domicile, the lack of adaptation of places, vehicles and amenities to the use of disabled persons is a dominant and recurrent theme. This is partly a question of height-level disparity – 'Tout est trop haut pour nous'[9] – and the full implications of the loss of the upright position will be discussed later on in this chapter. Gérald Métroz, the subject of Jacques Briod's biography *Soudain un train*, articulates this problem with reference to the lack of provision of disabled toilet facilities worldwide:

> Le seul moment où je me sens vraiment handicapé, c'est quand je ne parviens pas à accéder aux toilettes, quand le fauteuil ne passe pas. [...] En voyage, il m'est facile de me rendre compte qu'il y a des pays qui ont pensé aux handicapés et d'autres pas du tout.[10]

In 'Oppression, Disability and Access in the Built Environment', Rob Imrie theorizes the lack of wheelchair access in 'Western' cities as the result of 'a design apartheid where building form and design are inscribed with the values of an "able-bodied" society'.[11] According to Imrie, this aspect of the built environment is part of the legacy of modernism and its prioritization of mass production and standardization at the expense of the recognition of human diversity. By inference, a by-product of the rationalization of travel facilities for able-bodied people is the inaccessibility of these same facilities to people who do not conform to able-bodied normativity.

The disparity of access to transport and tourism among disabled and able-bodied travellers arguably amounts to a lack of coevalness of these groups in the specific context of displacement: Boorstin expressed nostalgia for a time when 'the travel experience was an adventure [...] because so few could afford or would dare its hardships'; four decades later, French disabled subjects signal the ongoing hardships of travel and the absence of a dedicated tourism industry.[12]

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[8] Boorstin, p. 88.
[9] Béatrice Coroller, *Condamnée à vivre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), p. 109.
[10] Jacques Briod, *Soudain un train* (Paris: Autrement, 2001), pp. 122-23.
[11] Rob Imrie, 'Oppression, Disability and Access in the Built Environment', in *The Disability Reader*, pp. 129-46 (p. 129).
[12] Boorstin, p. 92. The expression 'denial of coevalness' is from Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

6.3.3 DISABILITY AND *ENFERMEMENT*

> On vous aime bien, mais restez plutôt chez vous.[13]

A lack of adaptation of the built environment and transport systems in France means that, for the French disabled subject, displacements out of doors resist interpretation as banal and indifferent; correspondingly, it is argued that disabled persons experience greater levels of confinement indoors as a way of life. It has been suggested that, as the division between 'home' and 'away' is therefore more marked in the lives of disabled individuals, travel retains a privileged status as highly differentiated from the *quotidien*.[14]

According to Dumez, the French disabled person's life tends to be contained almost exclusively within the confines of a domestic space, so that travel represents a dramatic 'rupture avec un quotidien souvent limité à la surface du logement'.[15] An extreme illustration of the shrinking of the *quotidien* is provided by Bauby: 'J'ai bel et bien débuté une nouvelle vie, et c'est là, entre ce lit, ce fauteuil, ces couloirs, qu'elle se passe et nulle part ailleurs.'[16] However, there is a need to re-examine assumptions of the normalization of confinement in the lives of disabled people, as there have been attempts to suggest that such confinement is now a thing of the past. Broadly speaking, the period of hospitalization following disabling accidents is recognized as a primary and inevitable phase of *enfermement*, but it is a major development of mid-twentieth-century French social policy that the period of *enfermement* in disability clinics should be limited to what is strictly necessary for medical care, and followed by reintegration into mainstream society rather than continuing seclusion; this is to constitute a departure from an earlier norm of systematic and permanent hospitalization:

> La volonté de rompre avec les techniques de l'enfermement au profit de techniques normalisatrices [...] a donc été au centre des préoccupations des associations de handicapés [...] lors de leur création. En voulant ainsi substituer une logique normalisatrice d'enfermement, leur action a marqué une rupture essentielle dans le traitement social de la déficience.[17]

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[13] Baffert, p. 44.

[14] Cf. Michel, p. 11: 'Voyager, c'est oser défier la banalité du quotidien, le confort rassurant [...].' This is also thought to apply to mass practices of travel. See, for instance, Rauch, *Vacances en France de 1830 à nos jours*, p. 279: '*L'antithèse du quotidien*'; Rauch's italics. For a discussion of the importance, in travel, of distinctions between home and away/abroad, see Mark Cocker, *Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1992), pp. 17-18.

[15] Dumez, p. 460.

[16] Bauby, p. 135.

[17] Serge Ebersold, *L'Invention du handicap – la normalisation de l'infirme* (Paris: CTNERHI, 1997), pp. 188-89.

Although the treatment of physical impairment has now officially changed from systematic *enfermement* to reintegration in society, in order to make this possible, French social policy has allegedly preferred to implement facilities that enable the disabled person to live independently at home, rather than provide suitably-adapted amenities within mainstream society:

> A Paris, personne ne s'est préoccupé de l'aménagement. Autant dire que pour un paraplégique, on est à l'âge de pierre. En dehors de la Madeleine-Tolbiac, pas moyen de prendre le métro. [...] Le problème a été pris à l'envers. Ils ont eu tendance à encourager les services et les initiatives à domicile.[18]

This indicates a need to relativize theorization of the current popularity of the *randonnée pédestre* among able-bodied French persons. It will be recalled that this leisure practice was rationalized in the previous chapter in similar terms, found to be applicable also to pedestrian travel writers' practices of walking: 'Le besoin d'évasion naîtrait d'abord du sentiment d'enfermement [...] dans le cadre bâti.'[19] In the case of able-bodied French society, this 'cadre bâti' extends beyond the place of domicile to include all of urban space, including cars and public transport networks – 'les espaces clos ou clôturés du domicile, du transport, du lieu de travail, et même du jardin' (p. 47). The day-to-day situation of French disabled people is a much more extreme version of the circumstances of able-bodied French society, and Dumez implies that the disabled person's ability to appreciate travel is proportionately greater.

6.3.4 THE EXOTICISM OF THE FRENCH DISABLED SUBJECT

If issues of access and of the adaptation of amenities contribute to the continuing normalization of *enfermement* indoors as a mode of existence for French disabled subjects, it would appear that this pattern is further reinforced by French society's enduring uneasiness with the sight of physical alterity/deficience. This uneasiness is found to foster a tendency to efface the visibility of disabled persons by demotivating them to leave their homes. By demonstrating that disability is a persistent signifier of otherness in metropolitan France, theories and primary accounts of disability serve to problematize claims of the loss of global diversity: 'The disabled person's "strangeness" can manifest and symbolize all differences between human beings.'[20]

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[18] Baffert, p. 20
[19] Cointet-Pinell and Drosso, p. 47.
[20] Shakespeare, p. 13.

David Le Breton has argued that disabled people are frightening to able-bodied French society because they are signifiers of human corporeal fragility – a characteristic that contemporary society does not wish to acknowledge:

> L'homme handicapé rappelle avec une force qui lui échappe et qui tient à sa seule présence la précarité infinie de l'existence et il réveille l'angoisse du corps démantelé. [...] La mutilation, la cécité, la paralysie, la lenteur des mouvements sont les figures archétypales du cauchemar. L'homme handicapé rappelle l'insoutenable fragilité de la condition humaine. Ce que la modernité se refuse avec obstination à concevoir.[21]

The origins of this negative reaction to physical alterity/deficience may be found in contemporary idealization of the human body: an idealization that, according to disability theorist Vic Finkelstein, is inherently flawed, as human beings compare unfavourably with animals in every aspect of physical prowess, and rely on technological aids in order to compensate for a frailty that is a given of the human condition.[22] In Dominique Crombecque and Josée Mukendi's essay, 'Le handicap, désavantage social', on the other hand, hostility and discrimination against disabled people are considered as a symptom of a society that overemphasizes physical appearances and attacks visible alterity: 'Le handicap physique, visible d'emblée, affirme une différence qui peut aboutir à l'exclusion et même entraîner un certain racisme dans une société qui privilégie l'esthétique.'[23]

Interestingly, in primary accounts of disability, visual discrimination consistently takes the form of calling into question the disabled subject's right to be seen in public. In *Soudain un train*, Gérald Métroz is implicitly reproached for leaving his flat and for subjecting a neighbour to the spectacle of his physical impairment:

> Un jour, dans le couloir de mon immeuble, un vieux monsieur me dit:
> - Vous me faites peur!
> Il a dit ça sur un ton qui voulait dire: 'Vous n'avez pas le droit de vous montrer comme ça en public, vous êtes effrayant!' [...] Ils se voient immédiatement, eux, en fauteuil.[24]

Patrick Segal explicitly denounces corresponding attitudes that give rise to an unofficial ban on wheelchair-bound *flânerie* in France: 'Et qui me convaincra qu'il est bon d'interdire toute sortie sous prétexte que tout le monde en ferait autant, et que le

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[21] David Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité* (Paris: P.U.F., 1993), p. 142. Other theorists have emphasized cultural associations between corporeal dysfunction and sinfulness. See Tom Shakespeare, p. 16, and Lennard J. Davis, 'Nationality, Disability and Deafness', in *Revisiting Culture, Reinventing Peace: The Influence of Edward W. Said*, ed. by Naseer Aruri and Muhammad A. Shuraydi (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001), pp. 2-28 (p. 11).

[22] Vic Finkelstein, 'Emancipating Disability Studies', in *The Disability Reader*, pp. 28-49 (p. 28)

[23] Dominique Crombecque and Josée Mukendi, 'Le handicap, désavantage social', in *Déficiences motrices et handicaps*, pp. 9-11 (p. 9). For a discussion of disability as 'race' see Davis, pp. 9-10.

[24] Briod, p. 129.

spectacle en ville serait trop déprimant?' Segal directly accuses the public of banishing disabled people from the world outside their domicile for aesthetic reasons: 'Vous nous avez enfermés parce que notre image n'est pas belle à montrer, parce que vous avez peur que nous fassions peur aux petits enfants de la rue.'[25]

The individuals concerned are therefore either compelled to stay home because of the difficulty of negotiating an un-adapted outside environment, or they are under pressure not to go anywhere because of disapproving attitudes on the part of able-bodied French society. An end of literal travel is thus actually or psychologically in effect. Accordingly, Jean-Dominique Bauby explicitly equates the situation of paraplegic people living at home, with his own situation of permanent hospitalization. He argues that irrespective of degrees of paralysis, disabled subjects experience equivalent forms of *enfermement*, or 'locked-in syndrome': 'Nous [Bauby and a paraplegic individual] sommes tous les deux des *locked-in syndrome*, chacun à sa manière, moi dans ma carcasse, lui dans son troisième étage.'[26]

This section has introduced the concept of *enfermement* as a characteristic of the day-to-day experiences of French individuals with physical disabilities, together with theories elucidating challenges that the built environment poses to the disabled. The testimonies of Segal, Métroz and Bauby illustrated contemporary constraints to the access of disabled persons to public spaces. The feminist scholar of disability, Helen Meekosha, claims in 'Body Battles: Bodies, Gender and Disability' that 'it is as though disabled bodies exist in spaces outside mainstream society', and this assertion would appear to be appropriate to the experiences of the disabled French subjects examined in this chapter.[27] This chapter's primary corpus additionally offers insight into the implications, for newly-disabled French subjects, of transgressing, or preparing to transgress, the boundaries of the invisible, domestic spaces to which they have been consigned; the next part of the chapter addresses the implications of theories and French subjective narratives of disability for issues of able-bodied travel, French travel writing, and embodiment.[28]

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[25] Patrick Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 159; p. 177.
[26] Bauby, p. 50.
[27] Helen Meekosha, 'Body Battles: Bodies, Gender and Disability', in *The Disability Reader*, pp. 163-80 (p. 163).
[28] The term 'subjective narratives of disability' is an adaptation of Meekosha's reference to 'subjective stories or narratives of disabled women's (and sometimes men's) experiences'. Meekosha, p. 164.

6.4 RETHINKING THE RETURN TO THE BODY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH TRAVEL WRITING

6.4.1 DISABILITY AS 'VOYAGE DANS L'IMMEDIAT'

> Comme étrangers dans la communauté.[29]

There is considerable evidence that excursions out of doors, in geographically proximate spaces, share the symptoms of 'voyages dans l'immédiat', as theorized by Jean-Didier Urbain in *Secrets de voyage*: the subject's vicinity becomes *ailleurs* without the transformation being predicated on actual geographical displacement.

Disabling accidents seems to resemble 'voyages dans l'immédiat' to the extent that the physical alteration arising from such accidents results in marked changes to other people's interactions with the individuals concerned, as compared to before the physical alteration. Jean-Pierre Chevance theorizes the possibility of being made to feel like a stranger in an otherwise familiar environment: 'Nous avons tendance [...] à nous sentir comme étrangers dans la communauté à laquelle nous croyions être intégrés.'[30] Béatrice Coroller illustrates this with her personal experience: 'Depuis mon infirmité, quatre catégories se sont formées parmi mes anciennes relations.'[31] She lists the four categories of response, including: 'D'autres encore ne me connaissent plus, changeant de trottoir à ma vue.'[32] Visible physical impairment thus appears as an unacknowledged prototype for the voluntary, transvestic reconfigurations of embodied identity discussed in Chapter Four.

6.4.2 DISABILITY AND IMMOBILITY: RETHINKING 'VOYAGES IMMOBILES'

> Je commence à marcher, à marcher...dans ma tête.[33]

French subjective narratives of disability could usefully be integrated into discussions of immobile travel – a subject that is currently receiving interest from a number of scholars

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[29] Jean-Pierre Chevance, 'Le handicap à vivre: le point de vue de la personne handicapée', in *Déficiences motrices et handicaps*, pp. 45-52 (p. 48).
[30] Chevance, p. 48
[31] Coroller, p. 169
[32] Coroller, p. 169. See also Patrick Segal, *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...* (Paris: Flammarion,1990), p. 259. It is also to be inferred that Segal thinks that the way people respond to him is determined by the fact of disability, because he expects that regaining mobility will cause them to revert to default opinions of him: 'J'allais enfin perdre mon étiquette et savoir ce que l'on pensait réellement de moi.'
[33] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 38

of travel and travel writing. Urbain, as it was remarked in the introduction to this thesis, asks: 'Et Jean-Dominique Bauby, [...] lui non plus ne voyage-t-il pas?'[34] The context of this query is an attempt to attenuate theories of travel that overemphasize the importance of geographical displacement to experiences of travel. Urbain's treatment of the issue is ultimately ambivalent, however:

> Je ne veux pas faire accroire que penser au voyage, c'est déjà voyager. [...] Je veux seulement dire que le songe, rêverie, idée ou souvenir, n'est pas une donnée résiduelle ou marginale du voyage mais le constitue, l'informe et participe de sa vérité. (pp. 111-12)

This implies that mental processes are a key component of travel, but that travel still depends on physical displacement as well. In answer to his own apparently rhetorical question as to the validity of Bauby's travels, Urbain seems to be suggesting that Bauby's imagined experiences are valuable and not to be dismissed out of hand, without however committing himself to the acknowledgement of imaginary travel as equivalent to literal travel.

Franck Michel is altogether more candid in his hierarchization of immobile travel as an inferior substitute for literal travel:

> Le voyage sédentaire – ce *Voyage autour de ma chambre* de Xavier de Maistre (1795) – est le substitut pauvre du voyage géographique vers l'ailleurs, c'est le voyage offert à ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de partir ou à ceux qui résistent à l'obligation de s'enfuir. Mais, par contrainte ou parfois par snobisme, le choix de ce voyage-là n'est pas exempt non plus d'une volonté d'appropriation, de récupération – au même titre que chez ceux qui partent – de l'esprit du voyage, et notamment de ses dimensions initiatiques. Le voyage est partout [...].[35]

Once again, immobile travel is credited with some of the characteristics of 'real' travel, but it is posited as a less valuable and less valid practice than geographical travel. Although an able-bodied, eighteenth-century French aristocrat, Xavier de Maistre, is Michel's chosen representative of immobile travel in a study otherwise concerned with contemporary travellers, and no corresponding representative of disability is cited, Michel does demonstrate awareness of the fact that geographical travel is not an option for some people – 'ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de partir'.[36] Pasquali, on the other

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[34] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 111.
[35] Michel, p. 95.
[36] Xavier de Maistre is a frequent point of reference in discussions of the antithesis of literal travel, even in contemporary contexts. See for instance Alain de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2002), pp. 244-54. Cf. David Le Breton, *Eloge de la marche*, pp. 59-61. With regard to the more general issue of the privileging, within critical discourse, of the voluntary experiences of solitary, literary figures rather than the involuntary experiences of sectors of contemporary global society, see Kaplan, p. 4.

hand, entirely ignores disability in his substantial analysis of the 'voyage immobile' in *Le Tour des horizons*, focusing instead on the thematization of fishing and meditation.[37] In the present thesis, it is asserted that the literature of disability is a privileged site for the exploration of issues of travel and immobility.

Bauby, Segal, and Coroller all introduce varieties of imaginary travel at times of bodily immobility, but Bauby's version is the only one that does not involve the imagined re-enaction of embodied geographical displacement. Bauby's definition of 'voyage immobile' involves arrivals at destinations in time and space, but the journey itself is imagined in terms of spiritual or meditative, metaphorical movements divorced from human physicality: 'L'esprit peut vagabonder comme un papillon. Il y a tant à faire. On peut s'envoler dans l'espace ou dans le temps, partir pour la Terre de Feu ou la cour du roi Midas.'[38] The other writers mentioned, by contrast, focus their imaginary travel types on processes of displacement rather than places of destination. These displacements are also arguably forms of time travel as they are typically reliant on remembering a past in which imagined displacement was physically possible for the individual concerned.

Coroller's imaginary re-enaction of walks around the house involve such a process. On returning home from hospital for the first time since her accident, her initial experience of the house, as a tetraplegic, wheelchair-bound person, is as follows: 'Tout ce qui m'entourait évoquait un souvenir. Je me voyais déambulant d'une pièce à l'autre – une image obsédante, qui sera continuellement à mon esprit.'[39] In this example, the imaginary movement occurs as a substitute for actual movement.[40] In *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, on the other hand, imaginary movement and physical movement are presented in interrelationship as two consecutive stages of a coherent process of metaphorical movement. Segal seems to use positive visualization techniques as part of an attempt to step up the pace of rehabilitation. When his body imposes immobility or confinement, he exercises his will to walk by imagining himself to be doing so: 'Je suis faible et maigre dans mon corps, mais je commence à marcher, à marcher... dans ma tête'; 'Dans ma tête, je marchais à grands pas sur la voie ascendante.'[41] When a satisfactory extent of mobility has been attained, Segal observes: 'Ce n'est plus seulement dans ma tête que la vie a repris son rythme de galop' (p. 241). No further

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[37] Pasquali, pp. 77-84.
[38] Bauby, p. 10.
[39] Coroller, pp. 108-09.
[40] Cf. Hervé Bazin, *Lève-toi et marche* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1952), p. 18: 'Comme un aveugle de guerre cherche à voir en se référent à ses souvenirs, je fais de la nage cérébrale.'
[41] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 38; p. 73.

reference is made to walking in the head, and this statement also marks the end of the alternation of hospital-based chapters and worldwide travel chapters, as the narrative now assumes a single timescale. In the conclusion, the imagined, hospital-based displacements and the large-scale wheelchair displacements around the world are given equal status as stages in a metaphorical journey of personal transcendence.

> A travers les lumières blafardes de l'hôpital et les couleurs violentes du tour du monde, s'accomplissait la première étape d'un autre chemin. Je sais où je vais, j'ai reconnu mon parcours. [...] Partout où les hommes tentent de reculer les limites de leur corps ou de leur volonté, je sais qu'ils cherchent autre chose, ce que certains appellent dépassement et d'autres transcendance. (pp. 256-57)

This schematization of mental and physical displacement as equally valid and not necessarily overlapping paths to spiritual 'transcendance' problematizes the perspectives of Urbain and Michel; however, it also masks contemporary anxieties about the relative valorization of mind and body. These anxieties create tensions elsewhere in Segal's works and in the other texts discussed in this chapter, and the conflicts will be examined in the context of walking and verticality in section 6.4.5.

6.4.3 DISABILITY AND THERAPEUTIC TRAVEL: RETHINKING *VILLEGIATURE*

Rehabilitation may involve temporary relocation to clinics in other parts of France or elsewhere in the world. This accounts for a significant proportion of the larger-scale geographical displacements featured in the selected primary texts. The presentation of such transfers tends to involve recourse to the vocabulary of travel. Jean-Dominique Bauby explicitly employs the term 'voyages' – 'J'ai tout de même fait deux voyages éclairs à Paris en milieu hospitalier.'[42] Segal, in *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, describes a hospital transfer as a departure towards 'un ailleurs qui ressemble peut être à un lit' – visibility is given to the necessity of going 'ailleurs'.[43] Similarly, Coroller describes her 'départ' from one clinic to another as a journey from the familiar to the unknown: 'Je quittais des gens qu'en grande majorité j'appréciais, dont le visage et la voix m'étaient devenus familiers. J'allais au-devant de l'inconnu.'[44]

A consideration of journeys to rehabilitation clinics as travel may problematize contemporary theorization of the touristic practice of *villégiature*. It seems valid to align these physiotherapeutic visits with touristic practice, to the extent that tourism has been

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[42] Bauby, p. 83.
[43] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 79
[44] Coroller, pp. 46-47

linked, historically, to therapeutic traditions. Amirou highlights 'le lien qui s'établit entre la configuration des lieux et les vertus thérapeutiques qui leur sont attribuées', and infers that 'guérir l'âme ou le corps a été la suprême justification des déambulations et des plaisirs vacanciers'.[45] Going elsewhere for therapeutic motives may therefore also be a significant aspect of able-bodied tourism, at least historically, as well as being part of the rehabilitation process for disabled persons.

It is Bauby who uses the term 'villégiature' to describe his residence in a care facility – 'ma villégiature berckoise' – but it is helpful to consider all the rehabilitation journeys featured in terms of this particular type of touristic practice, because the journeys concerned lead to an extended stay at the rehabilitation clinic in question.[46] This is equally applicable to rehabilitation visits to other countries, namely Segal's lengthy period of residence at an acupuncture centre in China in *Viens la mort, on va danser*, and Gérald Métroz's internment at an artificial limb clinic in Germany in *Soudain un train*.

Jean-Didier Urbain's theorization of *villégiature* in *Sur la plage* uses the context of seaside vacationing for illustrative purposes, but allows *villégiature* to be applied to any travel practice involving a journey to a specific resort. The notion of clinic-based rehabilitation as *villégiature* problematizes Urbain's overemphasis on immobility as the desired characteristic of the *séjour* at the chosen destination. Urbain defines the *villégiateur* as one who travels, perhaps extensively, but only in order to secure an opportunity to be immobile thereafter: 'Pourtant, [le villégiateur] voyage. Il va même au bout du monde. Mais c'est précisément pour s'arrêter. [...] Ce singulier paradoxe: se déplacer pour ne plus bouger.'[47]

Urbain presents this immobility not as an incidental characteristic of *villégiature*, but as an outcome that is actively and wholeheartedly desired by the *villégiateur*, who is 'cet étrange voyageur rêvant d'immobilité, qui voyage pour ne pas voyager' (p. 15). Urbain dichotomizes residence and mobility, suggesting mutual exclusivity of these actions; the *villégiateur* has chosen one over the other, 'préférant l'installation au vagabondage, celui-là a interrompu son voyage' (p. 17). However, disabled subjects departing for extended stays in rehabilitation clinics are arguably travelling in order to achieve mobility, rather than immobility. Their stay is characterized by intensive physiotherapy and in fact more active motion than during the journey to the clinic, during which they will have been passive passengers of cars, aeroplanes and ambulances.

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[45] Amirou, p. 97. See also Rauch, *Vacances en France de 1830 à nos jours*, pp. 15-78, and Rauch, *Vacances et pratiques corporelles*, pp. 13-22; pp. 145-49.
[46] Bauby, p. 50.
[47] Jean-Didier Urbain, *Sur la plage* (Paris: Payot, 1996), pp. 14-15.

During his internment in Germany, Métroz practises walking on his hands and using artificial limbs; in China, Segal undergoes Chinese medical treatments in order to reanimate his legs; even Bauby's internment is filled with physiotherapy sessions – 'Brigitte vient faire fonctionner bras et jambes gagnés par l'ankylose. On appelle cela "mobilisation".'[48]

It would seem erroneous, then, to attribute any aspirations to immobility to disabled subjects travelling to rehabilitation centres away from home. Nevertheless, as indicated above, there seems to be considerable convergence in other respects between rehabilitation visits and resort-based and therapeutic touristic practices. It may therefore be appropriate to widen critical definitions of *villégiature* accordingly.

6.4.4 DISABILITY AND DECELERATION: RE-SCOPING TRAVEL

> Le lit voisin, c'était un autre pays, un autre continent.[49]

This section considers thematic and discursive convergences between the theorization and representation of certain able-bodied travel practices, and issues relating to the displacements of physically-disabled persons. Walking journeys are favoured by a number of contemporary travel writers as a means of counteracting the illusion, caused by the acceleration of transport and the diffusion of multimedia images, that the world is shrinking and that there is nowhere left to go.[50] Through deceleration of displacement, and increased physical effort, walking potentially reconfigures the traveller's sense of distance: 'Je rapporte mentalement l'immensité à parcourir à notre lenteur démesurée. [...] Et c'est à pas lents – cinquante mille par jour – que nous allons arpenter ces horizons.'[51] Physical disability is also presented as offering the potential to reconfigure affected subjects' perceptions and experiences of geographical space: 'Le lit voisin, c'était un autre pays, un autre continent.'[52]

The disabled subject, when without access to a wheelchair or adapted motorized vehicle, may experience a sense that ordinarily trivial distances are now seemingly immense because of the difficulty or impossibility of covering these distances unaided. Just as distances may be relativized to reflect the implications of slower speed and greater difficulty, analogies may be made with able-bodied travel examples in order to

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[48] Bauby, p. 21.
[49] Baffert, p. 11.
[50] See Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher', p. 50.
[51] Poussin and Tesson, p. 89
[52] Baffert, p. 11.

illustrate the relative danger of displacements. That is, a displacement-type that may be unproblematic for an able-bodied person may involve serious health risks for a person with physical impairment: 'Voyager dans un avion avec un fauteuil, c'est déjà le Paris-Dakar.'[53]

Certain corporeal types of travel, such as walking, cycling and mountaineering journeys, correspond to theoretical models of travel as physical effort and mastery of pre-planned, often rigid, self-imposed mobility targets, such as Poussin and Tesson's five-thousand-kilometre walk across the Himalayas in *La Marche dans le ciel*. This thematic tendency regularly involves textual focus on the body as it executes these displacements, including moments of pathology and *panne*, as well as increasing adaptation to physical exertion.[54] Also, it has been observed that corporeal journeys could theoretically be authenticated as travel on account of contemporary and historical valorization of difficult travel as superior to effortless tourism: 'Plus les conditions sont difficiles, plus la route est longue et escarpée, et plus l'illusion de "véritablement" voyager prend de la force.'[55]

The representation of rehabilitation processes in the literature of physical disability is also suggestive of these body-focused models of travel. As a result of the further limitations to mobility imposed by physical impairment to the body, smaller-scale displacements may be considered as worthy of representation than is ordinarily the case in able-bodied corporeal travel texts.

In his conclusion to *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, Segal reflects on the need to relativize travel-related accomplishments in terms of individual capability. He starts by disqualifying his achievements in terms of able-bodied norms, but he then reconsiders this disqualification:

> L'aventure est un trop grand mot pour moi, et ce que j'ai fait reste à ma hauteur. Je n'ai pas vécu l'extraordinaire. [...] Mais si, pour moi, monter sur un bateau dont la passerelle trop étroite n'accueillait pas mon fauteuil avait pris des allures de défi? (pp. 256-57)

This relativization is in evidence in Segal's later work, where the vocabulary of extensive able-bodied displacement is reappropriated to qualify small-scale displacements achieved in spite of physical impairment. In *Viens la mort, on va danser*, Segal entitles the third chapter of the first part 'La longue marche', but it emerges that the 'longue marche' in question consists of a walk from one room of a house to another, using crutches for

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[53] Baffert, p. 11.
[54] See Le Breton, *Eloge de la marche*, pp. 41-44; Forsdick, p. 55.
[55] Amirou, p. 90

support.[56] Segal approaches the journey in the manner of an able-bodied practitioner of long-distance walking journeys; the intended walk is presented as an individual project, involving prior planning of a route that will be divided into various *étapes*:

> Je décidai de pénétrer debout dans la grande salle à manger. [...] Mon plan était bien établi. Sortir de la chambre (les gestes à accomplir: poser la main sur la poignée, se reculer et s'engouffrer dans l'étroit passage sans perdre l'équilibre). Emprunter le couloir recouvert de moquette rouge. Prendre l'ascenseur jusqu'au sixième étage. Un dernier couloir mène jusqu'à la grande salle.[57]

The full account of this 'longue marche' is entirely in keeping with André Rauch's model of the able-bodied corporeal traveller, who is 'rivé à l'effort du voyageur, lié au rythme de son pas, tendu par son projet et les multiples obstacles que rencontre sa réalisation'.[58]

In Rauch's theorization of able-bodied corporeal travel, there are some attempts to propose a hierarchy according to which walking over mountainous terrain at high altitudes, or actually climbing mountains, is valorized above pedestrian journeys over flat terrain, due to the greater danger and difficulty incurred, and to the fact of elevation.[59] Segal's work provides a scaled-down model for the thematization of this debate: the act of standing upright is presented as an equivalent source of *vertige* and self-mastery, whereas travel along a horizontal axis is relatively effortless: 'Les quelques secondes passées debout m'avaient tourné la tête et plus fatigué que tous les marathons courus en fauteuil roulant.'[60]

The analogy of walking *vs* climbing and wheelchair use *vs* standing up is complicated, however, by the fact that for wheelchair users such as Segal, walking along a horizontal axis is simultaneously an experience of higher altitude, as it involves walking at a higher point on the vertical axis than would be the case in wheelchair displacements. Further problematics of deviations from verticality are discussed below.

6.4.5 RETHINKING THE BODY: REHABILITATION AS A RETURN JOURNEY

This section is concerned with disabled subjects' relationship to verticality and associated types of mobility. Specifically, this will involve a consideration of attitudes towards the loss and recovery of the standing position and the ability to walk, together with the renegotiation of concepts of virility, where this occurs in parallel with issues of

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[56] Cf. Bernard Ollivier, *Longue marche*; the subject of this later text is a 12000-kilometre walk.
[57] Patrick Segal, *Viens la mort, on va danser* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), p. 44
[58] Rauch, *Vacances et pratiques corporelles*, p. 70
[59] Rauch, pp. 71-79. Cf. Victor Segalen, *Equipée*, 2nd edn (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), pp. 32-34
[60] Segal, *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), p. 243

verticality. This emphasis reflects the prominent thematization of issues of verticality in the texts studied. It will also provide an additional perspective from which to evaluate issues raised in Chapter Five, concerning idealizations of bipedalism, and of 'natural' mobility.

The wheelchair is theorized as a disadvantaged site, in comparison to the pedestrian's condition of upright bipedality, for interaction with the physical and human environment. The basis for this disadvantage is dual, comprising of both the imposition of a low height level, and the presence of a physical, spatial buffer constituted by the wheelchair itself:

> De plus, être en fauteuil ne favorise pas les relations de proximité, cette orthopédie crée une certaine distance matérielle entre les autres et nous. Dans la vie sociale, si le fauteuil roulant [...] nous permet d'avoir une autonomie, il nous pénalise sur le plan relationnel parce que, concrètement et symboliquement, il nous amène à vivre une infériorité.[61]

As explained in Chapter Five, the walker derives his/her superior multi-sensory awareness of surroundings from the absence of any mechanical barriers between self and environment, such as a car windscreen. Wheelchair-bound subjects theorize the wheelchair as a physical impediment to perception, and also as something that has spontaneously detracted from their capacity for enjoyment in general. Béatrice Coroller articulates this idea of wheelchair as barrier in the following spatial terms: 'Le fauteuil est une barrière physique et psychique entre tout et tous. Physique car accoudoirs et repose-pieds empêchent une approche, une accolade.'[62] Equally, she describes how the loss of pleasure taken in observing her surroundings is simply a fact of her condition, without specific explanations: 'Malheureusement, la nature perd charme et grandeur vue d'un fauteuil roulant. Un peu comme une crevette que l'on vous tend toute décortiquée: le crustacé perd alors sa saveur' (p. 93). Segal, on the other hand, specifically links his loss of enjoyment of the physical environment to the wheelchair-bound subject's loss of the ability to experience through touch: 'Le handicap [...] m'avait privé des joies simples que la nature offre au corps. J'aurais voulu fouler de l'herbe, sentir mes plantes de pied s'enfoncer dans le vert tendre d'une pelouse ou entendre mes pas crisser dans la neige.'[63]

As far as height-level disparity is concerned, the compulsory seated position imposed by the wheelchair is found to result in feelings of alienation as the wheelchair user may feel dwarfed by physical environments designed for the use of people standing upright. Coroller observes: 'On n'imagine pas combien une personne assise peut se

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[61] Chevance, p. 49
[62] Coroller, p. 109.
[63] Segal, *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...*, p. 260

trouver petite.'[64] Patrick Segal explains that this literal inferiority also entails the added degradation of being stuck at crotch-level, and Segal accordingly expresses the desire to walk again and be restored to normative height-levels:

> Cette existence à ras de terre, pire, à hauteur des braguettes et des paires de fesses! Ne plus lever sans cesse les yeux vers autrui comme s'il fallait vivre à genoux dans une permanente humiliation, regarder enfin les choses d'un peu plus haut, avoir l'impression de toiser les femmes, se sentir aussi grand que le monde! [...] Je veux marcher...marcher à hauteur d'homme.[65]

When Segal thinks he is about to regain the ability to walk, he reiterates and thereby prioritizes the vertical aspect of this development: 'Le grand moment si longtemps différé est arrivé. Je vais marcher, me déplacer debout, me redresser, me relever' (p. 190).

In spite of the concession of these disadvantages arising from the loss of the upright position and the ability to walk, the disabled subjects featured in the literature of disability do not wholeheartedly endorse the valorization of walking, bipedalism and 'natural' mobility characteristic of the material discussed in Chapter Five. On the one hand, certain incidental remarks made by disabled subjects do support the idea that the loss of leg function actually does result in diminished humanity. Patrick Segal, for instance, diagnoses a self-image problem which he considers to arise from the use of wheelchairs; he suggests that in the consciousness of disabled people, the existence of the wheelchair takes precedence: 'Le drame des handicapés, c'est d'intégrer leur "image" d'homme diminué, et de se présenter ainsi aux yeux d'autrui. [...] Mal vivre parce qu'ils pensent davantage à leur fauteuil qu'à leur entité d'homme.'[66] He goes on to exclaim that 'l'espoir est difficile, quand on ne marche plus' (p. 201), implying that the impossibility of walking has a fundamental psychological impact. Similarly, Béatrice Coroller concludes that even if she were to develop her intellectual life to the full, she would always be psychologically prevented from happiness, because of the absence of limb function: 'Malgré tout, je serais restée en partie le déchet humain que je suis car personne ne peut se prétendre heureux sans jambes et sans mains.'[67]

The perceived disadvantages of physical disability are not restricted to issues of lost verticality. A critical aspect of physical disability is that the disabled subject is likely to require third-party assistance for the realization of travel, as with other, projects. Jean-

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[64] Coroller, p. 109.
[65] Segal, *L'homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 159-60
[66] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 201.
[67] Coroller, p. 173.

Pierre Chevance sets out the problematics of a lack of physical self-sufficiency as follows:

> [Il s'agit de] ne plus pouvoir satisfaire ses désirs ou ses besoins sans la médiation d'un tiers. Que devient le sentiment de liberté lorsque, pour réaliser nos projets, nous devons toujours négocier, différer ou renoncer? [...] On est pris entre le désir d'être et l'impossibilité d'être [68]

This problem of dependence on third-party assistance with wheelchair displacements, theorized by Chevance, is argued by Coroller to be the main drawback of physical impairment: 'Je ne le répéterai jamais assez, le plus éprouvant de la vie sans jambes et sans mains, c'est le manque total d'indépendance pour toutes choses, des plus anodines mais quotidiennes, aux plus intimes.'[69]

Segal applies the dependence problem to the context of physical displacement. Segal's description supports the idea there is a link between the ability to walk unaided, and the possibility of a self-perception as dignified and human. He presents a dehumanized image of himself as dependent on somebody to push his wheelchair during his travels in Los Angeles in *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*: 'Il faut me pousser comme un boeuf, me tirer comme un âne, dans un concert de grincements métalliques' (p.199).

However, Segal, Coroller and Briod all present arguments to problematize the excessive valorization of the ability to walk, by maintaining that restored leg function would not fundamentally transform their essential human subjectivity. Coroller demystifies walking by underlining the derivative nature of its value; she does not miss walking for its own sake, but only in so far as walking permits independence of lifestyle: 'Ce n'est pas tant de ne pas marcher qui est pénible, mais essentiellement le manque d'indépendance totale que cela entraîne.'[70] Similarly, In *Viens la mort, on va danser* Segal declares that the mind is the site of freedom, and that the benefits of walking are trivial in comparison. Segal assigns emphasis on legs to animal experience, and completes his argument with a reference to the fact that humans are only two legs away from being dogs:

> Encore un effort et tu marcheras! Tu feras pipi tout seul et tu jouiras en faisant l'amour. Mais ils n'ont pas compris que la liberté est dans ma tête. [...] Où me conduiraient donc mes jambes? [...] Et si j'en avais quatre, de jambes, au cimetière d'Asnières parmi les chiens.[71]

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[68] Chevance, p. 48.
[69] Coroller, p. 113. Cf. Fussell, p. 41: 'Travel implies [...] independence of arrangements.'
[70] Coroller, p. 172.
[71] Segal, *Viens la mort, on va danser*, p. 125.

In *Soudain un train*, Gérald Métroz, who has no legs at all, conjectures that the presence of legs would not alter his fundamental identity as a subjective human being:

> Avoir de vraies jambes bouleverserait probablement ma vie, mais mon être profond n'en serait pas tellement modifié. Comme un navire dont on changerait les voiles pour en mettre de plus performantes. Le bateau, même s'il va plus vite et plus loin, vogue toujours sur l'eau et sur les mers du monde. Avec des jambes de chair et d'os, je serais toujours cet être humain qui essaye d'y voir plus clair dans sa vie.[72]

Although Métroz's choice of extended simile focuses the nature of the change on the speed and extent of physical displacement, his sense of identity is ultimately anchored in mental processes and human subjectivity, as is indicated by 'voir plus clair dans sa vie'.

The French disability scholar Jean-Marc Bardeau subjects the contemporary valorization of walking to a feminist critique. Bardeau demystifies walking as just one of many means of access from A to B. In his critical study of disability, *Voyage à travers l'infirmité*, Bardeau argues that the notion of bipedalism as supremely human and inherently worthy is spurious and is a phallocentric myth:

> Je m'interroge sur cette mouvance et verticalité entre ciel et terre, c'est la victoire primaire semble-t-il de l'homme sur l'animal, elle est alors dictée par l'évolution de l'humanité. L'homme debout, dressé comme un phallus, qui avance la tête droite. Quand nous mettrons-nous dans la tête qu'au-delà de ce symbole phallique, la marche n'est qu'une fonction, un moyen toujours limité pour aller d'un point à un autre.[73]

The alignment of standing upright, walking and virility is a recurrent one in the literature of physical disability. Segal in particular denounces received notions of masculine sexuality in his invective against those who overemphasize the importance of walking: 'Ils n'ont pas compris, ces vendeurs de guérison, que nous n'avons plus les pieds sur terre et qu'il ne nous importe pas d'être "virils" pour jouir. Que nous importe de pénétrer, de dominer quand la tendresse est ailleurs?'[74] In fact, Segal regains the use of his legs, and in *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...* he explicitly refers to this development as 'ce retour à la verticale', in a section entitled 'L'homme debout'. The lengthy process of rehabilitation constitutes, in its totality, a metaphorical return to the normalized upright position. Interestingly, the event is also celebrated in this text as a return to virility, and the vision of Segal standing upright is described in phallic imagery, although this is presented as part of a letter from Segal's partner: 'Je te regarde, homme debout, et j'ai

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[72] Briod, p. 140.
[73] Jean-Marc Bardeau, *Voyage à travers l'infirmité* (Paris: Scarabée, 1985), p. 53.
[74] Segal, *Viens la mort, on va danser*, p. 125.

l'impression de voir se dresser un chêne, une montagne, un volcan. Un jour tu sauras me fertiliser et moi, la femme inaccessible, je recevrai ta semence et je la garderai.'[75]

The absence of any celebration of the return to the possibility of walking is conspicuous. Segal himself concludes that the only real benefit of regained verticality is that it enables him to look like the rest of the able-bodied population: 'La seule chose qui m'excitait vraiment dans ce retour à la verticale, c'était la possibilité d'apparaître comme les autres' (p. 259). Similarly, in *Soudain un train*, Gérald Métroz cites the interpersonal benefits of the vertical position as his rationale for submitting himself to the physical discomfort and inconvenience of artificial limbs as opposed to the relative comfort and convenience of a wheelchair:

> Mais pourquoi avais-je persévéré si longtemps à porter des prothèses? Sans doute à cause de l'appréciable avantage qu'elles ont par rapport au fauteuil roulant: elles permettent la position *debout*. Pour soi et dans le regard des autres, c'est un grand bénéficie psychologique. Sur mes prothèses, je peux parler avec quelqu'un les yeux dans les yeux, avec un regard à hauteur normale.[76]

No intrinsic value is ascribed to the ability to stand upright or walk: its value is derived solely from its status as a norm of able-bodied existence. Even when Métroz begins to concede that 'mis à part ça, la sensation de marcher est agréable' (p. 71), he substantiates this opinion with the fact that it enables him to wear trousers and shoes, and thereby resemble other people. Métroz explicitly reiterates his continuing desire to resemble other people, and his actions, displacements and identity are linked in this aim: '[J'étais] poussé par une force intérieure qui me disait: "Gérald, rien ne peut t'empêcher d'aller où les autres vont, de faire ce que les autres font, d'être ce que les autres sont"' (pp. 34-35).

As rehabilitation is conceived of as a return to able-bodied norms, the presence of an assimilationist motive to metaphorical and literal journeys of recovery is unsurprising, and is a detail that distinguishes the subjects of the literature of physical disability from able-bodied travellers: the disabled subjects appear to aspire to normality and

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[75] Patrick Segal, *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...*, pp. 231-32. Just as in contemporary theories of car culture, the car is critiqued for its phallocentrism, in the context of disability, walking is portrayed in phallic terms. For analysis of the phallocentrism of car culture, see Sachs, p. 115. The momentousness of the disabled author's gradual progress from abject horizontality to a triumphant upright position is itself evocative of nineteenth- and twentieth-century narratives of human evolution. See, for example, Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2000). Note that this work features, as its cover illustration, Rudolph Zallinger's influential diagrammatical representation of human evolution, 'The March of Progress' (1970).

[76] Briod, p. 71.

resemblance to other people, rather than exceptionality and individuation.[77] Walking, which is exoticized by pedestrian travel writers as eccentric behaviour is, in the literature of disability, mythologized as the most potent symbol of able-bodied normativity. This indicates a need to relativize claims, by contemporary French pedestrian travel writers, that walking is a bizarre anachronism.[78]

6.4.6 RETURNS TO AUTOMOBILITY

> Pourquoi nous refuser la griserie de la vitesse et du risque?[79]

In Chapter Five it was observed that the critique of automobility in general and of car culture in particular is a recurrent theme in the theory and literature of walking journeys. The virtues of walking are frequently extolled in opposition to the following key aspects of automobility: loss of full sensory awareness of the journey owing to velocity and enclosure; potential for car accidents resulting in injury/death to people and animals inside and outside of the vehicle; loss of opportunity for interaction with other people en route; decline of corporeal experience/health due to physical passivity when driving/being driven. The ways in which the literature of disability engages with these ideas is of particular interest because in all cases, accidents arising from automobility are present as having affected either the primary subject of the text or other disabled people featured within that text. Further, the role of automobility *after* disabling accidents is also a prevalent theme. The result is a certain overlap or even hybridity of high-speed/disability accounts.

By illustrating the significance of automobility within subjective narratives of disability, the literature of disability may be considered to substantiate and verify claims that remain largely theoretical in walking journey theories and literature, regarding the destructiveness of motor vehicles and high speed. In *Condamnée à vivre*, Coroller introduces the account of her tetraplegic condition with a description of her road accident: she was driving without a seat-belt at 110 km/h, breaking a speed limit of 90 km/h, and drove into a tree. In *Soudain un train*, the *récit* begins with an account of how Gérald Métroz as a two-year-old strayed onto a railway track on his tricycle, straight into

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[77] For an analysis of disability and disease as exile, see Richard Sawdon Smith, 'Exiles of Normality: Photography and the Representation of Diseased Bodies', in *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*, ed. by Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp. 153-74.

[78] For discussions of the eccentricity of the walker, see Chapter Five below, and Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher', p. 52.

[79] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 228

the path of a train, and lost both legs. Patrick Segal's *récits* feature a number of guest appearances of motor accident victims, such as Jean in *Le Cheval de vent* – 'un nouveau venu dans le monde des paraplégiques. Il avait dix-neuf ans quand la voiture conduite par un de ses amis heurta une borne kilométrique.'[80]

Theorists of disability are currently problematizing critiques, by able-bodied scholars, of technology. Alan Roulstone, for instance, affirms that 'technology does not simply assist the body, but elevates people with impairments to a point closer to accepted normality'.[81] There is greater ambivalence, however, in the attitudes of French disabled subjects towards motorized transport technologies in particular. On the one hand, after the onset of disability, the wheelchair-users featured consider automobility from similar perspectives to those typical of the proponents of pedestrianism. In *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, Patrick Segal reacts to the monopoly of roads by motor vehicle drivers from the point of view of a pedestrian:

> C'est l'heure des 'machos' [...]. C'est plutôt sous le capot de leurs voiture ou dans les cylindres de leur moto que s'est réfugiée leur puissance. Mettre un pied sur la chaussée, c'est provoquer le courroux de ces rois de bitume. Un piéton aperçu, et la chasse est ouverte. (p. 225)

Even though Segal himself is witnessing this situation from the position of his wheelchair, he describes the conflict in terms of motor vehicle users and pedestrians, and it is an argument familiar in such texts as Bernard Ollivier's *Longue marche*. Equally, Segal denounces the noise and air pollution caused by traffic: '[Les touristes] ont loué des scooters et des mobylettes dont les pétarades et les fumées polluent l'air et le silence miraculeusement préservés' (p. 169).

Béatrice Coroller's attitude towards motorized wheelchairs seems to be an adaptation of familiar moral dilemmas surrounding the effortlessness of car use. The motor vehicle is initially rejected as a signifier of corporeal deficiency, and bodily exertion is favoured over convenience and passivity: 'Je repoussais l'idée de cet énorme engin qui, à mes yeux, soulignait mon handicap. En appartement, je préférais suer sang et eau à me mouvoir.' When Coroller is eventually persuaded to use a motorized wheelchair, her anxiety about appearing to be lazy reflects contemporary valorization of the physical effort ethic of walking – 'Je fus un peu affolée à l'idée que l'on puisse me

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[80] Patrick Segal, *Le Cheval de vent* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), p. 16.

[81] Alan Roulstone, 'Employment and New Technology', in *The Disability Reader*, pp. 110-38 (p. 115); see also Meekosha, p. 179: 'Utopian technologies should be examined for their liberatory potential as well as exposing their dangers as tools of domination.'

croire assez fainéante pour me véhiculer assise sur cet engin, choisissant d'être secouée sur les pavés et les bosses plutôt que de marcher!'[82]

This evidence of anti-automobility discourse coexists in the literature of disability with a general reaffirmation of both the practical convenience and the potential for pleasure offered by the means of automobility in general, and motor cars in particular. In Australia, Patrick Segal discovers a community of disabled people which he considers to be utopian, containing all the requirements for a dignified and humane existence. When he lists these requirements, 'voiture' is mentioned first and foremost, and it is implied that the deprivation of this and other items amounts to a denial of autonomy:

> Dans ce village, on respecte l'intimité du patient; il a sa voiture, sa chambre, sa télévision, son atelier s'il le veut. Pour la première fois, je découvre qu'un malade est accepté comme un homme. Ailleurs [...] on vous rend moins que rien. Sans liberté, sans indépendance, sans responsabilité.[83]

Cars are also celebrated for enabling the disabled person to indulge in displacements that are not purely of a functional nature but are undertaken for their own sake. When Gérald Métroz describes his first experience of ownership of a specially-adapted car, he highlights the pleasure of long-distance displacement which the car allows: 'A seize ans, j'ai donc commencé à goûter aux joies, jusque-là inaccessibles, du déplacement sur de longues distances.'[84] For Segal, the return to the driving seat after hospitalization is long-awaited and momentous and seems to answer a fundamental latent desire for automobility: 'Déjà je suis au volant. Sans le savoir, sans le croire, j'attendais ce moment depuis des mois.'[85] Furthermore, in *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...*, Segal presents the experience of immersion in road traffic as being a necessary antidote to the monotony of the hospital milieu: 'La circulation sur les périphériques était fluide et les gestes automatiques de la conduite me lavaient le cerveau comme si j'avais besoin d'un bain de bruit et de mouvement pour combattre l'univers figé de l'hôpital' (p. 16). The stultifying, repetitive, passive aspects of motoring that appear in a disadvantageous light within critiques of car culture are here reappropriated and revalorized as being welcome and salutary. It should also be pointed out that even in the case of Béatrice Coroller, whose tetraplegic condition precludes driving, peripatetic car journeys feature as a source of pleasure, even though Coroller can only direct the itinerary from the passenger seat: 'Nous voilà repartis sans but précis. Nous roulions au gré de ma fantaisie, d'un bout à l'autre de la capitale.'[86]

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[82] Coroller, pp. 155-57.
[83] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 183.
[84] Briod, p. 63.
[85] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 228.
[86] Coroller, p. 130.

In the *récits* of Patrick Segal, particular emphasis is given to the pleasures of high speed. Segal argues that disabled people should not be denied access to fast cars. Making the initial point that any self-respecting disabled person would in the first place require a car, Segal denounces the small engine of the standard car that is available to disabled people in France, and accuses society of denying disabled people the thrill of high speed for superficial reasons relating to their physical appearance:

> Pourquoi, moi aussi, n'aurai-je droit qu'à la petite DAF qui est la voiture obligée de tout invalide qui se respecte, comme si l'on voulait, là encore, nous replonger dans la médiocrité? Pourquoi nous refuser la griserie de la vitesse et du risque? A moins qu'on ne heurte l'esthétique d'une belle carrosserie avec nos corps offensants?[87]

From the examples studied, it would appear that first-hand experience of car accidents does not, as might be expected, radically alter the disabled subjects' attitude towards the thrill of high-speed travel. In *Viens la mort, on va danser*, in a spirit that is in harmony with the title, Segal argues that true handicap is constituted not by physical disability but by a cautious attitude towards danger that pre-empts possible negative outcomes and maintains safety through avoidance of risk:

> Il y a quelques années, on me disait: 'Ne traverse pas la rue, tu vas te faire écraser!' Alors si je dis: 'Je vais traverser l'Atlantique!' que me répondra-t-on? [...] Les perdants d'avance, les pessimistes, ce sont eux les vrais handicapés. (p. 96)

An incident in *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...* demonstrates this determination to fulfil the desire for high speed in spite of awareness of the danger involved. Patrick Segal, who is starting to regain the use of his legs, takes a disabled friend for a drive in a Porsche and indulges him with regard to his requests for increasing speed, on the basis that the police will show lenience towards disabled drivers. Segal then neutrally observes that the unsatisfactoriness of moderate speeds is the root cause of car accidents:

> - T'as promis qu'on ferait du 200.
> La Porsche fit un bond et la six cylindres rugit comme un fauve.
> - 200, Nicolas.
> - Encore.
> - 230. Attention au permis, mon gars.
> [...]
> - Génial. Tu peux ralentir. Maintenant, je sais ce que c'est, ça me suffit.
> A 130 on avait l'impression de se traîner. C'est comme ça que les accidents arrivent, à force on s'endort, on se ramollit.[88]

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[87] *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 228.
[88] Segal, *J'en ai rêvé, tu sais...*, p. 91.

In *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, David Le Breton diagnoses 'atrophie de la motilité et de la mobilité de l'homme par le recours incessant à l'automobile', and this idea of 'recours incessant' is a useful one for consideration of the return to automobility that seems to be a pattern of the disability narratives considered.[89] Literal atrophy of mobility caused by automobile accidents brings about increased reliance on cars for basic displacements, and can also lead to increased recourse to cars for the fulfilment of intensified desires for speed; this return to automobility potentially renews the danger of further atrophy, suggesting perhaps a vicious circle of car-dependence and the literalization of Sidonie Smith's theory of the car as a prosthetic device – 'an extension of the body in and through space.'[90]

Finally, the literature of disability may also contribute to a reconsideration of pedestrianists' claims that the motor car is unfavourable as a means of travel because it acts as a barrier against the outside world and thereby precludes full sensory awareness of surroundings and dialogue with other people *en route*. Contrary to widespread claims that the car allows only a visual apprehension of the environment, Segal points out that odours can permeate a car and permit olfactory experience: 'Une odeur particulière, faite d'épices et de fleurs, de thé et de mousson, une odeur d'ailleurs remplit la voiture.'[91] Pedestrianists claim that walking is favourable to spontaneous encounters *en route*, but Segal reminds us that motorists can be a source of such encounters, as cars can stop and pick up passengers: 'Je rêve qu'un automobiliste s'arrête et qu'une rencontre tisse un nouveau rêve autour de moi.'[92]

The literature of disability, then, contains both positive and negative attitudes with regard to the use of motor vehicles, and this may simply reflect the fluidity of the disabled person's status as car-driver/passenger and pedestrian-equivalent. This is as opposed to the more rigid binaries of car-driver/pedestrian that are in evidence in walking theories and literature. The study of the relationship between disability and automobility as it emerges from the literature of disability primarily serves to demonstrate that, contrary to likely assumptions, first hand experience of motor accidents does not appear to give rise to any intensified or sustained critiques of car culture.

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[89] Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*, p. 169.
[90] Smith, p. 170.
[91] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 24
[92] Segal, *Viens la mort, on va danser*, p. 136

6.5 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER ISSUES

In this chapter, theories of disability, and an original corpus of twentieth-century French subjective narratives of disability, have been considered in terms of convergence with a number of issues in contemporary French literatures and theories of able-bodied travel. It should emerge from this chapter that physical disability is not necessarily tantamount to an irreversible personal end of literal travel, so it is a possibility that dedicated disabled travel accounts could appear in the near future, which should be generically categorizable as travel writing, as opposed to another literature of travel. Wheelchair travel, for instance, is a possible area of innovation for able-bodied as well as disabled travel writers, and the examples of disability literature presented in this chapter raise certain issues which would be likely to affect such a literature of disabled travel.

In the first place, the production of disabled travel accounts would raise linguistic debates comparable to those found within post-colonial literary theory. Simon During argues that post-colonialism resists attempts to 'turn the other into the same'. He says that 'for the post-colonial to speak or write in the imperial tongues is to call forth a problem of identity, to be thrown into mimicry and ambivalence.'[93] Similarly, if the disabled subject seeks to escape from any logic that posits him/her as deficient as compared to able-bodied norms, then current metaphors of displacement could be found to foreground such deficiency.[94]

In the texts studied, two possible responses to this problem are offered. In *Soudain un train*, Gérald Métroz consciously reappropriates able-bodied metaphor to humorous effect, and considers his status to be raised and empowered by the fact of attracting attention in this way:

> J'ai toujours aimé raconter les histoires drôles. Une manière comme une autre d'attirer l'attention en société, d'être le roi de la soirée. [...] C'est pourquoi j'emploie volontiers les expressions: 'Ça m'a fait une belle jambe!', [...] 'je ne mettrais plus les pieds chez vous'. [95]

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[93] Simon During, 'Postmodernism or Post-colonialism Today', in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 125-129 (p. 125).
[94] See Lennard J. Davis, p. 11. Davis also presents a case for the application of postcolonial theories to disability studies, pp. 2-28.
[95] Briod, p. 137.

Another possible approach is demonstrated by Segal, who spontaneously alters and renegotiates metaphors to reflect the reality of a wheelchair: 'A deux pas – à deux tours de roues -, une charrette offre le "feu", la soupe brûlante.'[96]

Secondly, the genesis of a literature of disabled travel might result in the development of a disabled exotic. Disabled travel writers could attempt to exoticize disabled experience in order to interest an able-bodied readership. Whilst Patrick Segal specifies that *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête* was written as an exemplar for disabled readers, the other primary texts discussed in this chapter appear to address an able-bodied readership without foreknowledge of the day-to-day complications of basic actions and displacements with a physical impairment. This may account for these texts' heavy emphasis on difficulties of eating, going to the toilet, and manoeuvring wheelchairs in snowy conditions, for instance. This emphasis could prove paradigmatic for disabled travel literature, consolidating thematic links with those types of travel literature in which corporeal experience is foregrounded.

Most importantly, perhaps, in this chapter, physical disability – an unacknowledged analogue of the 'end of travel' – has been found to offer possible precedents or prototypes for the innovations of able-bodied travellers. Vertical travel, as achieved by disguise and deceleration, mirrors the experiences of newly-disabled subjects returning to their local environments; and travel as the mastery of self-imposed challenges is suggestive of attempts to overcome physical handicaps through rehabilitation. At the same time, those able-bodied French travel writers who respond to the 'end of travel' by eulogizing 'natural', corporeal travel, may unconsciously be dehumanizing disabled subjects, without recognizing the continuity of their own 'innovations' with certain norms of day-to-day life as a disabled person in contemporary metropolitan France.

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[96] Segal, *L'Homme qui marchait dans sa tête*, p. 115

CHAPTER SEVEN: SCIENCE FICTION AND CYBERTRAVEL

7.1 INTRODUCTION

> Transport technology is the material base of potentiality and equally the material base of the traveler's space-time perception.[1]

In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the 'end of travel' imposed by severe physical disability can be counteracted by rethinking the corporeal basis of travel – 'l'esprit peut vagabonder comme un papillon' – although it should be admitted that there has been critical resistance to the notion that imaginary travel could be as valid as its conventionally physical counterpart. It remains in this final chapter to consider how rethinking the corporeal basis of travel may problematize that other, prior 'end of travel': the able-bodied French travel writer's sense of belatedness in a pre-discovered, insufficiently-diverse world. Science fiction and cyberspace[2] are identified here as important sites for the negotiation of new possibilities for travel and travel writing, dependent on revised concepts of corporeal, material and spatial reality; science fiction can be seen as a literary and cultural phenomenon envisioning new contexts and mechanisms for travel, whilst cybertravel must be seen as an emerging practice with the potential also to reconfigure physical boundaries of travel – with equal reliance, some would argue, on strategies of fictionalization.[3]

The starting-point for this chapter's consideration of science fiction is the presence of a small number of French science fiction texts that present travel as a central concern, and appear to override current limitations in transport technology. *Le Voyageur Imprudent* (1958) by René Barjavel gives the account of a journey to the year 100000, premised on the discovery of time travel pills; Philippe Curval's *Voyage à l'envers* (2000) describes a pioneering return journey to Proxima Centauri, on board a solar-powered spaceship; Jean-Claude Dunyach's 2000 work *Etoiles Mortes* charts the instant

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[1] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 36.

[2] The 'cyber' prefix is used liberally without explanation by Sidonie Smith, Michael Cronin and Franck Michel, suggesting that this has now entered into normal vocabulary. This thesis will provisionally conform with untheorized usage of this prefix to reflect critical assumptions that it is generally understood what 'cyber' means. However, terminology will be revisited and scrutinized in a later section about wider theorizations of information technology and travel.

[3] In contemporary France, science fiction is apparently being annexed to travel literatures – a process evidenced by the increasing representation of science fiction writers at the annual *Etonnants Voyageurs* festival in Saint-Malo.

travels of its first-person narrator around twenty-seven *AnimauxVilles* newly discovered towns identifiable as enormous living organisms; *Ambigata* (2000) by Vincent Michel presents an epic voyage across the six continents of the eponymous planet, in the two-hundredth millennium. With titles announcing journeys or unfamiliar places, and first person narrators providing autobiographical accounts of itineraries complete with detailed descriptions of displacements, geographies, cultures and encounters, these works call to mind Germaine Brée's diagnosis of travel-themed fiction that 'fairly bludgeons us with the fact' of travel; however, whereas in Brée's study, the voyage occurs as a structural device instrumental to the writing of fiction, these science fiction texts are open to the interpretation that recourse to fiction is instrumental to the composition of travelogues.[4] Although the result is nonetheless a work of fiction, crucially for this thesis, the science fiction texts reconfigure the 'material base of potentiality' in travel.[5]

As a site for the conceptualization of further possibilities for travel, science fiction necessarily omits primary travel as a point of referentiality. In this sense, it is excluded from definitions of travel writing as opposed to travel literature. On the other hand, recent developments in computer and information technology are being interpreted by some theorists as offering new modes of primary travel. An increasing number of French websites promise virtual tours of worldwide locations, while the consultation of non-specific internet sites generally is also being theorized as travel.[6] The publication in 2004 of the Anglophone travelogue *Dave Gorman's Googlewhack Adventure* demonstrates that journeys undertaken partly in cyberspace can potentially form the basis of travel writing, although French travel writers are yet to explore this avenue. The status of computer-based practices as primary as opposed to secondary travel is actually a matter of current debate: it is an unresolved issue as to whether the levels of materiality and embodiment involved in 'cybertravel' exclude it from validity as primary travel, and whether future developments in this area will further problematize this question. There is therefore a need to reassess twentieth-century articulations of the 'end of travel' in the light of newly-emerging, as well as hypothetical, spaces and technologies for travel.

Where science fiction and cyberspace have received attention in studies of travel and travel writing, it has been in the context of speculations about the future of travel, and there has been, in this respect, a bifurcation of interest in space travel and science

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[4] See Germaine Brée, 'The Ambiguous Voyage: Mode or Genre', *Genre*, 1 (1968), 87-96
[5] Schivelbusch, p. 36.
[6] See below, part two.

fiction on the one hand, and cyberspace on the other.[7] To a large extent, the distribution of interest in science fiction *or* cybertravel as alternative futures for travel reflects chronology; as a relatively recent phenomenon, cybertechnologies have only received interest from travel theorists in the last decade. However, there is still evidence of bifurcation in the twenty-first century, with some contemporary scholars choosing to prioritize space travel/science fiction in spite of developments in information technology, and others altogether excluding space travel from consideration.[8] In accordance with their independent consideration in studies of travel and travel writing, science fiction and cybertravel will be treated within separate sections of this chapter, in the chronological order in which they first appear as concerns within travel writing; however, it is to be understood that their inclusion in the present study is in each case motivated by their renegotiation of corporeality in travel, and by their reception as the possible futures of travel/travel writing.

Although this chapter asserts the particular relevance of a selected corpus of French science fiction texts, attempts to align travel literature and science fiction have heretofore depended not on the recognition of works that resemble travelogues, but on thematic and historical similarities applying to the science fiction genre as a whole. In order to contextualize the more specific issue of science fiction and the renegotiation of the limits of travel, the next section of this chapter begins with a general introduction to science fiction and its relationship to travel literatures. This is followed by an investigation of the spatial and temporal boundaries of embodied travel and exoticism; consideration of science fiction's role in overriding these boundaries; and an exploration both of the problematics of representing disembodied travel practices, and of the resources available within science fiction studies for the theorization of such travel.

In the second part of the chapter, the implications of information technology for travel are considered on the basis of existing speculation by scholars of travel literature and independent theories of information technology emerging from cultural studies and

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[7] In practice, these concerns are no longer separate, as cybertechnology is now an important subject of science fiction. A new category of 'cyberpunk' has been theorized in Anglophone contexts, although there is debate as to whether this is a subgenre of science fiction or whether it is applicable to science fiction generally. As cyberpunk does not seem to have entered into usage in French contexts, this chapter will not refer to a separate category of cyber-themed science fiction. See Edward James, *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 193.

[8] For the prioritization of space travel, see Bruce Prideaux, 'Links Between Transport and Tourism – Past, Present and Future', in *Tourism in the 21st Century: Lessons from Experience*, ed. by Bill Faulkner, Gianna Moscardo and Eric Laws (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 91-109 (p. 91). See also Cronin, pp. 127-33; Geneviève Dewulf, Elisabeth Coss, and Patrice Bougy, *L'Autre et l'ailleurs: Homère - Michaux - Lévi-Strauss* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1992), p. 256. For consideration of cybertravel but not space travel, see Michel, pp. 231-34; Smith, pp. 203-07.

studies of science fiction. It has not proved possible to locate a primary French corpus of travel texts representing journeys in cyberspace, but French online travel resources have been consulted and Dave Gorman's *Googlewhack Adventure* is drawn into discussions of Internet travel to the extent that it problematizes the theoretical perspectives of the travel scholars featured.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the implications, for French travel writing, of challenges to the assumed and actual boundaries of material and corporeal reality, now and in the future. To complement this issue, consideration will also be given to Jeanne Guesné's *Le Grand passage: les leçons tirées de mes voyages hors du corps* (1994). This is a contemporary French travelogue – currently unacknowledged in studies in travel writing – about personal experiences of discorporated travel, and is apparently unique within twentieth-century French travel writing. It provides insights into specifically French attitudes towards travel, embodiment and reality, and it also serves as an illustration of the contribution of theories of science fiction and cybertravel to the reception of travelogues that resist theorization within existing approaches to travel writing.

7.2 SCIENCE FICTION: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GENRE

Like travel writing, science fiction is a genre that has proved to be problematic to define. There has been disagreement in terms of the scope of the genre – that is, whether it is preoccupied with a limited range of specific concerns, or whether it encompasses a much wider range of fictional writing; there has been a long-standing debate with regard to the boundaries between science fiction and the possibly overlapping genre of fantasy ('le roman fantastique'); related to both these issues, opinion has been divided as to the relative importance of 'science' and 'fiction' in science fiction writing; also, the primary agenda of science fiction writers has itself been questioned, for example in terms of a commitment to predicting the future, or a desire to provide escapist literature. It is the intention of this section to provide an overview of the various understandings of science fiction that are currently in evidence, as a context for exploring its reception by scholars and writers of travel.

Science fiction[9] is widely held to have begun with the fiction of Jules Verne: 'La *véritable* science-fiction [...] est née en France dans les années 1860, avec les romans scientifiques de Jules Verne (1828-1905).'[10] Significantly, the designation of 'romans scientifiques' is an English one; the French privileged the notion of the journey in their choice of provisional generic category:

> There was no generally accepted contemporary terminology for these stories of adventures in space or time, of amazing inventions, or of romances on other planets. The stories of Jules Verne, published as *voyages extraordinaires* in France, were published as 'scientific romances' in Britain.[11]

Although 'voyage extraordinaire' has been superseded by (minor variants of) 'science fiction' as the usual genre label in both French and Anglophone contexts, reminders of the genre's continuing interest in issues of travel survive in the form of telling subgeneric names, most notably 'time travel'. However, with other contemporary subgenres of science fiction, the relationship to travel is not so explicit: examples here would include 'evolutionary fables', 'alien-invasion stories' and the 'future-history narrative'.[12] Accordingly, the complementarity of science fiction and travel literatures can no longer be considered as self-evident: there is a need for investigation of the current significance of travel – extraordinary, futuristic or otherwise – to what is now arguably a heterogeneous genre encompassing a wide range of subjects.

At one extreme, science fiction has been defined as a catch-all category descriptive of all literature. John Campbell has theorized science fiction as the literature of the possible, as opposed to the actual, and has argued that the literature of the actual is in any case a form of science fiction: 'La soi-disante "littérature générale" – la littérature de ce qui existe vraiment –, n'est qu'une déclinaison de la science-fiction parmi

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[9] There are various permutations of 'Science fiction' as a genre label: it is designated variously as science fiction, science-fiction, Science Fiction, sf, SF, with no apparent impact on meaning. This chapter will standardize usage by referring to the genre as 'science fiction', whilst retaining original forms used in quotations.

[10] Lucien Boia, *L'Exploration imaginaire de l'espace* (Paris: La Découverte, 1987), p. 31. Although the legacy of Verne is acknowledged by scholars of science fiction, the establishment of the genre is attributed to North American writers, and the resurgence of science fiction in 1950s France is attributed to the interest taken in North American culture by French writers such as Boris Vian. Indeed, from the outset, there has been little attempt on the part of French publishers to emphasize a nationally-specific tradition of science fiction writing: translations of Anglo-American work formed the core content of French anthologies in the 1950s and translated authors still feature heavily within contemporary publications such as Michel Le Bris, ed., *Le Futur a déjà commencé* (Paris: E.J.L., 2000) and Michel Le Bris, ed., *Etonnants voyageurs: Utopies S.F.* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 2000), although there are now a substantial number of French and French Canadian writers of science fiction.

[11] James, p. 9.

[12] See Mark Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 3.

d'autres.'[13] According to Campbell, science fiction is therefore the largest possible literary genre. At another extreme, science fiction has been defined in strict relation to the exploration of space: William Sims Bainbridge claims that 'science fiction is the popular culture of the Spaceflight Movement'.[14] Bainbridge considers that science fiction has been, at its most influential, a stimulus for the development of technologies for space travel in the twentieth century, inspiring as well as expressing enthusiasm for astronautical innovation:

> For more than a century science fiction stories about spaceflight have been widely read and [...] had a direct and significant influence on the rocket pioneers and on the development of their ideas. [...] It no longer has any direct relationship to astronautics and may be left without a role to play in the further exploration of space. (p. 198)

For other scholars of science fiction, a broader range of technological and scientific concerns are within the scope of the genre: indeed, science fiction is often considered to be part of the wider cultural phenomenon of the increasing technologization of society. For Norman Spinrad, science fiction 'est la littérature qui explore l'interface entre un environnement externe mutant à une vitesse sans cesse croissante et la conscience humaine qui en résulte, laquelle se transforme aussi à une allure exponentielle'.[15] Spinrad does not specify the sources of this rapidly-evolving environment, but the science fiction scholar Edward James makes the technological causes explicit: James states that science fiction, as a genre, has 'tried to make sense of the rapidity of technological change and the impact which science and technology have made on our society'.[16]

Whether concerned with science and technology, or with a more general conception of the 'possible', science fiction is considered to be a special category of fiction that combines the imaginary with the factual or apparently factual.[17] Mark Rose underlines the greater importance of 'fact' in science fiction: according to Rose, 'Generally speaking, [science fiction stories] will emphasize the "realism" of science fiction, its "respect for fact" as opposed to the "self-indulgence" of fantasy.'[18] The use of

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[13] Quoted in Stéphane Nicot, 'Interview de N. Spinrad', trans. by Nathalie Mège, in Le Bris, ed., *Le Futur a déjà commencé*, pp. 79-89 (p. 80).
[14] William Sims Bainbridge, *The Spaceflight Revolution: A Sociological Study* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), p. 198.
[15] Quoted in Nicot, p. 80.
[16] James, page unnumbered.
[17] Critics are divided as to the importance of non-fiction in science fiction. See Simone Vierne, 'Le fantôme, l'automate et le robot: les rapports de la science-fiction et du fantastique', in *Les Ailleurs imaginaires: les rapports entre le fantastique et la science-fiction*, ed. by Aurélien Boivin, Maurice Emond and Michel Lord (Quebec: Nuit Blanche, 1993), pp. 265-84 (p. 282).
[18] Rose, p. 3.

inverted commas here reflects the difficulty of applying the terms of realism and fact to the representation of fictitious scenarios; however, the message is clear: science fiction writers are concerned with representing feasible situations in a convincing and factually consistent way.[19]

There are, then, noticeable parallels between the genres of science fiction and travel writing. Science fiction, in common with travel writing, is increasingly being recognized as part of a wider cultural phenomenon: just as travel writing can be situated within the context of increasing human mobility and the proliferation of practices of travel, so the rise of science fiction has been associated with the technologization of society as a whole – a phenomenon which is of course relevant also to the evolution of travel practices.[20] Related to this, in spite of its acknowledged nineteeth-century origins, science fiction is considered to be very much a twentieth-century genre – the product of twentieth-century literature, culture, society and values:[21]

> Science fiction is identified [in this book] as a cultural phenomenon whose ideas and imagery, through books, films, television, computer games, and children's toys, have become part of the everyday language of the late twentieth century.[22]

As a wide-reaching cultural phenomenon, science fiction, like travel writing, is beginning to attract multidisciplinary critical approaches,[23] although theorists of travel have not been drawn into discussion. Similarly, science fiction has received little attention within studies of travel literature. Existing approaches are outlined below.

In *Essai sur l'exotisme*, Victor Segalen intermittently confronts time travel and extraterrestrial places/life forms in terms of their value as sources of exoticism, but the question is reiterated rather than answered.[24] Whilst the distant past is decisively embraced as a privileged source – 'exalter le prodigieux profond passé inconnu' – the future is approached with caution, scepticism and even confusion: 'Ne regarder qu'avec prudence et ironie l'avenir. L'avenir est-il exotique??? [*sic*]' (p. 95). Similarly, Segalen

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[19] If Rose is correct in suggesting that it is a convention of the science fiction genre to provide persuasive realism, reasoned facts and scientifically plausible scenarios, then this might explain the frequent recourse of science fiction writers to conventions of supposedly non-fictional genres including (auto)biography, ethnography, the log book and, crucially for this chapter, the travelogue – it may be that such conventions are borrowed in order to lend further credibility to the scenarios represented.

[20] See thesis introduction and Chapter Three.

[21] Mary Anne Doane's definition of science fiction as a 'genre specific to the age of rapid technological development' is perhaps preferable. See Mary Anne Doane, 'Technophilia: Technology, Representation and the Feminine', in *Cybersexualities: A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*, ed. by Jenny Wolmark (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 20-33 (p. 20).

[22] James, page unnumbered.

[23] For instance, James, p.vii: '[*Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*] attempts to be as much a cultural history as a literary history.'

[24] See Segalen, *Essai sur l'exotisme*, pp. 38, 47, 48 and 95.

scarcely progresses beyond the mere enumeration of 'Exotisme extra-terrestre' and 'Mondes martiens et autres' (p. 47). It may perhaps be speculated that Segalen's disappointment with then contemporary science fiction writing deterred him from pursuing related issues any further: 'Les romans anticipateurs me font l'effet de maquettes mannequins passant pour une statue' (p. 95).[25] Nevertheless, Segalen's *Essai* contributes, albeit incidentally, a potentially important definition of science fiction, in its theorization of the fiction of H. G. Wells as an example of 'Exotisme imaginaire'. This interpretation invites consideration of science fiction and travel writing as, mutually, literatures of the exotic; a crucial question then arises as to where, and why, real exoticism ends and imaginary exoticism begins.

Much more recently, the eminent French travel writer Michel Le Bris has recently praised science fiction 'stories' for offering the reader 'le plus étonnant des voyages'.[26] The compliment is all the more resounding given that 'Etonnants Voyageurs' designates the important annual French event dedicated to the representation of travel. Whilst the 'Etonnants Voyageurs' festival is a celebration of travel across disciplines as diverse as the visual arts, marine biology and politics, it gives particular prominence to literatures of travel. The implication is, therefore, that science fiction can compete with travel literature on an equal footing with regard to the representation of exciting, interesting journeys, and that the very best examples of science fiction actually epitomize 'astonishing' travel.[27]

Surprisingly, the anthologized stories to which Le Bris's promise of 'le plus étonnant des voyages' serves as an introduction are texts that do not in any obvious way thematize displacements through space and time and/or borrow narrative conventions associated with the travelogue. Rather, Le Bris approaches science fiction as utopian/dystopian discourse. Adamant that science fiction writing is not concerned with predicting the future,[28] he claims that in creating imaginary worlds and representing encounters with imaginary life forms, science fiction writers provide, first and foremost, a commentary on the here and now – the real contemporary world and the realities of

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[25] The allusion to science fiction writing as 'romans anticipateurs' reveals a very specific and now controversial understanding of the genre. See below.

[26] Le Bris, ed., *Etonnants voyageurs: Utopies S.F.*, p. 9.

[27] See also Marion Mazauric, 'La littérature du futur', in Le Bris, ed., *Le Futur a déjà commencé*, pp. 123-27 (p. 123): 'L'étonnant voyageur de la littérature, ce serait, bien sûr, plus que tout autre, l'auteur de science fiction...'

[28] 'Il faut vraiment n'avoir jamais lu un livre de S-F pour imaginer qu'il s'agit d'abord de "prévoir l'avenir" – avec quelle morgue amusée tel ou tel fait valoir que cette littérature est ainsi nécessairement vouée à être démentie par la marche même de la science ' Le Bris, 'Préface', in *Le Futur a déjà commencé*, (pp. 7-12) p. 10. This stance is in direct opposition to Segalen's reception of science fiction as 'romans anticipateurs'.

human responses to alterity: 'Le plus étonnant des voyages – dont vous découvrirez à la lecture qu'*il ne nous dit jamais que notre monde*, aujourd'hui, tel qu'il se tisse de nos rêves, de nos désirs, de nos peurs.'[29] By introducing science fiction as a literature that 'tells of the/our world', Le Bris effectively aligns this genre with the 'Pour une littérature voyageuse' movement. The alignment is further reinforced by Le Bris's recapitulation, in the introduction to this anthology of science fiction stories, of other related key ideas expressed in *Pour une littérature voyageuse*: specifically, Le Bris reiterates the demise of literature in the age of introspection, word-play and 'literariness'; the need for literature that focuses on the world; and the marginalization, by the French literary establishment, of writing and other cultural productions that meet this need.[30] Science fiction is highlighted, alongside travel writing, as a prime example of marginalized, world-focused literature. In this way, it would appear that Le Bris is recognizing a shared agenda that unites travel writers and science fiction writers as representatives of global realities. There is, however, ambiguity as to whether Le Bris considers this function of science fiction to be a deliberate one, or rather just an inevitable aspect of a wider range of imaginative fiction. The specificity of science fiction's relationship to travel literature is thus obscured by more general issues of the relationship of fiction to reality.[31]

Michael Cronin's *Across the Lines* pioneers an exceptionally integrative approach to science fiction, by using primary science fiction texts to illustrate paradigms of linguistic experience within travel. Science fiction is introduced as a category of travel literature, with, by way of mitigation, only the retention of its status as 'fiction':

> At the age of twelve, Rydra Wong knew seven earth languages and could make herself understood in five extra-terrestrial tongues. Rydra Wong, the heroine of Samuel Delaney's science fiction novel, *Babel-17*, comes from a family of communicators. [...] The translator as saviour is a recurrent idea in the travel fictions of the future.[32]

Cronin's treatment of science fiction raises a number of questions, due to a lack of theorization of terms used, and the absence of attempts to substantiate key generalizations upon which his argument is premised. An innovative interpretation of

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[29] Le Bris, 'Préface', in *Etonnants voyageurs: Utopies S.F.*, pp. 7-9 (p. 9); my italics.
[30] Cf. Introduction to Le Bris, ed., *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 10-13.
[31] Note that Ursula Le Guin has remarked that science fiction, in common with all fiction, is simply a way of responding, through metaphor, to the non-fictional: 'All fiction is metaphor. Science fiction is metaphor. What sets it apart from older forms of fiction seems to be its use of new metaphors, drawn from great dominants of our contemporary life – science, all the sciences, and technology, and the relativistic and the historical outlook, among them. Space travel is one of these metaphors; so is an alternative society, an alternative biology; the future is another.' Quoted in Rose, p. 16. It is ambiguous as to whether Ursula Le Guin considers that science fiction writers use metaphor to serve a conscious intention to represent reality, or whether she believes that it is an inevitability for reality to be the basis of fiction.
[32] Cronin, p. 127.

science fiction, the coinage 'travel fictions of the future' demands further explanation: is 'travel fiction' the self-explanatory genre that this unanalysed usage would suggest? Are we to infer that science fiction is, in any sense, the form that travel literature is set to take in the future?[33] To answer such questions, the only assistance offered by Cronin is the statement that 'science fiction [...] almost invariably takes the form of a travel narrative if only because it involves time-travel into the future' (p. 128). Here again we are left with unanswered questions of critical importance: how meaningful is 'the form of a travel narrative' as a characterization of form?[34] What evidence is available to support the claim that science fiction necessarily 'involves' 'time-travel into the future'?

7.3 SCIENCE FICTION AND TRAVEL WRITING: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Travel writing and science fiction appear as genres with historical affinity, beginning with the latter genre's early reception as *voyages extraordinaires*, and continuing into the present day with Michel Le Bris's recognition of shared agendas, challenges and strengths, which can be reinforced also by a number of easily-identifiable thematic convergences suggested by theories of science fiction as a popular genre that on the one hand occurs in a close relationship with technological developments and on the other hand masquerades as non-fiction. Victor Segalen's evocation of science fiction, although outside the context of travel literature, prompts consideration of a closer generic interrelationship, as Segalen creates an association between the exoticism of space and the future, and imaginary exoticism, and aligns this with science fiction. Finally, Michael Cronin theorizes science fiction as 'the travel fictions of the future', implying that this generic interrelationship goes beyond affinity.

As this thesis is concerned with genres other than travel writing only insofar as they engage with the problematics of writing travel 'after the end of travel', the discussion of science fiction will here be confined to the elaboration of the following points:

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[33] Cf. John Barth's problematization of the preposition 'of' in such a context: 'Between prophesy and prose fiction, that connection [between prophecy and poetry] gets debased (some would say elevated) into "science fiction": fiction *about* the future, which of course is no more the same thing as the fiction *of* the future than science fiction is the same as scientific fiction.' John Barth, *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 162.

[34] Cf. Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature Through The Ages: An Anthology*, pp. xxi-xxiii, for a discussion of the multitude of 'forms' of travel narrative.

- What assumptions of technological, corporeal and material reality determine twentieth-century French perceptions of the limits of travel?
- By rethinking corporeal, material and technological reality, how do science fiction writers extend the possibility of travel/writing? What resources are available within science fiction studies regarding the problematics of representing such travel?

7.4 'EXOTISME IMAGINAIRE' AND THE BOUNDARIES OF EMBODIED TRAVEL

> A la conquête d'un univers enfin devenu réel.[35]

If global exoticism is being conceived of as an exhausted resource, space remains virtually untouched by the processes that have led to the banalization of travel on Earth;[36] similarly, the future remains entirely unknown. For Victor Segalen, writing in the early decades of the twentieth century, the exoticism of space and the future are understandably schematized as 'exotisme imaginaire' of uncertain value, and associated with the fiction of H.G. Wells. Although time travel remains 'in our current state of scientific knowledge [...] impossible',[37] the latter third of the twentieth century witnessed the transition of space travel from theoretical possibility to accomplished fact. The resulting change in circumstances remains under-theorized in studies in travel writing and is addressed in this section. In particular, there is a need to re-evaluate the boundaries of real, as opposed to imaginary, travel and exoticism.

The circumscription of travel by the Earth's atmosphere is elucidated, uniquely, by Alain Borer in 'L'ère de Colomb et l'ère d'Armstrong'. Borer heralds the presence of an age in which outer space is the new 'ailleurs' – an 'ailleurs' that is however inaccessible to the travelling body:

> L'ailleurs et l'inconnu sont désormais cosmiques, infiniment fascinants pour mes rêves, absolument confisqués pour mon corps. Toutes les cartes ici-bas ont été dessinées; les Colomb et les Magellan désormais sont physiciens nucléaires.

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[35] Philippe Curval, *Voyage à l'envers* (Paris: J'ai lu, 2000), p. 175.
[36] See Henri Michaux, *Ecuador*, 2nd edn (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 35: 'Cette terre est rincée de son exotisme. Si dans cent ans, nous n'avons pas obtenu d'être en relation avec une autre planète (mais nous y arriverons) l'humanité est perdue (Ou alors l'intérieur de la terre?)'
[37] James, p. 178.

> A l'ère d'Armstrong où l'on apprend que l'horizon galactique fuit à la vitesse de la lumière. toutes les courbes nous ramènent *ici*, résignés à l'ailleurs impossible.[38]

This passage affirms the enduring exoticism of space, but expresses resignation at the physical impossibility of exploring it in reality. It would seem that the achievement of spaceflight, directly relevant only to a small number of astrophysicists, has served mainly to underline the hopelessness of trying to chase horizons that displace themselves at the speed of light. There is no sense of the potential future viability of space travel: for Borer, space is exotic, but travel is grounded on Earth.

This is rather different from the perspective of science fiction scholar Lucien Boia, who presents the reality of space travel as an achievable but disappointing prospect. According to Boia, the twentieth century boasts, as its most outstanding event, the conquest of space; however, this 'victory' has also been a failure, because space exploration has failed to produce evidence of alien life: 'Aucune rencontre n'a eu lieu et n'aura vraisemblablement lieu. Il faut se rendre à l'évidence: notre Terre est une oasis au milieu d'un vaste désert.'[39] Correspondingly, Boia inscribes fictional – as opposed to actual – space travel within a grand narrative of human/male desire for pioneering exploration, establishing a causal link between the domestication of the Earth and recourse to the imagining of alien encounters. The imagined pursuit of fictional extraterrestrial locations and life forms is presented as an inevitable late stage of a timeless tradition of pioneering travel:

> De tous temps, l'homme a cherché à repousser les frontières du monde connu, et sa quête se nourrit d'une part de plus en plus grande d'imaginaire. C'est ainsi que les extraterrestres ont remplacé les sauvages et que Mars et la Lune n'ont plus aucun charme pour les rêves humains depuis que l'on sait qu'ils sont inhabités. (p. 6)

Thus, in Boia's study of space travel, the boundaries of embodied travel are extended to include space –[40] posited as 'conquered' – but the reality of space excludes experiences

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[38] Alain Borer, 'L'ère de Colomb et l'ère d'Armstrong', in Le Bris, ed., *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 17-40 (p. 37).

[39] Boia, p. 6.

[40] In recent studies of tourism, there is also evidence of a belief that space travel is closer to the realms of practical possibility than Borer's essay would suggest. Positing space travel as technology that is neither exotic nor hypothetical, Bruce Prideaux notes: 'It is also possible that space travel may be the final new transport mode, unless exotic technologies such as teleporting and interstellar travel via some unknown technology are developed at some time in the future.' Prideaux, p. 91.

of a particular understanding of exoticism,[41] focused on inequitable encounters with alien equivalents to 'sauvages'.[42]

Philippe Curval's 2001 work, *Voyage à l'envers*, displays consistency with Boia's theory of fictional space travel as the sequel to pioneering terrestrial travel, and with Borer's opinion that 'l'ailleurs et l'inconnu sont désormais cosmiques'. In this text, interstellar travel is found to be a response to the *retrécissement* of the Earth, as the narrator confesses to a long-standing belief that the travel opportunities offered by the Earth are inadequate, and that space exploration is a more substantial undertaking: 'Depuis longtemps, la Terre était devenue trop petite à mes yeux. Seuls, à mon avis, le système solaire, la Galaxie, offraient de réelles possibilités d'expression pour l'être humain.'[43]

However, the idea that space is a privileged or exclusive site for the projection of exoticism is no longer tenable in the light of other studies, or indeed primary works, of science fiction. René Barjavel's *Le Voyageur imprudent* demonstrates that time travel can be used to similar effect, as the first-person narrator/travelling subject Pierre Saint-Menoux presents his journey to the year 100,000 as entirely unfamiliar: 'Le monde extraordinaire qu'il m'a été donné d'explorer défie notre vocabulaire. Je m'efforcerai d'être exact.'[44] This equal emphasis on originality within a time travel fiction could be considered to undermine the specificity of space travel as the logical sequel to horizontal terrestrial travel. A de-differentiation of these approaches to exoticism – temporal and geographical – may therefore be more appropriate. Mark Rose's *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* is instructive here: Rose highlights the genre's fundamental interest in alterity of place, and demonstrates that time travel and space travel converge in function, as equally valid routes to the geographically other.[45] The future is presented as a location on the same terms as planets are locations:

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[41] The conviction that there is no life in the universe is not shared by all. Note, for example, Stanislaw Lem: 'In the second half of the twentieth century one can hardly be a complete human being without at least occasionally calling to mind that community of rational beings, as yet unknown, to which we presumably belong.' Quoted in Karl S. Guthke, *The Last Frontier: Imagining Other Worlds, from the Copernican Revolution to Modern Science Fiction*, trans. by Helen Atkins (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), page unnumbered.

[42] For the issue of the alien as metaphor for human other, see Jenny Wolmark, *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism and Postmodernism* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 5.

[43] Curval, p. 21.

[44] René Barjavel, *Le Voyageur imprudent* (Paris: Denoël, 1958), p. 107. Cf. Forsdick, *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity*, p. 35: 'It is implied that the exotic is that for which the author must invent a lexis – or even a new language.'

[45] For the converse argument that spatial travel is tantamount to time travel, see Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques*, and Pasquali, pp. 73-77.

> Science-fiction stories either portray a world that is in some respect different from our own, as for instance in stories set in the future or on other planets, or, alternatively, they describe the impact of some strange element upon our world.[46]

Science fiction appears as a genre that permits the overriding of physical constraints to travel – spatial and temporal – and attempts to compensate for the lack or uncertainty of exoticism of locations inaccessible to the embodied traveller. This is arguably no more than can already be inferred from Segalen's brief notes on the exoticism of the future and other planets, and it does not in any case follow that this accurately describes the priority of science fiction writers in general; however, the works of Curval and Barjavel demonstrate that the genre's capacity to override the boundaries of embodied travel is being used, by these authors at least, to recreate at least one possibility supposedly lost to contemporary travellers: that of being the first to explore a place. The following section considers, in further detail, the reception of such texts as 'travel fiction' in terms of the problematics of representing currently non-viable travel.

7.5 SCIENCE FICTION AS TRAVEL FICTION

By reinstating the supposedly lost possibility of pioneering horizontal travel, the texts in this chapter's primary corpus feature travelling subjects who can be aligned with an earlier type of traveller theorized by Franck Michel as the 'explorateur' or 'aventurier d'antan',[47] for whom undiscovered territories were still attainable – thus, Dunyach: 'Dans la poussière une rangée d'empreintes nettes vont jusqu'à l'échelle. Les miennes. Devant, sur les côtes, rien. Ce monde manque de traces de pas.'[48] In this sense, science fiction is capable of countering the 'end of travel' as determined by the limits of human

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[46] Rose, p. 3.
[47] Michel, p. 24.
[48] Jean-Claude Dunyach, *Etoiles mortes* (Paris: J'ai lu, 2000), p. 136.

mobility, of contemporary transport technology, and of sources of exoticism.[49] In order to reach sites of geographical exoticism located outside the current boundaries of embodied travel, however, the traveller-narrators of science fiction 'travelogues' are presumed to have access to radically accelerated transport technologies that are capable of eliding travel by making it imperceptible. The reception of these texts as travel literature is then fraught with the paradox that, as well as staging a return to an anterior mode of geographical exploration, they can also be situated at the point of actualization of that other 'end of travel' theorized in Chapter Three of this thesis – the elision of displacement as a differentiated phase within travel, as journey time approaches zero.

This chapter's primary corpus illustrates the corresponding difficulty of representing such displacements. Curval's traveller-narrator apologizes, 'J'aurais aimé décrire l'impression qu'on éprouve en se déplaçant à une telle allure. Il n'y a malheureusement rien qui puisse l'exprimer. Les mots sont impuissants à décrire ce qu'on ne perçoit pas';[50] and 'Closter', the traveller-narrator of Dunyach's *Etoiles mortes* announces: 'Puis, soudain, le déclic! J'ai réussi le grand saut une fois de plus, je suis là où je dois être, même s'il me faut du temps pour le réaliser.'[51] In the first example, faster-than-light travel takes place over an extended period of time, and is experienced as uneventful immobility; in the second example, travel is instant, so the travelling subject is initially unaware that he has been displaced at all.

By implicating and/or thematizing such displacements, science fiction would seem to offer a privileged context for the elaboration of issues of the representation of accelerated travel. Where the displacement phase in a science fiction text, or indeed any other work of fiction, is either imperceptible or drastically abridged, must the categorization of such a text as 'travel fiction' be attenuated accordingly? One answer to this question can be inferred from Michael Cronin's understanding of science fiction as

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[49] With qualification, it is proposed here that, insofar as they chart the exploration of *terrae incognitae* with conspicuous regard for verisimilitude, there is a case for examining science fiction travel narratives in comparison with earlier travel writings. Outside the context of science fiction, Michael Cronin has theorized a shift from 'travel log' to 'travelogue', based on a change of emphasis from fact to impression: 'A traditional problem for travellers in earlier centuries was convincing readers they were not making it all up. Travel was closely associated with the literature of fantasy [...]. The Renaissance travel writers began to freight their work with fact and erudition to allay doubt and guarantee authenticity. [...] Detail [in the travel log] [...] act[s] as circumstantial evidence in the writer's case for being believed.' Cronin, p. 23; pp. 39-40. *Etoiles mortes* inundates the reader with factual evidence to corroborate the discovery of the 'vingt-sept AnimauxVilles vivantes qui ont offert le voyage instantané à l'humanité' (rear cover) and to explain the technologies underpinning this development. Excerpts from newspaper articles, scientific treatises and historical studies – all fictional – are supplied at regular intervals throughout the text. Similarly, Philippe Curval dedicates the first half of *Voyage à l'envers* to a painstaking reconstruction of progress made in space transport technology in the twenty-first century. This is consistent with Mark Rose's diagnosis of the elaborate pseudo-realism characteristic of the genre.

[50] Curval, p. 176.

[51] Dunyach, p. 8.

travel fiction – an understanding that, it will be recalled, encompassed the genre as a whole. Cronin claims that, by 'involving' time travel into the future, science fiction texts can be ascribed the 'form of a travel narrative', almost without exception.[52] The point that science fiction 'involves' time travel is revealingly vague: whilst bypassing the need to commit to an explanation of how, exactly, time travel is 'involved', this claim remains applicable even if time travel is only implicit as a context and no temporal displacements are represented in the narrative itself.

Regrettably, science fiction theories similarly avoid attenuating definitions of travel fiction, again in the context of time travel into the future. According to Mark Rose, science fiction is still 'time-travel fiction' even if displacements in time are assumed rather than described. Rose introduces the subgenre of 'future-history narrative' which, he claims, 'is also, logically, a time-travel fiction except that in this case the journey has usually been dropped in order not to detract from the focus on the future world.'[53] A contrasting approach is to be found in Anne Balsamo's essay, 'Reading Cyborgs, Writing Feminism'. For Balsamo, science fiction's interest in places located elsewhere in space and time calls for a comparison with ethnography: 'What if we read contemporary science fiction stories as ethnographies of the future?'[54] Reading science fiction as fictional ethnography removes the imperative of charting a journey, whilst accommodating also those texts in which displacements do receive attention.[55] In this as in Rose's approach, definitions of travel and ethnography remain untheorized, contributing little to the question of how and why instant travel is still travel, and what bearing this might have on the status of science fiction as travel fictions.

Although issues of acceleration are under-theorized in science fiction, Mark Rose does address the question of displacement modes typically thematized by science fiction writers, and suggests that radically accelerated or instant transport types – 'teleportation, telekinesis, faster-than-light travel, matter transmission (which may be understood as a mechanized version of teleportation), and time travel' – feature *because* they are 'quasi-scientific' phenomena, being 'points at which the spiritual and the material intersect'.[56] In other words, the specificity of the treatment of physical displacement in science fiction is that it is not straightforwardly reducible to material/corporeal processes, but

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[52] Cronin, p. 128.
[53] Rose, p. 110.
[54] Anne Balsamo, 'Reading Cyborgs, Writing Feminism', in *Cybersexualities*, ed. by Jenny Wolmark, pp. 145-56 (p. 145).
[55] See Clifford for arguments in favour of acknowledging displacements as a non-peripheral interest within ethnography.
[56] Rose, p. 47.

involves transcendence of natural laws. This prompts reconsideration of the function of new travel technologies in science fiction travel narratives.

It is to be noted that although the traveller-narrators of *Etoiles mortes*, *Voyage à l'envers*, and *Le Voyageur imprudent* explicitly announce their privileged status as discoverers of previously unexplored spaces, corresponding with Lucien Boia's interpretation of science fiction as an extension of global exploration, there is considerable slippage in these texts between the presentation of macroscopic, radically-accelerated displacements leading to exotic *terrae incognitae*, and travel as a quasi-spiritual experience of self. This will now be examined in more detail below.

In René Barjavel's *Le Voyageur imprudent*, time travel enables the traveller-narrator to travel to the year 100,000, but it is also the means to a journey a few hours into the future, straight into the path of his double. Having been given the means to transcend embodiment and to travel anywhere in space or time, Pierre Saint-Menoux is astonished to discover that the possession of unbounded mobility leads him initially to the banal destination of his hotel stairwell, straight into the path of his own future self:

> Il en eut la respiration coupée. L'autre lui-même, celui qui arrivait, vêtu comme tous les jours, lui souriait, heureux de son étonnement. La rencontre ne le surprenait pas. Il était déjà au courant. [...] Il venait, à l'instant, de le trouver, le compagnon parfait, celui que les hommes cherchent en vain, l'âme jumelle.[57]

The hotel stairwell, a few moments into the future, constitutes a contact zone[58] in which the self and future self are united. This is presented as the most intensely fulfilling encounter possible: the two Saint-Menoux lie in bed together in a tight embrace, feeling blissfully content – although the experience is ephemeral as only one Saint-Menoux can return to the present.

The confounded expectations of travel experienced in this encounter recall Victor Segalen's meeting with his past self in *Equipée*, as theorized by Forsdick: 'Autoscopy is a solitary, privileged moment of insight, a spatialization of the ultimate interaction of self with other.'[59] Segalen's autoscopic encounter occurs in the context of a prolonged enquiry into the relationship between the 'réel' and the 'imaginaire', whereas Saint-Menoux's equivalent experience is the consequence of committing his body to the act of travel without fixing his mind on any desired outcome or destination.

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[57] Barjavel, pp. 63-65.

[58] This usage is an adaptation and literalization of Mary Louise Pratt's definition as follows:
' "Contact zone" is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by [...] historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect.' Pratt, p. 7. The colonialist implications emphasized by Pratt are not, however, retained here.

[59] Forsdick, *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity*, p. 215.

However, it could be argued that the two moments of autoscopy are analogous in effect: the traveller's geographical or temporal search for exoticism is relativized by the appearance of a re-exoticized spectre of the self. Unlike travel literature, the science fiction genre, as theorized to date, can account for slippage between embodied experiences and those bordering on the supernatural, in so far as science fiction has been considered in terms of a 'role as a mediator between the spiritual and the material'.[60]

In *Voyage à l'envers*, faster-than-light space travel frequently becomes indistinguishable from a journey into undiscovered regions of the self:

> Les conditions du voyage défient la réflexion. Même au coeur du vaisseau, à l'abri de ses parois, le sentiment identitaire s'efface devant l'incommensurable. [...] Naviguer dans l'espace, c'est pénétrer au coeur de l'interrogation, en risquant plus que son existence, sa raison.[61]

This is arguably consistent with Rose's categorization of faster-than-light displacement; there is possible thematic overlap here with Jean Baudrillard's representation of high-speed car travel in *Amérique* as considered in Chapter Three of this thesis.

If radically accelerated, disembodied travel is the context for the mediation of the material and the non-material in *Le Voyageur imprudent* and *Voyage à l'envers*, embodied geographical travel acquires a privileged status in Jean-Claude Dunyach's *Etoiles mortes*, gaining new exoticism in the context of a norm of disembodied travel. Dunyach thematizes three modes of displacement, of which two are new transport technologies permitting interplanetary travel, and the third is pedestrian exploration. Whilst the radically-accelerated, macroscopic displacements are found to be imperceptible, pedestrian displacements assume heightened significance. As well as being privileged as a source of multisensory experience, including touch and taste – 'Je me plaque contre la ville, écrase mes lèvres sur sa chair. Un goût de saumure et d'algues m'emplit la bouche' – walking is enhanced as a result of reconfigured material reality; the places explored in *Etoiles mortes* are living organisms, so their surfaces are emotionally and physically responsive to the travelling subject.[62] This leads to the representation of walking as a sensuous, supernatural experience:

> L'ensemble est à la fois étrange et familier, comme un morceau de mon propre corps agrandi des millions de fois. Je pose la main sur un repli de la grosseur d'un crâne et le caresse. Ça vibre, c'est vivant. Une vague de tendresse m'envahit. Chair contre chair, nous communiquons. Sensation fantastique. (p. 89)

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[60] Rose, p. 47. In Rose's argument, this point follows on from the list of 'quasi-scientic' displacement types listed earlier in this section.
[61] Curval, p. 174.
[62] Dunyach, p. 283.

The presence of interactive environments for walking is not paralleled in pedestrian travel writing, but indicates the importance of relativizing emphases on geographical exoticism in science fiction travel narratives to take supernatural experiences into account. Whilst this treatment of pedestrian travel is consistent with an interpretation of science fiction as mediator between the material and the spiritual, it must be observed that Dunyach's use of embodied, decelerated displacement for this purpose diverges from the transport types recognized by Rose as above.

Science fiction's interest in different spatial and temporal locations and related methods of displacement may be oriented towards the mediation of the psychological and the material, as well as or instead of a new exoticism. Otherness could then be of less importance to science fiction writers than the 'magical permeability of the boundary between the self and the other'.[63] This does not exclude continuity of aims with travel, exoticism and travel literature, in so far as texts such as Victor Segalen's *Equipée* probe also into the problematics of the materially real and the non-material. As these areas are under-theorized in studies of travel literature, it is therefore a matter of critical interest as to whether science fiction studies offer resources for the analysis of such issues.

In terms of a methodology for approaching the relationship between the spiritual and material, studies of science fiction suggest that diagnosis of 'critical utopia' is particularly appropriate. It will be recalled that Le Bris has designated science fiction as 'd'étonnants voyages en utopie': however, Le Bris does not explain the relationship of science fiction to *voyage*, and there does not seem to be evidence of rigorous engagement with any particular elements of utopian discourse to support this categorization. 'Utopie', as used by Le Bris, seems to denote, variously: the representation of the world in line with the dreams *or* the nightmares of science fiction writers; an allegory of subconscious and unconscious figurations of the present.[64] Tom Moylan, in *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, theorizes utopia in terms of wish-fulfilment – '*displacement and transfiguration* of the given historical world in such a way as to revive the conditions of a lost paradise or to anticipate a future kingdom in which suffering and limitations have been effaced.'[65] According to Moylan, this is an inadequate framework for the reception of science fiction texts, because of the

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[63] Rose, p. 193. Note that Rose emphasizes the role of science fiction as mediator between the material and the spiritual/supernatural. See pp. 45-47.
[64] See Le Bris, ed., *Etonnants voyageurs: Utopies S.F.* pp. 7-9.
[65] Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986), p. 31; author's italics.

implication that, within a utopian or dystopian vision, alternatives are effaced. 'Critical utopia' is preferable, because science fiction texts contrast utopian or dystopian elements with recognizable features of current reality or 'originary society', in the space of a single text:

> A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream. Furthermore, [science fiction texts] dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated. Finally, the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives. (p. 10)

The issue that science fiction writing, as a genre, attempts to resolve, is held to be the tension between the spiritual and the material in a world experiencing technological change.[66] It has been observed above that in ostensibly travel-themed science fiction texts, the focus of the attempt to resolve contradictions between the spiritual and the material may be travel, and, in particular, the critical-utopia methodology seems useful for the analysis of Dunyach's alternation between technologized, spiritually desolate travel types and exaggeratedly sensual, enriching experiences of walking in *Etoiles mortes*. However, the retrospective applicability of such a methodology for the reception of travel writings such as *Equipée* is less certain.

Marion Mazauric contributes perhaps the most helpful perspective, in characterizing science fiction as 'une vision du réel intégrant totalement ce qu'est notre réalité':[67] science fiction is celebrated by Mazauric as the only genre that demonstrates a fully inclusive understanding of reality, and the limitations of current approaches to other literature may be an excessively dichotomizing attitude towards scientific, material and rationalizable realities on the one hand, and psychological, spiritual and transcendant phenomena on the other.

Arguably, this dichotomization is in evidence in Jean-Marc Moura's dismissal of science fiction from considerations of global exoticism:

> Le lointain ne désigne nullement des espaces chimériques. L'exotisme se distingue du merveilleux, du fantastique ou de la science-fiction comme de toutes les rêveries où se créent des ailleurs extraordinaires – par son statut empirique: il se situe sur le même plan de vraisemblance que l'ici. [...] Il réalise le paradoxe captivant d'une rêverie potentiellement expérimentable [68]

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[66] See above, 'Science Fiction: An Introduction to the Genre', and also Rose, pp. 99-193.
[67] Mazauric, p. 127.
[68] Jean-Marc Moura, *La Littérature des lointains: histoire de l'exotisme européen au XXe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), p. 263.

It is in the light of this denial of the imaginary co-reality of the spaces of science fiction that this chapter now turns to an investigation of an alternative future for travel and travel writing that is being considered by scholars of travel: do cyberspaces and cybertravel offer a 'rêverie potentiellement expérimentable' to enhance possibilities for travel, and travel writing, in the twenty-first century and beyond?

PART TWO: CYBERTRAVEL

> No one sees themselves as constrained anymore, either by space or indeed by time. Science is shrivelling global space to a screen in front of you so that there are no boundaries to going where you wish, at least in cyberspace, nor indeed preventing you from going back to any particular moment in time.[69]

7.6 TRAVEL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

> Qu'y-a-t-il au-delà de la fin? Au-delà de la fin s'étend la réalité virtuelle.[70]

Since the 1980s, speculation about the acceleration of travel has crystallized around a specific reference point: the rise of information technology, particularly the Internet. According to Mitsuhiro Kagami, the expansion of such technology characterizes the contemporary period, which can be seen as sequential to the mass-industrial, 'automotive' bias of the previous period:

> The third industrial revolution occurred during the 1980s, driven by technological breakthroughs in the computer industry. [...] The third industrial revolution comes from a combination of computer and telecommunications technologies, especially the development of the Internet, which has brought about global linkages between individuals, regardless of distance and time. This in turn has produced fundamental changes within society.[71]

With varying degrees of optimism and pessimism, theorists of travel are beginning to confront the implications that such advances in the computer industry may have for practices, and to a lesser extent literatures, of travel. For Franck Michel, the Internet has

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[69] Susan Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People: How 21st-Century Technology is Changing the Way We Think and Feel* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), p. 35.

[70] Jean Baudrillard, *A l'ombre du millénaire ou le suspens de l'an 2000* (Paris: Sens & Tonka, 1988), pp. 13-14.

[71] Mitsuhiro Kagami, 'The IT revolution and its meaning for society', in *The Internet Revolution: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Emanuele Giovannetti, Mitsuhiro Kagami and Masatsugu Tsuji (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 21-38 (p. 21).

revolutionized travel by enabling people – including those without the slightest intention of leaving their homes – to enjoy instant access to an infinitude of locations, cultures and online communities. Michel provides an adjusted definition of travel, which does not depend on actual physical displacement: 'Voyager, c'est rêver d'un espace-temps différent du nôtre.'[72] Accordingly, net-surfing is presented as the latest phase of mobility, and is shown to have superseded those forms of travel involving displacement in geographical space: 'La Terre n'est plus qu'un tapis et la souris remplace la marche ou l'avion. On ne se déplace plus mais on surfe' (p. 232).

As the iteration of 'ne [...] plus/que' constructions would suggest, Michel's diagnosis of an age of 'cybertourisme' is less than celebratory – rather, there is an overriding sense that 'cybertourisme' is *that to which travel has been reduced*. The subject is introduced in *Désirs d'ailleurs* under the telling subheading '*Le cybertourisme ou la mise en fiction du réel*' (p. 231) and this is consistent with Michel's general proposition that computer-based equivalents to travel are essentially inauthentic. The travel experiences offered by the Internet correspond to a sanitized, dehumanized version of reality that can only ever be deficient in comparison with 'real' travel:

> Le Net ou le Web bouleverse aussi l'univers du voyage en permettant aux sédentaires affirmés, sans détours exotiques inutiles, de goûter aux joies du voyage sans en connaître les peines. L'aventure sans la mésaventure. L'Ailleurs sans l'Autre. [...] Plus on communique virtuellement, moins on se rencontre réellement. Et l'abonnement à Internet ne remplacera jamais la bonne vieille boussole ni même le bottin jaune. (pp. 231-32)

Michel's primary criticism of *cybertourisme* is that it is a form of travel that does not prioritize human, intercultural encounters – the valorization of which is key to the philosophy of travel articulated in *Désirs d'ailleurs* as a whole. Rather, according to Michel, Internet travel answers to a selfish thirst for instant personal gratification and a general lack of interest in other people: 'Ainsi avance notre monde épris de vitesse, dopé à l'obligation de résultats tangibles. [...] Le cybertourisme est certainement la forme de voyage la plus égoïste qui soit' (pp. 233-34). It is perhaps in the light of this alleged 'egotism' that Michel ultimately undermines the theorization of I.T.-based explorations as travel. Thus: 'Contempler un écran d'ordinateur dans l'espoir de voyager, est-ce vraiment le meilleur moyen de rencontrer l'autre?' (p. 236). Here *cybertourisme* is demystified as a banal, limited activity that is only ancillary to real travel. This understanding of cybertravel/tourism is problematized by *Dave Gorman's Googlewhack Adventure*, in which surfing on the Internet prompts a chain of encounters with random

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[72] Michel, p. 232.

people living in countries worldwide. The use of a search engine makes Gorman aware of the existence of strangers, and this leads to Gorman buying flight tickets online and following up each online encounter with a real encounter:

> Before the next three weeks were over I would travel a further 30,992 miles taking my total googlewhacking mileage to 41,286. I would cross the Atlantic Ocean five times and I would meet many more googlewhacks. [...] That's a lot of travelling and a lot of googlewhacks.[73]

This usage of the Internet contradicts Michel's criticisms that net-surfing is a practice that excludes and devalorizes the interpersonal encounter; however, the Internet's function, in Gorman's journey, as a resource providing suggestions for embodied geographical travel – and facilitating the purchase of airline tickets for this – suggests the ongoing status of Internet surfing as an analogue of the tourist guidebook or any other textual or pictorial resources that stimulate the desire for geographical travel.

Michael Cronin's *Across the Lines* is an important contribution to discussions regarding the status of Internet travel as either equivalent or ancillary to travels in geographical space. Cronin theorizes net-surfing as analogous to the reading of travel literature since both practices involve disembodied, 'armchair' travel. These practices are presented as evidence that geographical displacement is not a strict condition for travel: 'Users surf the Net, readers read travel accounts, [...] all these activities involve 'travel' that does not demand departure from the proverbial armchair.'[74] However, it is recognized that a distinction can be made between primary and secondary travel: thus, net-surfing and reading arguably involve the vicarious or secondary experience of somebody else's prior, first-hand travels. The status of Internet travel remains ambivalent: on the one hand, Cronin presents a case for granting 'secondary' travel equality with geographical travel:

> The forms of travel are as various as its destinations and there are any number of ways to experience the sensation of travel, from hitch-hiking to Net surfing. Thus, it may be more useful to think of virtual travel on the Net not as a substitute for real travel, the logical *telos* of nomadic (post)modernity, but as another form of travel. (p. 152)

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[73] Dave Gorman, *Dave Gorman's Googlewhack Adventure* (London: Ebury, 2004), p. 136.
[74] Cronin, p. 133.

On the other hand, Cronin retains oppositional categories of 'real' and 'virtual/cyber' travel, such that virtual travel and travel literature are analogous to one another but distinct from embodied travel, which is posited as 'real':[75]

> A salient difference between cybertravel and forms of travel previously discussed is the disembodied nature of the cybertraveller. [...] In real travel, the body itself is the site of the personality change, whereas in virtual travel personalities can be adopted or abandoned without any visible alteration to the body. In this respect, however, virtual or cybertravel is like travel literature. (p. 153)

This distinction is reinforced by Cronin's affirmation that 'the traveller is an *embodied* subject' (p. 153). The extent to which Cronin feels that the disembodied nature of the cybertraveller problematizes this assertion is ultimately ambiguous: should we reconsider the association of 'real' travel with embodiment, or is disembodiment necessarily indicative of derivative as opposed to authentic travel experiences?

In theorizing cybertravel as analogous to travel literature, Cronin excludes consideration of cybertravel as potential subject matter for travelogues. At the same time, it may be inferred from *Across the Lines* that the representation of cyberjourneys within travel literature would modify challenges currently inherent in the genre. Cronin claims that 'a difficulty of the genre of travel writing is finding a language that is adequate to the domain of physical sensation' (p. 134); in theory, therefore, disembodied 'cyber' itineraries should be particularly conducive to literary representation, thus creating new possibilities for travel literature.

Sidonie Smith is the only critic to have addressed issues of the representation of cybertravel in travel literature, and her glance at the subject is consciously cursory. Smith ends her 2001 study of twentieth-century women's travel writing with a 'coda' about 'electronic transport in cyberspace', which, she proposes, is likely to influence travel writers in the near future: 'Undoubtedly, new kinds of travel narratives will emerge with this new technology of postmodernity.'[76] Of particular note here is the parity that is accorded to information technology and to the means of transport explored in earlier chapters of the work, specifically trains, aeroplanes, cars and walking. Information technology is unequivocally theorized as the 'newest technology of travel' (p. 203) and

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[75] The problematics of 'reality' in the age of the virtual are discussed by Neil Gershenfeld, *When Things Start to Think* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), p. 129: 'Discussions about virtual reality lead to awkward constructions like "real reality" to describe that which is not virtual; it's much more natural to simply think about reality as something that is presented to you by information in your environment, both logical and physical.'

[76] Smith, p. 203.

the logical successor of the aforementioned transport types – but without the nostalgic overtones of Franck Michel's equivalent grand narrative of transport technologies.

In common with the scholarship of Michael Cronin and Frank Michel, Sidonie Smith's analysis of electronic travel highlights the disembodied nature of corresponding travelling subjects: 'The disembodiment at the heart of cyberculture and cybertravel is also at the heart of travel in virtual reality' (p. 206). However, Smith's evaluation of issues of travel and disembodiment differs entirely in emphasis: rather than querying the relative (in)authenticities of electronic and geographical travel, Smith offers a pre-emptive critique of the potentially anti-feminist or otherwise politically objectionable implications of disembodied practices:

> This dream of disembodiment may, on the other hand, be the reiteration in our postmodern time of a predominant narrative of modernity in the West: the elevation of mind over body/matter. [...] This unmarked body of the virtual world is the normative subject of travel, empowered, masculine, and white. (pp. 206-07)

As an introduction to issues of travel and information technology, the conjectures of Smith, Michel and Cronin powerfully convey the extent to which conventional understandings of travel may be grounded in material and corporeal reality – to rethink the embodiment of the travelling subject or the materiality of spaces is seemingly to call into question the validity of the travel experience. At the same time, these conjectures arguably do not go quite far enough to elucidate, define or differentiate between the characteristics of the various forms of cybertravel in evidence. What is the difference between 'virtual travel' and 'cybertravel'? Is 'cybertourisme' synonymous with 'cybertravel'? Is an insistence on the dichotomies of embodiment/disembodiment and 'real'/'virtual' the most helpful approach to theorizing these evolving modes of travel and their potential relevance to travel literature? An increasing corpus of theoretical material is becoming available for the elaboration of such questions: in particular, issues of information technology and displacement are receiving attention within feminist theories and within studies of postmodern culture. These interdisciplinary resources will now be discussed in more detail.

7.7 TRAVEL AND CYBERSPACE: DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

The 'cyber' prefix, applied freely to travel and tourism by the critics introduced in the previous section, indicates a relationship with a new kind of space referred to as

'cyberspace'. Current definitions reflect an understanding of cyberspace as an artificial equivalent to geographical space. Edward James, for instance, describes cyberspace as 'a landscape [...] inhabited by computer programs and simulacra created by artificial intelligences.'[77] The reference to landscape reinforces an analogy between cyberspace and geographically 'real' space: the differentiating factor here is the artifice of a 'landscape' that comprises computer-generated features as opposed to natural or even 'man'-made ones. Equally, Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows have theorized activities associated with cyberspace as correspondingly illusory: cyberspace is defined as 'an information space in which data is configured in such a way as to give the operator the illusion of control, movement and access to information'.[78] Just how convincing this illusion could theoretically become is illustrated by the notion of 'virtual reality'; according to Featherstone and Burrows, virtual reality represents:

> The ultimate extension of this process to provide a pure information space populated by a range of cybernetic automatons or data constructs, which provide the operator with a high degree of vividness and total sensory immersion in the artificial environment. (p. 3)

The insistence on data configuration and 'total sensory immersion in the artificial environment' supports Franck Michel's interpretation of cybertourism as a solipsistic practice involving complete detachment from other people within a *mise en fiction du réel*. The following passage from Zoë Sofia's essay, 'Virtual Corporeality: A Feminist View' demonstrates how virtual reality could provide an illusory restoration of travel both in the context of a depleted world no longer conducive to enjoyment, and in the context of individual physical disabilities that hamper literal displacement:

> At a time when habitats and climatic patterns are being destroyed at an unprecedented pace, the smooth, luminous microworlds and artificial objects of computer microworlds offer imaginary restorations of a fragmented and out of control reality. The phantasmic mobility of virtual bodies not only satisfies our infantile desires for omnipotence and omnipresence, but can provide hallucinatory satisfaction for those whose real body's mobility is impaired in some way.[79]

The proposed inauthenticity of both remedies is again apparent: for the disabled subject, mobility in virtual reality offers only 'hallucinatory satisfaction'; for the traveller, the

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[77] James, p. 196. The term 'cyberspace' is held to have been coined by William Gibson, who is also associated with the beginning a 'cyberpunk' movement within science fiction. See Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), p. 6.

[78] Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows, 'Introduction by editors', in *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, ed. by Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 1-20 (pp. 2-3).

[79] Zoë Sofia, 'Virtual Corporeality: A Feminist View', in *Cybersexualities: A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*, ed. by Jenny Wolmark (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 55-68 (p. 61).

new environment made available by computers is a sterile one – 'smooth', 'luminous', 'artificial', and suggestive once again of Franck Michel's portrayal of the computer-generated 'aventure sans la mésaventure' and 'ailleurs sans l'Autre'.

Whilst these theories of contemporary information technology privilege the notion of cyberspace as a purely artificial and dehumanized environment,[80] it is important to acknowledge the scope of such technology for facilitating a broad range of 'human' and social behaviours such as communication, learning and recreation. Cyberspace is both the medium and the product of the Internet – a globally accessible information network which enables pictorial, textual, numerical and auditory information to be transmitted instantaneously between human users and/or other computers, irrespective of the time zones and geographical distances involved:

> With a PC, an individual can communicate through the Internet network and participate in worldwide electronic commerce (e-commerce), so traditional concepts on location and time have to change. People can easily communicate with people at the opposite side of the globe, crossing national borders through cyberspace.[81]

Equally, virtual reality can be a space in which multiple users interact, 'linked together [...] via a puppet-like simulation which operates in a feedback loop to the operator.'[82] The complex interplay of contemporary information technologies, physical realities and living people has recently been theorized as contributing to a general condition of 'HyperReality'. In *HyperReality: Paradigm for the Third Millennium*, information technologies and related global conditions are collectively denoted by the prefix 'Hyper', which signals a shift in emphasis, connoting the enhancement of properties, as opposed to virtuality's suggestion of the almost-real or the less-than-real:

> HyperReality [...] is a technological capability that makes possible the seamless integration of physical reality and virtual reality, human intelligence and artificial intelligence. [...] HR makes it possible for the physically real inhabitants of one place to purposively coact with the inhabitants of remote locations as well as with computer-generated imaginary or artificial life forms in a HyperWorld.[83]

This is an integrating approach to information technology, indicating that overlapping experiences of computer-centred and general modes of existence are/will be paradigmatic of the current millennium; crucially, social interaction is by no means

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[80] See especially James, p. 196.
[81] Kagami, p. 23.
[82] Featherstone and Burrows, pp. 2-3.
[83] Nobuyoshi Terashima, 'The definition of HyperReality', in *HyperReality: Paradigm for the Third Millennium*, ed. by John Tiffin and Nobuyoshi Terashima (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 4-24 (p. 5).

written out of HyperReality, as new forms of communication and 'coaction' come into effect, involving 'physically real' people *as well as* data constructs.

The concept of HyperReality has attracted speculation as to the new forms of travel and tourism that it could enable. According to John Tiffin, HyperReality raises the possibility of instantaneous, disembodied touristic experiences: 'HyperResorts', generated by the technology of virtual reality, could be visited by 'teletravellers' in the comfort of their own homes or in designated hotel rooms – simulations of different environments and cultures could be brought to the 'teletraveller', dispensing with the need for physical displacement in geographical space: 'HyperReality has the capability to facilitate a form of tourism in which the tourist need not be a part of the physical reality of the place they tour.'[84] Tiffin argues that the new 'HyperTourism' would not be fundamentally different from existing motorized modes of transport, which also detach the travelling subject from the physical reality of the places visited, replacing it with a two-dimensional image in a window or television screen:

> Would [HyperTourism] be so very different from the way people tour in motor coaches? I have in mind being in a big powerboat as it cruised through the Great Barrier Reef of Australia and noting that the majority of passengers were happily sitting inside watching a video of the boat they were on as it cruised through the Great Barrier Reef. They found the vicarious experience better than the real thing. (p. 129)

HyperTourism, however, is presented as a more 'eco-friendly' alternative to those practices of tourism dependent on the use of motor vehicles: 'HyperTourism could at least relieve some of the pressure on natural heritage sites by allowing people to visit places virtually without the need of combustion engines' (p. 129).

Significantly, this theorization of virtual tourism conforms to an understanding of applications of information technology as disembodied experiences. This is explicitly stated by Tiffin:

> With HyperReality, virtual reality does not supercede [*sic*] physical reality. Teletravellers in HyperReality cannot escape the immutable laws of physics in the place where their bodies are, but they can sojourn as telepresences in another physical reality and interact with that reality without being subject to its physical laws. (p. 135)

This vision of the future of tourism corresponds with Cronin's understanding of the 'disembodied nature of the cybertraveller' even though Cronin's analysis of the subject refers to present opportunities for travel in cyberspace, and Tiffin is theorizing more

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[84] John Tiffin, 'HyperLeisure', in *HyperReality: Paradigm for the Third Millennium*, pp. 126-141 (p. 129)

sophisticated, future facilities. The ongoing disjuncture between I.T.-based practices and 'real' practices is seen by Susan Greenfield as a reflection of the current limitations of underlying technologies:

> Although the computer offers a reality of sorts, until now the cyberworld has always had its limits, its boxed boundary easy to encompass with a sweep of the eye. We would need a three-dimensional, all-pervading environment to completely seduce us away from *real* reality. Computers may dominate our lives, but we know where the division lies between screen and 'out there'.[85]

There is a bifurcation, in theories of cyberculture, around the subject of whether developments in cybertechnology are tending towards an intensification of disembodiment or towards the integration of corporeal experience. This issue has important implications for the reception of cybertravel, as existing approaches to the theorization of I.T.-based exploration within studies of travel depend on the understanding that the cybertraveller is a disembodied subject.

According to Mark Dery, cyberculture is to be interpreted in terms of an escape from embodiment and material reality: the use of cybertechnology results in the exoticization of embodied reality, suddenly conspicuous after 'longtime immersion in a simulated world'.[86] Dery states: 'Surfacing is marked by a few seconds worth of decompression – a momentary reincorporation of the wandering mind into the vacant body' (p. 234). Dery predicts the continuation of cyberculture as a site of discorporation: 'Bit by digital bit, we are becoming alienated from our increasingly irrelevant bodies' (p. 234). This is consistent with the paradigm of 'mise en fiction du réel' that is presented in Franck Michel's treatment of *cybertourisme*.

By contrast, Susan Greenfield and Neil Gershenfeld theorize the future of cybertechnology as de-differentiation from material, embodied reality. Gershenfeld comments that at present, the use of I.T. is necessarily a sedentary activity: 'A desktop computer requires a desk, and a laptop computer requires a lap, forcing you to sit still. Either you can take a walk, or you can use a computer.'[87] This accords with Michael Cronin's association of cybertravel as one of the forms of 'armchair travel'. However, Gershenfeld argues that in the future, computers will be embedded into the material environment, or even into the body. In Greenfield's study, the result will be an 'augmented reality' or 'AR', in specific distinction to the 'alternative reality' offered at present:

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[85] Greenfield, p. 46.
[86] Dery, p. 234.
[87] Gershenfeld, p. 7.

> AR brings addditional information beyond the raw inputs of the five senses. Labels, descriptions and information will superimpose on your normal vista; ultimately the user should not be able to tell the difference between the real world and the virtual augmentation of it. [...] One banal and obvious example of an early application will be instant information for tourists.[88]

The actualization of the fusion of 'real' and 'virtual' reality would problematize the perspectives of Michel, Cronin and Smith, by abolishing the assumption of two alternate realities, one non-material, two-dimensional and inauthentic, and the other a materially real space populated by embodied human subjects.

Neil Gershenfeld makes an apparently self-contradictory appeal for a return to an appreciation of non-virtual reality and a celebration of the merger of virtual and material realities, and this recalls the terms of Marion Mazauric's celebration of science fiction as a more inclusive approach to 'reality' that acknowledges the non-material, as quoted at the end of part one of this chapter:

> Now that media has become multi, and reality has become virtual, and space is cyber, perhaps we can return to appreciating the rest of reality. [...] I can't imagine a more exciting mission than merging the best of the world that we are born into with that of the worlds we're creating.[89]

This passage is fraught with conflicting interpretations of real and virtual reality, and suggests that virtual and cyber spaces are the dominant condition – 'reality has become virtual, and space is cyber' – and the basis for revalorizing non-cybernetic reality – 'the rest of reality'. Real and virtual reality remain perplexingly dichotomized, whilst a merger of real and virtual worlds is simultaneously presented as the most desirable outcome.

7.8 CONCLUSION: FRENCH TRAVEL WRITING, DISCORPORATION AND REALITY

On account of areas of thematic and discursive overlap in relation to issues of travel in certain French science fiction texts, it was hoped that relevant theoretical material might be available within existing scholarship of science fiction, of potential usefulness to the reception of under-theorized, related aspects of travel writing. However, the intersections that have been identified here – the problematics of representing accelerated

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[88] Greenfield, p. 67.
[89] Gershenfeld, p. 245.

displacements, and the presence of slippage between the spiritual/psychological and material in travel – appear to be under-theorized also in science fiction studies.[90] Accordingly, consideration of science fiction in specific relation to issues of renegotiated boundaries and concepts of travel has arguably raised more questions than it has answered.

The relevance of a comparative study of science fiction and travel literatures (in the more inclusive sense) extends however to issues outside the scope of the present thesis. In the first place, any reliances of science fiction texts on formal, structural and stylistic conventions of travel writing – registered but not corroborated or developed by Michael Cronin – are not analysed within studies of science fiction, and would benefit from extensive investigation, in the manner that scholars of twentieth-century French fiction have addressed the role of the fictional travel narrative in the novel. Secondly, as science fiction has been recognized as a site of (anti-)technological discourse, where this relates specifically to modes of transport, a comparison with travel writing would be instructive in terms of establishing thematic continuities across a broad range of fictional and 'putatively non-fictional' travel-themed literatures. For similar reasons, there is also work to be done in terms of exploring analogies between science fiction's treatment of the alien and the representation of encounters with human 'others' in twentieth-century and earlier travel literatures.[91]

The response of scholars of travel and travel writing to new information technologies seems consistent with contemporary resistance to the validation of disembodied, discorporated travel. This desire to retain corporeality as a component assuring the authenticity of travel could be seen as a welcome convergence with feminist agendas: Smith's speculations about cybertravel revolve around the concern that travel will become disembodied and therefore masculinist. However, it serves also to reinforce the sense that authentic travel is premised on able-bodied normativity.

Jeanne Guesné's *Le Grand passage: les leçons tirées de mes voyages hors du corps* reflects many of the problems raised in both parts of this chapter with regard to the reception of travel types that cross boundaries of material and embodied reality. Guesné, who claims that she has mastered techniques of out-of-body travel, alternates accounts of her disembodied travels in geographical space with accounts of her holidays to various

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[90] Note that Kenneth White, in his contribution to *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, emphasizes the need for 'une littérature qui soit véritablement une initiation au-dedans et au dehors de nous-mêmes'. Kenneth White, 'Petit album nomade', in Le Bris, ed., *Pour une littérature voyageuse*, pp. 167-96 (p. 180).

[91] See Wolmark, *Aliens and Others*; Le Bris, 'Preface', *Le Futur a déjà commencé*, p. 10; Boia, p. 9.

popular tourist resorts as an embodied subject; essayistic reflections on the nature of out-of-body travel are integral, and Guesné defines such travel as 'voyages transcorporels'.[92]

'Voyages transcorporels' are described by Guesné as instant displacements that are unrestricted by material reality: 'Il m'est arrivé de survoler de grandes étendues, de traverser des fleuves tumultueux en rasant la surface liquide, et souvent d'éprouver un immense effroi en me jetant dans le vide de la flèche d'une cathédrale ou d'un pic montagneux' (pp. 24-25). According to Guesné, who has had to defend herself against the claims of medical authorities who have disbelieved her ability to transcend her body, 'voyages transcorporels' are materially real on the same terms as conventionally-understood, embodied displacements in geographical space:

> Il existe une certaine matérialité dans cet état, comme il en existe dans notre environnement quotidien, et nous ne mettons jamais cette dernière en doute. Cependant, nous ne pouvons ignorer qu'il s'agit de milliards d'atomes tourbillonnant à des vitesses vertigineuses ainsi d'ailleurs que les atomes de notre propre corps. J'ai donc licence de penser que ce corps subtil qui émane de mon corps physique, et par lequel je prends contact avec un autre aspect de la vie, correspond à la même 'matérialité' d'atomes que celle constituant cet autre monde. (pp. 24-25)

Guesné proposes that there is a need to recognize a greater complexity of material reality than is generally acceptable. She describes 'voyages transcorporels' as a means of experiencing the world more vividly; paradoxically, in disembodied travel, the senses are apparently heightened: 'Nulle part dans notre monde je n'ai vu des bleus, des roses, des verts aussi lumineux et surtout je sens ces couleurs vivantes' (p. 32). However, Guesné's efforts to portray, valorize and justify her 'voyages transcorporels' coexist with a counter-tendency to promote embodied travel as the source of greater fulfilment. Guesné prefaces the 1994 edition of the text with the remark that discorporated travel has taught her that the most valuable experiences are located in terrestrial materiality: 'Je tiens à dire la découverte fondamentale que ces expériences m'ont enseigné: l'essentiel de ce que nous avons à vivre, à comprendre, se trouve dans nos racines, dans cette vie bien terrestre, ici et maintenant.'[93] This is supported by a justification of the inclusion of banal, embodied holidays abroad as evidence that the terrestrial here and now is an undervalued focus in contemporary French society – a 'véritable trésor d' "impressions" qui est à notre portée' (p. 28). A hierarchy of embodied, terrestrial reality over disembodied, differently-material reality therefore confusingly persists even in a travelogue otherwise concerned with raising awareness of out-of-body travel.

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[92] Jeanne Guesné, *Le Grand passage: les leçons tirées de mes voyages hors du corps*, 2nd edn (Paris: L'espace bleu, 1994), p. 21.
[93] Guesné, page unnumbered.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

> Inventer du voyage, c'est en proposer des usages nouveaux afin que, n'importe où, le voyage demeure garant de sens ou d'exotisme quand ceux-ci ne sont plus donnés mais a retrouver ou à susciter.
>
> Voyager, c'est le passage de soi à l'autre, le pont d'un monde à l'autre. Le voyage invite au désir de l'altérité autant qu'à celui de l'ailleurs: la rencontre humaine et l'écoute des autres.
>
> Ainsi définirai-je minimalement le voyageur: celui qui, en se déplaçant, s'éprouve, s'instruit et s'enrichit...[1]

This thesis has sought to investigate suggestions that recent French travel writers might actively be involved in the reinvention of travel, possibly in response to the sense that travel, in the contemporary period, has become banal. For travel writers, reinventing travel – that is, consciously seeking new or revised approaches to travel as a practice – is not, of course, the only response to the 'end of travel'. Other options include (in any combination) the nostalgic retracing of previous journeys; recourse to fiction; a postmodern renunciation of novelty in favour of the playful realignment of conventions; textual self-distinction; or simply just disregarding the perceived 'stéréotypie des pratiques voyageuses modernes'.[2] All of these approaches are visible in twentieth-century travel writing in French; however, the present thesis has focused specifically on travel writers who have tried to counteract the exhaustion of travel through the negotiation of alternative practices and itineraries. Above all, it was felt that Clifford's reductive conception of twentieth-century travel writing as the perpetuation, by Anglophone travel writers, of a tradition of 'sophisticated travel', coexists uneasily with the vision that writers and scholars such as Urbain, Michel and Lacarrière seem to be proposing, of ongoing attempts to revitalize travel as the means to broadened horizons, equitable intercultural encounters, and personal growth. It remains in this concluding chapter to recapitulate, and reflect on, some of the issues brought to light in the three main sections of the thesis: 'The End of Travel', 'Returns to the Body', and 'Rethinking Corporeality, Rethinking Travel'.

Perceived distinctions between traveller and tourist have recently fallen out of favour as a concern in studies of travel and travel writing, perhaps because of a sense that Jean-Didier Urbain has dealt with the subject exhaustively in *L'Idiot du voyage*. However, it is asserted here that popular mass travel, and its technological and infrastructural support, is an essential context for understanding practical innovation in

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[1] Urbain, *Secrets de voyage*, p. 29; Michel, p. 11; Lacarrière, 'Voyageurs, voyageants, voyages', p. 21.
[2] This phrase is from Pasquali, p. 65.

French travel writing. Chapter Two of this thesis scrutinized the conventional definitional importance of tourism as the antithesis of travel. It asked whether tourism, as conceived by its opponents, corresponds with tourism as theorized by those without an anti-touristic agenda, and whether touristic practices are currently being reappropriated by French travel writers in unexplored ways. This chapter compared definitions of tourism emerging from studies of literary anti-tourism, with objective analyses of tourism from the discipline of Tourism Studies. The study of a much wider sample of contemporary theories of tourism than has previously been integrated into studies of travel writing indicated that although key issues in travel writers' critiques of tourism – the rapidity, superficiality and ocularcentrism of the tourist's perceptions; the inauthenticity and commodification of tourist sites and experiences; the bias of touristic activity towards group sociability as opposed to encounters with strangers – are largely uncontested by scholars of tourism, writers and scholars of travel seem to homogenize touristic experiences, whereas tourism is elsewhere theorized as a set of evolving and heterogeneous practices, threatened, indeed, with a loss of specificity from the *quotidien*. Further, recent theorists of tourism are rejecting the notion of the gullibility of the tourist, and arguing that those perceived to be tourists actually participate in touristic practices in a self-aware and ironic manner.

With these points in mind, a survey of the thematic appropriation of tourist itineraries by French travel writers was attempted, and it was found that deliberate re-explorations of existing tourist sites are rare, and undertaken in a spirit of critique, within texts of ambiguous generic status as either travel writing or reportage; however, it was acknowledged that tourism is receiving interest as a theme in other genres such as fiction, although this was not explored further. The consultation of tourism theories, as opposed to anti-touristic studies, serves usefully to problematize the assumption, by travel writers, that their engagement with touristic sites is qualitatively different to that of the tourists whom they 'other': contemporary theories of 'post-tourism' suggest that many, or indeed all, of those considered to be tourists are not necessarily less enlightened than travellers as to the inauthentic and commodified aspects of their activities. However, the identification of overlapping emphasis, in theories of tourism and in anti-touristic discourse, on the key characteristics of rapidity, superficiality, ocularcentrism, consumption, passivity and a preference for group sociability over intercultural encounters, perhaps attenuates assumptions that travel writers reject tourism out of elitism alone, by indicating a number of seemingly unobjectionable values – the desire

for authenticity, depth, encounters – that travel writers might legitimately seek to reinscribe into practices of travel.

In Chapter Three, a dynamic relationship between twentieth-century French travel writing, motorized transport, and theories of transport, was revealed. Two French categories of approach to the thematization of motorized travel were discussed, as well as Baudrillard's celebration of high speed travel in *Amérique*, which did not correspond to either category, but has been privileged in theoretical studies including Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, as a representative example of French travel writing. Theories of self-legitimation and the alibi in travel, emerging from sociological and anthropological studies of travel, were found to be applicable to the reception of long-distance motor journeys in French travel writing. Travelogues about domestic motorized journeys mirrored contemporary ethnographic interest in unexplored, proximal, interstitial spaces – the inversion of the ethnographic gaze onto neglected aspects of the local. From this point of view, such texts resist categorization as gimmick-driven, or predominantly comic, works. However, whilst interdisciplinary analysis of domestic infrastructural journeys aligns these thematic innovations with the serious project of re-examining previously marginalized local spaces, or reinscribing the body into displacements, there is arguably a need for further textual/discursive analysis to elucidate slippage between genuine attempts to re-exoticize the familiar, and a postmodern play on thematic conventions testifying to the end of worthwhile travel.

Domestic motor journey travelogues were usefully elucidated by the analysis of theories of deceleration/atomization as strategies for reappropriating perfunctory displacements as travel. The default conditions for contemporary motor transport use were found to be theorized in terms of mental and corporeal passivity, a lack of receptivity to surroundings and to interpersonal encounters, but also possible interaction between co-passengers. The elaboration of this theoretical context for motor travel elucidated French themes including *panne* and deliberate interruptions and repetitions of travel at high velocities. It also accounted for the lack of twentieth-century French travelogues thematizing passenger air journeys. Also, the North American/Anglophone basis of theories of car culture that emphasize associations between car use, masculinity, aggression and speed, were found to require attenuation in the light of certain French thematizations of the fragility and/or modesty of the vehicles used.

Chapter Four examined a corpus of transvestic travel writing texts in French, including canonical as well as previously unstudied works, and foregrounded intersections between the practices of transvestic travel writers and the putatively

objective travel practices of ethnographers and journalists. Theories emerging from the discipline of Journalism Studies were found to be useful for the analysis of travel writers' awareness of, and responses to, moral issues associated with the deception inherent in the adoption of an assumed identity. Theories of tourism focusing on contemporary valorizations of the intimate 'back regions' of cultures proved to be a relevant analogical framework for the rationalization of transvestic travel practices in travel writing. Further, existing speculation, in studies in travel writing, about the status of the transvestic traveller's body as a site of metaphorical travel, was expanded with reference to recent innovations in feminist cultural geography, according to which the body should be theorized as an integral part of geographical, material and spatial reality. This allowed for a consideration of transvestism as literal travel from one embodied location to another. The postmodernist paradigm of the *simulacre* was also introduced as one of a number of useful reference points in the analysis of contemporary French transvestic travel practices in travel writing, but the frequent emphasis on cultural appropriation and boundary transgression in the primary corpus suggests a possible need for further consideration of postcolonial and feminist theories.

Chapter Four also revisited Urbain's thematic conflation of transvestic travel writing and transsexual autobiography, and applied North-American innovations in literary criticism and transgender studies to the analysis of two contemporary French transsexual autobiographies, neither of which have been examined in existing studies in travel writing. Intersections with transvestic travel writing were considered, and it was concluded that transsexual autobiographies, at the level of theme, could be theorized as a literature of travel, on account of the prominence accorded to metaphors and discourses of displacement, and the significant representation, within the texts considered, of actual changes to corporeal and geographical location; however, the one-way nature of the journeys represented differentiated these texts from transvestic travel writing, in which return journeys are characteristically thematized.

In Chapter Five, the popularity of walking journeys as a theme in late-twentieth-century French travel writing was examined in relation to a parallel rise in the domestic market for leisure practices of walking, notably the *randonnée pédestre*. A comparison between a sample of pedestrian travelogues and sociological and anthropological studies of leisure indicated that the motivations of pedestrian travel writers overlap to a significant extent with those attributed to *randonneurs*, as walking is perceived to be a salutary return to corporeal experiences effaced from day-to-day living. Walking journey travelogues emerged as a site for the privileging of olfactory experience, and it was

proposed in this chapter that recent innovations in cultural geography could facilitate analysis of the problematics of representing this aspect of sensory experience in travel literature. In its emphasis on the natural, organic experiences of the unfettered body, late-twentieth-century pedestrian travel writing demonstrated consistency with a corresponding rise in neo-naturalist and anti-urbanist ideologies, as theorized by sociologists of the *randonnée pédestre*; however, the paradoxical commodification of such values in contemporary French culture was also arguably reflected. The prioritization of interpersonal encounters emerged as a factor differentiating pedestrian travel writers from leisure walkers; however, the sufficiency of these values – a return to the body and openness to encounters – is seemingly undermined by recourse, in recent travelogues, to additional strategies of self-differentiation.

By giving consideration to issues of physical disability, this thesis has demonstrated that the alleged belatedness of the twentieth-century French traveller is potentially problematized by the co-presence, in contemporary metropolitan France, of disabled subjects who find that the built environment, and transport and leisure facilities, have not been designed to take bodily diversity into account. The question of physical disability introduces, into studies in travel writing, a new space of critique. Rhetorical insistence, by able-bodied travel writers, on the over-facilitation and banalization of travel, arguably effaces the issue of the ongoing difficulties experienced by French disabled subjects in gaining access to public and private transport. Equally, the rhetorical celebration of the natural, upright, able body, in a number of French pedestrian travel writing texts, needs to be analysed in terms of its contributions to perceptions of disability as deficiency.

Finally, the integration, in this thesis, of theories of science fiction and cybertechnology, should have elucidated the extent to which French travel writing, as a genre, is bounded by specific understandings of material reality. Rightly or wrongly, 'in our times of virtual and cyber-realities the body may be held up as the last bastion of the real, even while it is presented as the materiality which the new cyber-technologies will finally be able to surmount'.[3]

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[3] Elisabeth Bronfen, 'The Body and its Discontents', in *Body Matters: Feminism, Textualism, Corporeality*, ed. by Avril Horner and Angela Keane (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 109-26 (p. 121).

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The majority of works in this category are travel writing texts, but also included are a number of works of travel-themed fiction, journalistic and/or essayistic texts, (auto)biographies, guide-books and poetry. The heterogeneity of this primary corpus is consistent with the primary corpora of a number of recent studies of travel/travel writing, for example, James Buzard's *The Beaten Track*; Urbain's *Secrets de voyage* and *L'Idiot du voyage*; Adrien Pasquali, *Le Tour des horizons*, and Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines*.

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