REDEFINING THE "SUPPLEMENT" IN 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH TRAVEL LITERATURE: 1750-1789

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

French

December, 2012

Nashville, Tennessee

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For Liam, Andrew, and Winnie

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is close to my heart, not only because of the special interest the topic holds for me, but because of the collaboration and support of my professors, colleagues, and family that it represents.

I first thank Amy Wyngaard of the Syracuse University Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics for her invaluable guidance durng the PhD application process, as well as for her rich seminar courses on the Enlightenment and libertine fiction. Somewhere between Laclos and my first encounter with Diderot's *L'Encyclopédie* in a visit to rare books, I decided to pursue Enlightenment literature and never looked back.

I express my gratitude to Texas Tech University for a generous Humanities Grant, which permitted me to conduct important research in Paris, France. Specifically, I thank my former colleagues in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages & Literatures: Hafid Gafaiti, Diane Wood, and Joe Price, who were quick to offer words of wisdom and help with revisions. Special thanks to Christopher Bains for his encouragement and willingness to let me bend his ear whenever needed.

Thank you to my colleagues, past and present, at other institutions for their interest in my work and for their support of the completion of my dissertation-Elaine Fahrner of The Academy of Old Cockrill, Cheryl Brown and David Julseth of Belmont University, and Joan McRae of Middle Tennessee State University.

Special thanks are in order to Jonathan Lamb of the Vanderbilt English department, whose early participation in this project played a large role in where it is today. It was during an independent study on travel supplements and utopias that many

pieces of the dissertation began to take shape and his expertise and scholarship in this field of research was priceless.

During the course of my dissertation research, I was fortunate on several occasions to have received funding that enabled me to conduct archival research in France. Thank you to the Graduate School for a Dissertation Enhancement Grant and to the College of Arts and Science for a Summer Research Award. Special thanks to the Pichois family for the Claude and Vincenette Pichois Fellowship.

I am very grateful to all of my Vanderbilt University "family" in the Department of French and Italian, who have cultivated me as a scholar and shown unfaltering support throughout the years on many levels. It was truly an honor to have belonged to such a vibrant, inspiring, and accomplished community of professors and students. Special thanks to Virginia Scott for her candid and invaluable advice, as well as for working with me to provide opportunities to showcase my work professionally. Thank you to Nathalie Dieu-Porter and Patricia Armstrong for their teaching collaboration and course innovation. I thank Anthère Nzabatsinda and Marc Froment-Meurice for helping me to develop sophistication in my research and for working with me to improve my writing style. I express my gratitude to Beth Smith, Liz Shadboldt and Véronique Homer for their administrative support. And finally, warm thanks to my fellow graduate students for their camaraderie and encouragement: Heather McNeil, Sarah Lloyd, Ingrid Schwab, Eva Dessein, Robert Watson, Daniel Ridge, Rachel Nisselson, Lisa Weiss, and Louis Betty.

I offer my sincerest thanks to the members of my committee: Robert Barsky, for offering fresh perspectives on my work that will help shape future projects; Katherine Crawford, for her meticulous reading of my draft and for challenging me to think about

my arguments more critically; Holly Tucker, for holding me accountable, both for my deadlines and my ideas; and Lynn Ramey, for her collaboration, mentorship and optimism that motivated the completion of the thesis. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jérôme Brillaud, who stepped into the role of thesis director later in the project and was incredibly generous with his time and knowledge, and was quick to offer words of encouragement in support of thesis in process.

To my original thesis director, Patricia Ward, I offer my deepest and most heartfelt thanks. A significant portion of this dissertation was inspired, written, and edited under her careful and patient guidance. Words cannot express how grateful I am to have had her as a mentor during this process and to count her as a friend outside of the academy.

Thank you to my loving family, and my mother in particular, who is my best friend and inspiration, and whose selfless sacrifices over the years have brought me to where I am today. Loving thanks to Ryan for his support and patience throughout the years-I know it was not always easy. And to the light of my world, Winnie, thank you for being an incredible and consistent sleeper while I worked and for offering tangible proof that dreams do come true.

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INTRODUCTION

REDEFINING THE "SUPPLEMENT" IN 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH TRAVEL LITERATURE: 1750-1789

Travel literature had a significant impact on French Enlightenment culture from a social and political standpoint. The voyages of discovery depicted in this type of literature were motivated by colonial competition resulting from territorial disputes during the Seven Years' War, particularly between France and Great Britain. Voyages were also driven by scientific goals, such as map-making, which included the tasks of establishing better routes for trade and locating the mythical Terra Australis in the southern hemisphere.[1] With regard to French Enlightenment culture, exploration appealed to the philosophical and ethnological questions of the period. Did Rousseau's "noble savage" exist outside of the corruption and hypocrisy of modern French society? Were savage civilizations derived from the same species as the European man, or were arguments defending polygenesis more valid? And finally: Was there a universal human nature that could offer insight into how to construct laws to maintain social order and mold public opinion toward the good of mankind?

These debates engaged the Enlightenment voyager who, after his discovery of a little-known locale, was upon his return an expert on this unknown place, as well as an

[1] Jonathan Lamb describes the Terra Australis, or "Great Southern Continent", in light of James Cook's travel objectives in his book *Preserving the Self in the South Seas: 1680-1840* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001) 89: "...The Great Southern Continent, formerly the terra incognita, the vast landmass believed to cover the greater portion of the high latitudes of the South Seas, stretching from the South Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and acting as counterweight to the continents of the Northern Hemisphere."

anthropologist and a linguist who interacted with its natives.[2] Perhaps most significant to the study of travel supplements, the voyager was also an author. However, what the voyager chose to represent and how his observations were interpreted inevitably blurred the lines between fact and fiction. Whether it was the voyager's intention to be deceptive, or whether he was simply recounting what he believed he had seen, travel literature was often wrought with inaccuracies, exaggerations, and gross misunderstandings. Ironically, this characteristic of the genre is what ranked its literary productions among the richest and most culturally telling of the epoch, since the influence of ongoing intellectual discourse about travel and popular culture is evident. However, in spite of its flaws travel literature generated debate about colonial expeditions and promoted a greater interest in the understanding of civilizations outside of the continent.

Specifically, voyages of exploration raised interest amongst eighteenth-century academics and intellectuals who looked to draw comparisons between French society and the characteristics of "primitive" civilizations emerging from voyagers' accounts of the time. Overall an interesting contradiction was taking shape in Enlightenment cultural discourse where French society was regarded as the highest form of civilization on one hand and the most conspicuous casualty of civilization on the other. Cultural comparisons in the travel literature of the time often reflected a hypothetical search for alternatives in primitive culture to the societal ills philosophers and writers identified in their own society. Dena Goodman argues, "French men of letters saw themselves as the leader of a

[2] Friedrich Wolfzettel explains, "Le voyage modèle des Lumières semble être caractérisé par l'esprit indépendant du voyageur qui, désireux de prendre ses distances vis-à-vis des superstitions et des préjugés, prétend « voir neuf », sans s'en remettre à la tradition humaniste et aux jugements d'autrui. On dirait une subjectivité distanciée, consciente d'elle-même et aussi éloignée que possible de l'esprit enthousiaste des voyages sentimentaux." *Le Discours du voyageur* (Paris: PUF, 1996) 270.

project of Enlightenment that was both cultural and moral, if not political."[3] Travel literature, in the form of prose fiction, travel journals, and encyclopedia entries, proved to be an effective vehicle for this enlightenment project. The emphasis on empirical and rational sources of knowledge reinforced the validity of the "voyage of exploration" as a means of gathering new information and contributing to the intellectual wealth of mankind.[4] The literature that was produced as a result of these voyages was a means of diffusing this new knowledge in a useful context.

Travel literature and the reading public

Travel literature proved to be a genre that captured the Enlightenment reader's interest. The quantity of travel texts published during this period was a testament to its relevance in popular literary culture. Moreover, the largely academic and intellectual readers who were avidly consuming these texts were also indirectly writing them through their participation in conversations with their contemporaries, notably in the salons.[5] Jürgen Habermas discusses the role of discourse between authors and their audiences prior to publication. The philosopher maintains:

> There was scarcely a great writer in the eighteenth century who would not have first submitted his essential ideas for discussion in such discourse, in lectures before the *académies* and especially in the *salons*. The *salon* held the monopoly

[3] Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) 4.

[4] Daniel Brewer, *The Discourse of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France: Diderot and the Art of Philosophizing* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 2.

[5] Taking this a step further, discourse surrounding voyages to Tahiti was undoubtedly influenced by the Tahitian native, Aotourou, who turned up with Bougainville to a number of Parisian salons upon the voyager's return.

> of first publication: a new work, even a musical one, had to legitimate itself first in this forum.[6]

This is an important element of the travel literature tradition, particularly when arguing that the literary "supplement" is a culturally-driven phenomenon whose modifications to a source text are many times acting as a response to popular culture and reader preferences. For this reason, travel texts serve the Enlightenment project as manifestations of its principles. Goodman traces the link the salon established between the rise of modernity and sociability: "If conversation shaped the discursive space within the boundaries of the salon, writing moved the Enlightenment out of that circumscribed world and into the public world beyond it."[7] She regards the "translation of salon values into writing" as a means of transmitting Enlightenment ideals through the conversations that took place in the Republic of Letters.[8]

Why was travel literature an effective medium for illustrating the cultural discourse of the time? One could argue that travel texts were the embodiment of popular literary vogues and provocative new discoveries and debates. One such debate was focused on colonial expansion, with many writers expressing a disdain for the French invasion of seemingly idyllic, "natural" civilizations, prompted in large part by voyagers' glowing reports of some of the cultures they encountered. These sentiments became a springboard for critiques about the negative effects of civilization on society, and French society in particular. The argument over whether or not indigenous societies were inferior

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[6] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT P, 1999) 34.

[7] Goodman 136.

[8] Goodman 137.

and civilizable, or "perfectible", was fueled by travel texts that portrayed acts deemed heinous by the relativistic eye of the European reader: incest, cannibalism, sexual rites of passage.[9] Furthermore, travel accounts often depicted a society that possessed very different sexual mores than those of France. Consequently, an alluring image of the female "Other" surfaced, which brought to light debates surrounding morality and religion, while at the same time creating a seductive fantasy for the reading public.

Non-literary and paratextual travel "supplements"

Although the focus of this thesis is the literary travel supplement, travel supplements may take many different forms. Some non-literary supplements may accompany and enrich a literary supplement, whereas others serve as a stand-alone response to a source. For example, some of the texts included in this thesis feature a prolific amount of illustration, including the *Histoire générale des voyages*, compiled by l'abbé Prévost and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*. These illustrations were as much a part of the text as the prose itself, as they often were telling of the veracity of the voyager's accounts as well as of the understanding the voyager had of the "Other" civilization. Portraying native Tahitians in European courtly garb was a good indication that the observer missed the objective mark.

The various functions of these illustrations are also an important component. For instance, in the *Histoire générale des voyages*, the illustrations serve as supporting evidence of the voyager's descriptions of other civilizations or locales, such as a sketch of livestock on Mauritius, a scene depicting Japanese torture, or simply the topography of

[9] In his Second Discourse, Rousseau elucidates the notion of "perfectibility" as a defining characteristic of human nature that separates man from animals.

the African coast. Aside from the visual appeal that would attract subscriptions to the encyclopedic work, these also offered validity to the scientific and anthropological claims set forth by the explorers included in the works. On the other hand, certain volumes of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* included illustrations that aided the author in meeting his literary goals of awakening reader sensibilities through the pastoral representations of two young lovers and their ultimate demise.

Maps also provided a means by which to supplement in travel literature. If not a stand alone "supplement", maps may have been inserted in a text as a literary accompaniment to prose, or even act as the backdrop on which a text is written. Maps were an especially integral tool in convincing the reading public that the fictional places they were reading about did indeed exist in reality. Scafi proposes, "What was previously seen only in the imagination was now visible to the eye, place becomes bound to human experience because the map makes it visible."[10] Maps were equally important to accounts of real-life voyages of exploration not only as an aid to future circumnavigation, but also as a testament to the expanse and erudition of the voyager's undertaking.

Prefaces, appendices, and other ancillary sections were significant components of the travel text, and may also be regarded as "supplements". Gérard Genette confronts these elements of the text in his work, *Seuils*, where he defines them based on their function, placement, and audience. This is an idea relevant to the study of "supplement" in that it considers a structural dissection of the text into separate entities. These components of the text are then at liberty to supplement diverse origins, meanwhile creating a cohesive heterogeneous work that can speak to many and one specific origin at

[10] Scafi 53.

the same time.[11] The deliberate characteristics of the text put into place by the author, such as the preface, dedication, footnotes, cover, etc., also convey the goals of the text to the reading audience. Genette assigns a certain obligation to these "paratextes" which are "défini[s] par une intention et une responsabilité de l'auteur".[12] Furthermore, Genette makes an interdependent link between authorial intention and the reading public in his definition of the paratext's function. For Genette, "Le paratexte est donc pour nous ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs, et plus généralement au public".[13] In terms of travel supplements, this is to say that paratexts may reveal the main text's relationship to the sources it is supplementing, while at the same time act as a supplement in and of itself. This will be seen in Chapter 4 with the case of the subtitle to Diderot's *Supplément*.

It is also important to give further consideration to the paratextual impact of giving titles such as *Histoire générale des voyages* or even *Voyage autour du monde* to travel series or travel accounts.[14] From the onset of the reader's interaction with these two texts, they would immediately be confronted with the idea they were about to read a historical non-fiction or an adventure fiction, respectively.[15] Genette explains,

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[11] This is not intended to contradict Derrida's argument that the origin of the text is not identifiable, but rather that it is clear that these "unidentifiable" origins are different.

[12] Genette 9.

[13] Genette 7.

[14] One specific example Genette brings to light is that of the editor's inclusion of a work in a specialized series that serves to identify its genre affiliation. He cites "L'indication générique peut encore (enfin?) redoublée ou suppléée par un moyen proprement éditorial, qui est la publication de l'ouvrage dans une collection génériquement spécialisée, comme, chez Gallimard, la Série Noire, les Essais, la Bibliothèque des idées, ou, au Seuil, Pierre vives, Poétique, Travaux linguistiques, etc.-encore qu'il y ait là, en général, coexistence de catégories génériques et disciplinaires" (96).

> Comme nous l'avons déjà entrevu, l'indication générique est une annexe du titre, plus ou moins facultative et plus ou moins autonome selon les époques ou les genres, et par définition thématique, puisque destinée à faire connaître le statut générique intentionnel de l'œuvre qui suit.[16]

If a text is named properly, it could be a successful feat for the travel author. This is because once again, the greatest obstacle for the author/voyager was convincing the reader of the verisimilitude and magnitude of one's discoveries amidst the fanciful nature that characterized many travel texts. François Moureau recognizes the influence a paratext in general has on dissipating questions of authenticity, "De nombreux récits de voyages analysés dans le détail montreraient, outre des montages de textes et des compilations étrangères habituels à ces sortes de publications, une tentation redoutable à la mystification, dont les paratextes- avis aux lecteurs et préface – renforcent l'effet de réel."[17] In this respect, the careful naming and categorization of travel texts is potentially another way to define a travel "supplement," where the paratextual attribution of a genre is in fact a characteristic of the travel supplement tradition.

"Supplement" in postmodern theory

In order to arrive at a "redefinition" of what a literary supplement means in the context of travel literature, it is useful to consider how past scholarship has conceived of this literary phenomenon. Perhaps the most well-known debates surrounding the idea of

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[15] "Adventure fiction", as I am terming it in this case, refers to Bougainville's narrative adaptation of his actual travel notes which was criticized for its lack of factual scientific appeal in spite of its success as a popular fiction.

[16] Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987) 89-90.

[17] François Moureau, *Le Théâtre des voyages: Une scénographie de l'Âge classique*, Imago Mundi (Paris: PUPS, 2005) 64.

"supplement" may be found in Jacques Derrida's *De la grammatologie*. Here Derrida offers a post-modern perspective on how supplements and their sources interact, as well as the status of each of these texts when read individually or in conjunction with one another.

Derrida brings to light one central conflict in analyzing the tradition of travel literature, which is where to locate the origin in relation to the supplement. While it may be possible to historically identify what came first, it is in the textual representation that the relationship between source and supplement is depicted more clearly. Secondly, there is a parallel between Derrida's discussion of Saussure's theory of how signs derive meaning from what is not present, and how supplements gain a secondary, deferred meaning from the texts to which they are related. More "dangerous" is the notion of the supplement supplanting the source altogether. Moureau recognizes this issue with regard to the myth of Tahiti: "D'une certaine manière, la fiction précède et commente les découvertes à faire, ou peut-être se substitue à elles dans l'imaginaire collectif. C'est ainsi que Tahiti deviendra la "Nouvelle-Cythère", reconquête mythique du modèle antique, avant de retrouver son nom originel."[18] With each travel account, "pure" Tahitian culture is further debased as it is interpreted and fabricated by European colonizers. Finally, Derrida's discussion of the power dynamic between speech and writing is also pertinent, as the spoken word in conversations that took place in the salons and academies wrote a large portion of what ultimately made it to the page.

[18] Moureau 59.

A redefinition of the literary travel "supplement"

One unique characteristic of the eighteenth-century travel literature tradition is its capability, or rather propensity, to "supplement" itself much in the same way a speaker would reply to someone in a conversation, elaborate their point of view, ask their interlocutor for clarification, or simply disagree. In order to analyze the literary and cultural impact of the travel "supplement," it has been necessary to work backward and attempt to determine the origins from which these supplements evolved.[19] As shown thus far, textual and cultural origins are crucial to assessing the intention and impact of a work, particularly in the context of travel literature where literary success often rests on its reception. Locating origins is a complex task, as many of these texts are structurally and discursively diverse enough for the reader to cite more than one source text that is being "supplemented." In certain cases, when the source text or texts are not explicitly identified, the structure of the supplement offers clues as to the question of origin. The form of each travel supplement studied also provides insight into the author's reasons for creating it and the targeted reading audience.

With the objective of redefining travel supplements and their importance to Enlightenment culture, it was crucial to corner an important moment in French maritime and colonial history. For this reason, the period of 1750-1789 was selected as a focus. However, a study of eighteenth-century French travel literature during the second half of the eighteenth-century would produce only a small number of titles where the author has identified the work as a "supplement" to another text. One goal of this thesis is to identify the literary texts during this time period that are not explicitly named as "supplements,"

[19] For the purposes of this discussion, *source* is to mean the text from which a supplement results, whereas *origin* is an absolute beginning that is unidentifiable, but recognizable as the theoretical genesis.

but that fulfill a role in adding to, deleting from, or manipulating a source text in a manner that is reflective of ongoing debates and conversations in Enlightenment culture. The choice of corpus works for this thesis was initially difficult when limited to texts with the nomenclature "supplement," but upon further investigation, there were many works of travel literature during this period that function as a supplement in spite of not being identified as such. This led to a redefinition of terms of what constitutes a travel "supplement," which brought to light many new and interesting textual relationships, thus revealing infinite possibilities for consideration. Ultimately, the "supplements" chosen for this thesis were those that were most revelatory of the categories set forth for discussion below.

Finally, it is important to point out that the voyages of exploration that served as inspiration for the travel literature discussed in this project were not exclusively French. Whereas the key voyagers of the period that will be discussed were indeed French, such as Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, l'abbé Prévost, and l'abbé Raynal; there were a number of other European voyages that influenced French culture and literary vogue. In particular, one could cite British exploration as a key influence, encompassing the travels of Samuel Wallis and James Cook and accompanying naturalists, Banks, Solander, and the German Forsters.

Four key categories of supplements have been constructed for the purpose of this dissertation: Eyewitness, Narrative, Anthology, and Postmodern. Close analysis of the supplementary texts in relation to their sources attests to interdependent relationship between the literary travel supplement and Enlightenment cultural discourse. This thesis represents a progression in that the link between the travel supplement and its source, or

sources, becomes increasingly more difficult to discern with each subsequent chapter. Diderot's postmodern supplement concludes the analysis and deconstructs the notion that a travel supplement is a response to any one source text, but rather a cultural manifestation of reader tastes and Enlightenment thought in general.

The Eyewitness Supplement

The texts that fall under the category of the "Eyewitness Supplement" prove to be among the most persuasive of the tradition of literary travel supplements. This is in large part because the author established his credibility as an expert in some capacity before embarking on the featured voyage. The role of an "eyewitness" could certainly extend to the principal voyager, but the impact of the naturalists and other "scientists" who claimed to have seen what the voyager had was more powerful because of the privileged position of their expertise. The veracity of this type of secondary account was less likely to be challenged because of the witness's distinction in his respective field.

One of the most salient examples of how the roles of voyager, scientist, and naturalist are exploited in order to defend the principal voyager's accuracy unfolded in the legacy of travel accounts to Tahiti. In 1766, the naturalist Philibert Commerson accompanied Louis-Antoine de Bougainville on his voyage around the world, including a visit to the island of Tahiti. Upon his return, Commerson leaked his observations to the *Mercure de France* before Bougainville's account was published. This strategy offered evidence as to how travel tales could be corroborated before their release. Commerson's testimony also served to dissuade the reading audience from questioning the leading voyager's utopian claims about Tahiti when his narrative appeared several years later.

The Fictional Narrative Supplement

Contrary to what is seen in the "Eyewitness Supplement," the "Fictional Narrative Supplement" seeks to detract from, or embellish, the real-life observations recorded during voyages of exploration. The voyager who looks to impart precise first-person observations about the societies he has observed over the course of his journey is transformed into an author intent on appealing to reader preferences. The result is a largely subjective text whose factual omissions and narrative additions render the voyager's travel supplement no more authentic than an entertaining fictional travel work. Although the narrative's representation of a given culture may have sacrificed accuracy in favor of readership, this type of supplement to a travel journal could still be immensely successful in winning public interest in a specific voyage or location.

This transition is best exhibited by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's texts centering on his voyage to the Île de France. Whereas Tahiti held the promise of an undiscovered paradise, the Île de France held the often unpleasant reality of colonial expansion. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre documented the social ills, famine, and slavery that were a daily part of colonial life. However, his honest account was not well-received by academics or the reading public. This changed when he scaled back his critiques of European tyranny and vices, reframing the locale of present-day Mauritius into a virtuous love story between two young people. *Paul et Virginie* went on to phenomenal success as a popular literary choice at the epoch and even today in its many translations. This supplement brings to light a crucial question in the genre of travel supplements: Were there literary forms in which travel data could be embedded that would make it better received? The answer is a resounding yes. Moreover, one could argue that several types

of popular literature, such as a sentimental fictional narrative, reflected certain trends and tastes in popular and literary culture that would almost guarantee its success over a dry, critical account of slavery in the colonies. In addition, the academy and political officials preferred that a negative image be avoided. In this respect, the fictional narrative supplement is equally telling as a cultural studies device as it is a form of literary divertissement.

The Anthology Supplement

A number of encyclopedias, dictionaries, and anthologies appeared in France during the second half of the eighteenth-century. For those that featured anthropological descriptions gathered during voyages of exploration, the task of compiling and organizing data represented a major conflict. How may one categorize the information? How could the anthologist avoid arbitrarily classifying voyagers' observations? One work that confronted these questions was a lesser-known anthology by Jean-Nicolas Demeunier, *L'Esprit des usages et des coutumes des différents peuples*.

Demeunier's work served as a travel supplement in that it sought to reconcile the contradictions amongst various travel accounts with the addition of both the anthologist's own notes and an original method of classifying voyagers' accounts. Demeunier strove to debunk the myth of the noble savage and critiqued the relativistic reports made by voyagers who observed other cultures, but who could only understand them in relation to their own. However, in spite of this well-intentioned project, Demeunier himself fell victim to Todorovian universalism. The ethnographer employed a classification system comprised of "usages" to sort and compile various travel accounts, which only served to

reinforce the notion of universal values because of their superficial and subjective nature, as in the case of the categories "beauty" and "modesty". In spite of the anthology's misguided premise, Demeunier deserves recognition for introducing a new kind of ethnological awareness that sought to challenge and deconstruct the one-dimensional anthropological images voyagers offered post-voyage.

The Postmodern Supplement: A postmodern problem?

The discussion of literary supplements thus far culminates in the analysis of a well-known example that in fact bears the title "supplement," Diderot's 1772 *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*. Diderot often used supplements in his writing for reasons that are brought to light both through the analysis of the *Supplément*, as well as through this text's relationship to his body of work and philosophy. The *Supplément*'s reader soon discovers that this is a text for which locating the origin is especially difficult, as various literary, historical, and philosophical sources are implicated as parts of its literary genealogy. The *Supplément*, which appeared in the same year as Bougainville's narrative, *Voyage autour du monde*, operates in its most prominent role as a "factual-fiction" where a critique of French society is constructed through the philosopher's manipulation of legendary voyage accounts to the South Seas by British and French explorers.[20]

Subject to awe and fascination by explorers, the tradition of travel texts about the utopian Tahitian culture form an interconnected corpus, where the literary works all appear to build on one another. One characteristic of the collective corpus of texts that promulgated the myth of Tahiti, including the *Supplément*, was that it created problematic

[20] The *Supplément* contains allusions to voyage accounts to Tahiti by Samuel Wallis, James Cook, and Louis-Antoine de Bougainville.

referents as to the true nature of Tahiti. Eric Vibart argues: "Quelles que soient les réalités, les images littéraires prévalent, car il s'agit avant tout d'incarner un mythe."[21] Diderot's counted on the reader's familiarity with the myth of Tahiti so that he might use it as a backdrop for his philosophical agenda. Moreover, the philosopher justified the choice of Tahiti for his social critique by exploiting key factual details from Bougainville's voyage that proved the Tahitian myth was at least in part a reality. Roger Célestin explains that the dynamic between the two texts is defined by Diderot's validation and subsequent deconstruction of Bougainville's account:

> [But] before this erasure of the *Voyage*, Diderot establishes its authority. This is where the exchange between the *Supplément* and the *Voyage* take place on the level of legitimization: in his text Diderot perversely multiples the markers that authenticate Bougainville's *Voyage*, so that the *Supplément* can profit from a solid base, a corroborated source, before becoming an independent and divergent text that goes further.[22]

At the conclusion of Diderot's *Supplément*, the reader is no closer to grasping the true nature of Tahiti, but this was not the intention. The imaginary nature of Diderot's Tahiti only begs the inclusion of the philosopher's text next to others in the tradition.

However, it must be pointed out that the Tahitian was not passively represented in Diderot's *Supplément* as he was in other accounts in the tradition. Instead, Diderot rewrote the myth of Tahiti by assigning a rational voice to the Tahitian natives included

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[21] Eric Vibart, "L'Île du Pacifique, territoire sans mémoire" *L'Île, territoire mythique*. Ed. François Moureau. (Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1989)119.

[22] Roger Célestin, *From Cannibals to Radicals: Figures and Limits of Exoticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 68.

in the dialogues of the *Supplément*. The inclusion of an invented dialogue casts doubt on the faithfulness of other voyager's representations of island civilizations, adding another dimension to the underlying slippage between fact and fiction on voyages of exploration through the deconstruction of these terms. Ultimately, Diderot's *Supplément* was potentially the most culpable in marginalizing the "true" Tahitian culture in order to exploit the island's literary value as a foil to Enlightenment France. But what does truth mean in this case? Perhaps a voyager really did observe something in his reality, but this was one man's truth. Does the terminology "fiction" apply to only the elements the voyagers have invented, or does it extend to gross misunderstandings and inaccuracies regarding the cultures they evaluate as well?

The choice of Diderot's *Supplément* as the conclusion to this study of literary travel supplements was meant to demonstrate that supplements cannot be exclusively grouped into any one category after all. This closing insight subverts the pragmatic study of supplements presented in the first three chapters, and introduces new perspectives that lead to a better understanding of a unique literary tradition. Most importantly, the postmodern approach to this project reinforces how befitting the term "supplement" is in the context of travel literature. Although some divergences do exist between the theoretical framework of this study and Derridean philosophy, the post-modern philosopher's perspective is crucial to the implementation and understanding of the validity of this term. This is especially true with regard to the notion of source texts and origins. While one may easily identify the sources from which a particular text is derived, it becomes clear that no text can be evaluated in a vacuum or closed system, independent of the external variables that are a part of the text. As this thesis will show, the literary

travel supplement is both a catalyst for and artifact of surrounding Enlightenment cultural discourse.

CHAPTER I

THE "EYEWITNESS SUPPLEMENT": PHILIBERT COMMERSON AND THE "MYTH" OF TAHITI

Enlightenment voyagers, both British and French, relied on fellow crewmen to corroborate their tales of fantasy and fiction once they returned home to their critical public consisting of patrons, academies, and readers of their voyage accounts. More often than not, these crewmen had been invited to join the expedition in order to fulfill some scientific purpose, under the title of a "naturalist" for example. Even those men who did not have formal training as such received prestigious invitations to join voyages that held the hopes of making promising scientific discoveries.[1] The most important contribution to these maritime expeditions, however, may have been that these "naturalists" brought back eyewitness accounts to their respective voyages, in addition to their collection of flora and fauna. In some cases, these naturalists were highly instrumental in editing or commenting on a voyager's existing account of the journey. Some even wrote a travel journal of their own which in turn became their own literary achievement or was transformed into the principal voyager's plagiarized account. In other cases, the naturalist published an account that would substantiate extraordinary claims made by the principal voyager about a particular locale.

[1] O.H.K. Spate indicates that the phenomenon of bringing scientists aboard maritime expeditions started with Bougainville, where he brought the naturalist, Commerson, and the astronomer, Véron, along on the voyage.

To illustrate how an "eyewitness" supplement evolved from mundane notes about the ship's daily course to the voyager's "journal de voyage," the complex, interwoven literary travel history of expeditions landing on Tahiti is particularly useful. In particular, this chapter will focus on the written contributions of the naturalist Philibert Commerson during his voyage around the world with Louis-Antoine de Bougainville from 1766-1769. Commerson is an example of the way in which a secondary voyager played a role in the ultimate depiction of the discovered lands, simply by recasting or reinforcing what was already noted by the principal voyager. Such an "eyewitness" supplement was both a catalyst for and a product of the cultural and political debates they inadvertently entertained. Commerson's observations were a "supplement" to Bougainville's account of his voyage. The naturalist collected scientific data about the locales visited and provided further proof of the veracity of Bougainville's account. Commerson's observations were also a "supplement" because they spoke to the overall tradition of the "myth" of Tahiti, meanwhile offering new evidence that sparked further public interest. This interest gave rise to new accounts of the island and voyagers vying to be the next to return.

It is essential to look at the travel discourse surrounding the discovery of Tahiti from both a political and cultural perspective. Debates still persist over who the real "discoverers" of the South Pacific islands were. Politically, this was a controversial issue between France and Great Britain during the period following the Seven Years' War, in which the latter had obtained an "advantage" in North America and Asia.[2] From a cultural standpoint, the reading publics of the two adversaries were equally fascinated by the exotic flora, fauna, and sexual mores witnessed in Tahiti. Both Samuel Wallis and

[2] O. H. K. Spate 86.

James Cook had enticed the British public with tales of Tahiti, which later filtered into France in translation, culminating in several editions of Bougainville's own account.

In the history of exploration of Tahiti, the contributions of voyagers from Great Britain and France are indisputably linked. In the wake of Wallis's discovery of Tahiti in 1767, Bougainville's first encounter of the island occurred in 1768 during a voyage that had the purpose of relinquishing the Falkland Islands to Spain.[3] Bougainville expanded the scope of this expedition to encompass a "voyage around the world" with several stops in South America and the South Seas. Bougainville and his crewmates, including the naturalist Commerson, returned with evidence that corroborated and further elaborated on the idyllic natural state of Tahiti that their British counterpart had observed during his visit.[4]

Bougainville's visit to the island was followed by that of Captain James Cook in 1769.[5] Bougainville's narrative, first published in 1771, was translated into English in 1772, which prompted the need for an English publication that would catalogued British voyages in the Southern hemisphere. Hawkesworth's 1773 compilation of Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Cook filled this need, following the anonymously unofficial published account of Cook's first voyage that first appeared in 1771.[6] In 1772, France was

[3] Captain Wallis's 1766 expedition on the *Dolphin* and *Swallow* with Lieutenant Philip Carteret was a follow-up to Captain John Byron's 1764 voyage on the *Dolphin* and *Tamar* and was believed to be the first European contact with Tahiti. (Frost 13).

[4] Wallis's reports to the British government about his voyage and "discovery" of Tahiti were an influence in sending James Cook on his voyage, but Wallis's official journal was not published until 1773.

[5] James Cook would also visit Tahiti during both his 1772-1775 and 1776-1780 voyages on the *Resolution*.

[6] O.H.K Spate explains that this successful work, entitled *An account of the voyages undertaken by order of His Present Majesty for making discoveries in the southern hemisphere*, was controversially written in the first person and presented scientific and chronological inaccuracies. O. H. K. Spate, "The Literature of Cook's Voyages," *LaTrobe Journal* 41 (1988): 27. It is important to note that Cook's journal beat

introduced to Cook's discoveries through M. de Fréville's translation of the unofficial voyage account, published as a supplement to Bougainville's second edition of the narrative *Voyage*.[7] This edition contained Cook's anonymous account of his first voyage and several letters, including one from the naturalist Philibert Commerson describing his experiences on Madagascar where he met the legendary Patagonians. Cook went on to complete two other maritime expeditions, both of which include time on Tahiti and resulting printed accounts, but the initial voyage provided the first "taste" of the island.

Upon gaining confirmation that this island "utopia" did exist, readers took interest in these accounts, sparking ethnological debates about civilization and humanity, which in turn impacted social consciousness as seen in satires such as the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* by Diderot. The Tahitian myth became a sensation. The credibility of the myth for the reading public was largely due to the number of "scientists" supporting each other's conception of this myth which in large part unfolds in the literary discourse surrounding travels to the island.

Tahiti

Tahiti was believed to have been discovered by Captain Wallis: "With Lieutenant Philip Carteret commanding the *Swallow*, Wallis sailed from Plymouth in the *Dolphin* on 22 August 1776 [sic 1766]."[8] The description of what took place upon his arrival is one

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Bougainville's to publication in spite of the fact Bougainville's voyage ended 2 years prior to Cook's. (Duchet 62).

[7] This title has been abbreviated from its complete form, *Supplément au voyage de M. de Bougainville, ou, Journal d'un voyage autour du monde, fait par MM. Banks & Solander, anglois, en 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771* (Paris: Saillant, 1772).

[8] Alan Frost, *The Voyage of the Endeavor: Captain Cook and the Discovery of the Pacific* (St Leonards: Allen, 1998) 18.

that would reappear in several different versions in other travel writings regarding Tahiti. Alan Frost offers a description of the events that greeted Wallis:

> As the *Dolphin* coasted the island, the Natives came out in their canoes, first to proffer fronds of plantain and long speeches, which the Strangers took as gestures of good will, then to trade food for the Strangers' goods, particularly nails and other metal items. Repeatedly, the Natives tried to persuade the Strangers to bring the ship inshore and to land, including by having 'Young Girls play a great many droll want[on] tricks'. When the Strangers would not oblige, the Natives pelted them with stones.[9]

Frost explains: "Today we know that the Polynesians viewed the *Dolphin* as the great canoe of the god 'Oro, who legend said had first come from the land beyond the sky and would one day return".[10] The Tahitians' hostility stemmed from the lack of cooperation by Wallis's men. However, trade was ultimately carried out between both parties. In fact, "The European men also found the Tahitian women astonishingly willing to have sex. The price of this favour was quickly established as a nail, and so frenetic did the trade become that Wallis had to forbid the crew from drawing nails from the ship, for fear it might fall apart".[11] The Tahitian's openness to sex was one characteristic of their civilization that was included repeatedly in descriptions of this island, and voyagers and their readers were fascinated by a culture so unlike their own that "appeared" to be

[9] Frost 18-19.

[10] Frost 20.

[11] Frost 21.

pleasure-driven.[12] For reading audiences, Tahitian sexual freedom was also at the center of debates about the effects of civilization and the differences between savage and man**.**

Emma Spary has examined this phenomenon more closely, noting that a number of eighteenth-century historians considered the history of civilizations to move in cycles. Savages became "civilized" with continued exposure to civilized society and knowledge, and continued this process until they reached a point where their morality degenerated and the society collapsed.[13] Therefore, there was a genuine fascination in comparing and contrasting European society with that of island "utopias", an often exaggerated and illusory portrait of virtuous island life and a return to life before progress. Was "society" more virtuous before social laws were created to restrict sexual freedom or after these laws were made but often disobeyed? These were the types of debates portraits of Tahiti sparked for many Enlightenment thinkers, notably Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Diderot.[14]

Lansdown affirms the role and effects that the discovery of Tahiti had on Rousseau's social theories in particular. He cites that after studying American culture, Tahiti gave Rousseau yet another stage on which he could play out his ideas about the "noble savage" living in a natural state. The Tahitian society resonated so much with

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[12] Even Diderot will portray this aspect in his *Supplément*. However, in addition to touting the sexual freedom found in Tahiti, he will ultimately explain the economic motivation for procreation among this civilization as a means of achieving wealth. Orou explains in the *Supplément*: "The birth of a child brings domestic and public joy. It will mean an increase of wealth for the hut, and of strength for the nation. It means another pair of arms and hands in Tahiti. We see in him a future farmer, fisherman, hunter, soldier, husband father." Denis Diderot, *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* in idem *Political Writings*, Eds. John Hope Mason and Robert Wolker (Cambridge: Cambride UP, 1992) 53.

[13] Emma Spary, "Cultures of Natural History" 187.

[14] One example of how this debate manifested itself in philosophical discourse may be found in Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, where he questions the validity of laws that oppose "natural" acts and relationships, i.e. between husbands and wives, fathers and sons, etc.: "Loi inique, qui, pour conserver les moeurs, renversoit la nature, d'où tirent leur origine les moeurs" (Livre XXVI ; Chapitre IV, 197). *De l'esprit des lois*, Eighteenth Century collections online. (Londres, 1768).

Rousseau, as evidenced from his writings, that Lansdown affirms, "Some have argued that this intellectual crystallization had momentous implications indeed, playing a preparatory role in the French Revolution itself.[15] In Rousseau's political writings, several provocative themes are common to the discussions of the individual versus the collective and the role of civilization: civic responsibility, social equality, and freedom from social institutions such as personal property, and these came alive in the context of Tahitian life, far removed from "civilized" France. [16]

Philibert Commerson

Philibert Commerson was asked to join Bougainville's 1766 expedition as a naturalist, with the purpose of recording scientific and anthropological observations along the way.[17] Dunmore points out that Commerson's account of Tahiti, which appeared in the November 1769 edition of the *Mercure de France,* in fact preceded the first edition of Bougainville's narrative published in 1771.[18] Once published, neither Bougainville's nor Commerson's accounts enjoyed the same *scientific renown* in France as the translations of their British counterparts, Cook, Banks, and Solander, which appeared in the same

[15] Richard Lansdown, ed. *Strangers in the South Seas: The Idea of the Pacific in Western Thought* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 2006) 71.

[16] "Quand on songe à la bonne constitution des Sauvages, au moins de ceux que nous n'avons pas perdus avec nos liqueurs fortes, quand on sait qu'ils ne connoissent presque d'autres maladies que les blessures et la vieillesse, on est très porté à croire qu'on feroit aisément l'histoire des maladies humaines en suivant celle des Sociétés civilies." *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*, Première partie, Oeuvres complètes III (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

[17] Knowlton 8.

[18] Dunmore lxxi. Dunmore cites that Bougainville's official report to the king was submitted in 1769, but that the explorer did not finish his narrative until several years later.

year that Bougainville's narrative was in its second edition.[19] However, the first release of Commerson's report did succeed in sparking the general reading public's interest in both the island and the potentially fascinating works based on this voyage that were anticipated.[20]

To focus now on the notion of an "eyewitness" supplement, Commerson's works offer a rich example of how this type of text functions in relation to its source. First, Commerson's position as naturalist and crewmate on Bougainville's voyage enabled the scientist to create a supplement that offered more layers of "proof" to what was observed over the course of the voyage, further propelling the myth of Tahiti into French culture. Commerson confirms the utopian qualities of the island, elaborates on the happiness of its inhabitants, and even lends authenticity to the origins of Aotourou, the Tahitian who accompanied Bougainville back to Paris. However, it is necessary to point out that the writings of Commerson the naturalist fulfill the function of an "eyewitness" supplement from the position of *preceding* Bougainville's published account. It is understood that Bougainville's *Voyage* was not received warmly by the French public in spite of "eyewitness" collaboration, largely because it was more of a literary contribution than a scientific one. Since Commerson's sensational account of Tahiti was the first with which the public was met, is it fair to say that Commerson influenced what Bougainville presented to the public in his own narrative? Was Bougainville's narrative more "popular" because he insisted on the details of the voyage that Commerson was corroborating? Was Bougainville criticized even more harshly by the scientific

[19] Dunmore lxxi. Botanists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander accompanied James Cook on his first voyage on the *Endeavor* in 1768.

[20] Dunmore lxxi.

community when it became clear that his published narrative included little extra detail on longitudes and latitudes than what could be found in Commerson's existing work? When weighing the benefits of having an "eyewitness" onboard, is publication chronology a crucial element to the success of the principal voyager's work, or is this an exceptional case? These are questions that will be considered further when focusing on Bougainville.

Travel journals

Commerson explained his role in accompanying Bougainville as "médecin naturaliste" on his voyage around the world from 1766-1768 in a manuscript entitled *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Voyage fait autour du monde par les vaisseaux du Roi la* Boudeuse *et l'*Étoile *pendant les années 1766-1768.*[21] According to Étienne Taillemite, Commerson intended for this journal to be a reorganization of his travel notes into a form that could potentially become a "récit de l'expédition," but that it stopped after only 34 pages.[22] These pages contained a chronological journal that has an entry for every two days that commented on mostly mundane travel details: the ship's location, the wind directions, the ocean height, food, etc. The journal is preceded by an "Avertissement" and "Remarques préliminaires," that included a description of the ship, *L'Etoile*, and its crew, while citing that the principal objective for this ship was to

[21] Étienne Taillemite, Ed. and Comp., *Bougainville et ses compagnons autour du monde: 1766-1769, Journaux de navigation*, Voyages et Découvertes. Tome II (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1977) 421. Taillemite notes that these "mémoires" are found in ms. 301 of the Bibliothèque du Muséum.

[22] Taillemite, Tome I 135. This manuscript stops before any mention of Tahiti. Taillemite explains: "Ce travail ne va pas au-delà du 1er avril 1767, avant même l'arrivée de l'*Étoile* à Montevideo" (135). In ms. 2214, there is another journal written by Commerson that runs from the 1st of February 1767 to the 16th of July 1767 that includes descriptions of Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro (136).

accompany *La Boudeuse* in its 'proposed voyage around the world'.[23] While the naturalist fulfills his scientific obligations of sharing the data he collected about the places and people he encountered, Commerson does not lose sight of the importance of how this data is presented. He admits that the journal is a rough sketch of the findings, but that a more "readable" version would be released at the earliest possible date:

> On observa que ces mémoires ci sont faits à la hâte et ne doivent servir que de matériaux à l'histoire de ce voyage que nous nous proposons de mettre sous une forme plus intéressante en y insérant nos observations d'histoire naturelle au premier loisir dont nous pourrons jouir.[24]

It will be discussed below how Commerson achieved this more reader-friendly and detailed version of his observations of Tahiti with the *Mercure de France* publication. There the naturalist communicated his findings in a descriptive narrative, rather than a chronological inventory of travel notes.

Another significant manuscript journal that was written over the course of Bougainville's voyage was that of Duclos-Guyot, a volunteer aboard the *Boudeuse*.[25] This journal, contained under the *Premier Cahyer des Mémoires* in manuscript 2214,

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[23] Commerson 421. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[24] Commerson 421. (Taillemite, Tome II). In Tome I, Taillemite points out the obligation of marine officers to keep a journal of the voyage under "la grande ordonnance du 15 avril 1689", which perhaps contributed to Commerson's haste in finishing these mémoires and to the number of travel journal surrounding Bougainville's journey: Vivez, Caro, Fesche, to name a few. Taillemite cites that outside of Bougainville's "Aucun journal tenu par un officier de vaisseau ne nous a été conservé. Ceux-ci ont pourtant existé, nous en avons la certitude, d'abord parce qu'en vertu des ordonnances en vigueur, tout officier de marine en campagne devait tenir un journal, ensuite parce que le ministre en a demandé la communication" (122).

[25] Duclos-Guyot was the son of the second-in-command of the *Boudeuse* (Taillemite, Tome I, 135). Taillemite explains that this journal runs from November 1766-September 1767, where it is later edited and added to by Commerson later that year (135).

predominantly covered Bougainville's voyages to South America and the South Pacific.[26] What is of interest here is that Commerson added to several portions of Duclos-Guyot's journal, including a short segment on Tahiti in 1768 from the 23rd of March until the 6th of April.[27] In approaching Tahiti, Commerson's first impressions were general and were limited to descriptions of the location, sandy shores, and foliage. However, when the ships anchored on the larger of the two islands of which Tahiti is comprised, Commerson came into contact with the native "savages".[28] He recounts how the Europeans were favorably received by the inhabitants:

> Il nous est venue quantité de pirogue[sic] dans lesquelles il y avoit deux ou trois homme[sic] très robuste[sic] ayant de grande cheveux et la barbe longue et noire. Il n'avoient point d'armes en abordant, il nous présentoient une petite pied de bannanier qui est apparemment une marque de paix et d'amitié.[29]

After this initial contact, the natives brought the voyagers fruits and meats. Commerson explains that one of the savages, who appeared to be a chief of some type, sent the others away and requested to come aboard with the Europeans during their stay in Tahiti. The natives continued to bring them food, meanwhile swarming around the ships in their small boats. Commerson has the opportunity to make a more thorough physical

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[26] In the "Édition critique" of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*, PUPS (Paris 2001), Michel Bideaux and Sonia Faessel offer a detailed list of the many fragmentary manuscripts containing Commerson's observations on the voyage, as well as his collaborative writings with Duclos-Guyot. The editors also cite that these manuscripts failed to be published at the epoch, with the exception of the "Post-scriptum", which was published in the Mercure de France in 1769 and extracted in the December 1769 *Journal encyclopédique*. They note that it was later reproduced in the *Décade philosophique* and in Taillemite's 1977 volumes (28).

[27] Commerson 459. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[28] Commerson 472. (Taillemite, Tome II). These observations are made between March 23 and April 6 of 1768.

[29] Commerson 472. (Taillemite, Tome II). The original spelling and grammar have been maintained in all quoted passages, including errors of usage and archaic forms.

description of the island inhabitants when another handful comes aboard. Once again, the portrait of the "noble savage" is carefully crafted, for the natives are: "...Très beaux hommes de la taille de 5 pieds 7 à 8 pouces et les autres de 5 pieds 9 à 10 pouces, les cheveux noirs, barbus avec de belles dents. Ils nous parurent bons et affables, nuds et sans armes quelconques..."[30] However, the resources of the island were not limited to those who populated it. Commerson is also quick to note that the island was fertile and fruit-bearing to which he remarks is "comme dans nos colonies d'Amérique".[31] Clearly enchanted by the Tahitians, Commerson is inspired to follow up these initial reflections with supplementary texts supporting his utopian claims about the island. While it may not be evident whether the naturalist's "findings" were purely driven by his awe of his surroundings or by the purpose of finding new colonial pursuits, the literary productions to follow offered undeniably detailed and alluring portraits of the island civilization.

Description de l'isle de la Nouvelle Cythère[32]

This *Description* may be found as one of Commerson's "apostilles," which were supplements to the second book of manuscript 2214.[33] As Bougainville claimed in his own published narrative, this manuscript shows that Commerson had believed to have found a utopia on Tahiti, which is reflected in many of the same observations

[30] Commerson 472. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[31] Commerson 472-473. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[32] The full title of this "apostille" is *Description de l'isle de la Nouvelle Cythère où nous avons relâché le 6 avril 1768 vers les 3h après midy* (Taillemite, Tome II 496).

[33] In Tome I, Taillemite describes the format of this book: "2e cahier: suite du précédent, du 7 septembre 1767 au 25 octobre 1768, date à laquelle il s'interrompt brusquement. A la suite de ce journal se trouvent des "apostilles" numérotées, de la main de Commerson qui, à partir du 10 juillet 1767, l'a enrichi de nombreuses annotations" (135).

Bougainville made and in the name they both use to describe the island, "la Nouvelle Cythère".[34] After his stay in Tahiti, Commerson contributed well-founded ethnological and scientific perspectives covering various aspects of Tahitian civilization, even including a vocabulary list of everyday words. However, his depiction of the Tahitian's physical appearance and sexual mores would be most captivating when his observations were ultimately published.

In *Description de l'isle de la Nouvelle Cythère...*, Commerson begins with a physical account of the women and girls:

> [Elles] Peuvent être comparées aux plus belles brunes européennes à l'exception qu'elles ne sont pas tout à fait si blanches. Elles ont les yeux grands, bleu ou noir et à fleur de teste, les sourcis noirs, un regard coquet et séduisant mais sans pudeur, la bouche petite, les dents petites serrées les unes près des autres, de beaux cheveux noirs amarrés le plus souvent sur le haut derrière de la teste, une belle gorge, de belles mains potelées et le bras encor plus beau, enfin tout le corps comme jetté au moule à l'exception des pieds qui sont un peu trop larges et les jambes trop grosses.[35]

The Tahitian women Commerson describes are not only beautiful, but possess a seductive charm. The portrait of the female natives' beauty, combined with sparse dress and tattoos, vividly constructs an intriguing fantasy of the island woman for the European

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[34] O.H.K. Spate 82. "La Nouvelle Cythère", or "The New Cythera", is an allusion to the island that was believed to be the birthplace of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, in Greek mythology.

[35] Commerson 497. (Taillemite, Tome II). The description of the male natives is equally flattering : "Le soleil et l'eau brunit extrêmement les Sauvages presque tous beaux hommes. Les plus grands (dont on en a mesuré quelques uns) ont 6 pieds 4 à 5 pouces les autres d'une belle taille ordinaire, cheveux noirs, portant barbe au menton comme les Capucins, sourcils noirs, yeux à fleur la tête, dents petites et serrées les unes près des autres, blanche comme émail, enfin d'une figure très belle et celle des vieillards fort respectable" (496).

reader. In this description many of the praise-worthy qualities the Tahitian women possess are features that might be traditionally associated with European standards of beauty, such as a small mouth, small teeth, and a coquettish glance. These standards often were indicative of some internal quality as well, offering yet more proof that the seductive Tahitian may be virtuous, or more importantly, fit to be civilized.[36]

As shown in other voyagers' accounts of Tahiti, sensual and sexually liberated women are at the center of the island fantasy that Commerson depicts. In spite of this "liberation," it appears that a moral standard does exist. For instance, marriage is a binding contract and those who violate it may be punished by death:

> Il nous a paru qu'aussitôt qu'une fille est mariée ou du moins convennue de rester attachée à un homme, elle lui est fidelle et ne se soucie plus d'avoir commerce avec d'autres, y ayant à ce qu'on prétend la peine de mort portée contre les adultères.[37]

On the other hand, there are no sexual limitations for a young woman who is not attached:

> Les filles au contraire tant qu'elles restent telles sont très libres de faire tout ce qui leur plait, la jalousie n'etant point connue dans l'état du célibat.[38]

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[36] Emma Spary discusses the presence of physiognomy in eighteenth-century culture: "The relation of physical structure to moral qualities was not merely of interest to naturalists. Travel accounts, medical writings, discussions of gender differences and books on etiquette all evidenced similar concerns...Physiognomists could predict moral character from an observation of the facial structure; the examples given in physiognomical guides, however, clearly show that class, gender and context were highly important elements in assessing an individual's virtues and vices." "Political, natural and bodily economies", *Cultures of Natural History*, Eds. N. Jardine, J.A. Secord and E.C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 191.

[37] Commerson 497. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[38] Commerson 497. (Taillemite, Tome II).

This divergent view of Tahitian female sexuality is even more powerful than simply describing a liberated society with no moral conscience. In promoting the notion that the Tahitians have some measures of decency, they can not be automatically dismissed as incorrigible "savages" without further consideration.

There are other positive characteristics included in Commerson's description that further support the island's utopian qualities. For instance, the Tahitians do recognize one chief as an authority, and this individual appears to be a competent, peace-keeping figure who has their obedience and respect:

> Ils paroissent soumis à un premier chef qu'ils respectent plus qu'il ne semblent le craindre et ensuitte à d'autres chefs de la famille et cela d'une rivière à l'autre qui sont apparemment les bornes naturelles de chaque petit état. La paix et l'union paroissent toujours régner parmi eux.[39]

The image of the peaceful savage is also drawn through the natives' fear of the voyagers' weapons. According to what Commerson observed, they did not possess any sophisticated weaponry, outside of bow and arrow. When the Tahitians caught sight of the crew's artillery, they were frightened:

> Nos fusils et encore plus nos canons leur faisoient la plus grande peur. Lorsqu'on en tiroit, ils s'imaginoient qu'on vouloit tous les tuer. D'ailleurs très timides, ils trembloient et fuyoient lorsqu'ils s'apercevoient d'un moindre mouvement pour les menacer.[40]

Even in trading with the natives, Bougainville's crew found that they preferred agricultural tools, particularly hatchets, but shied away from knives and scissors which

[39] Commerson 497. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[40] Commerson 499. (Taillemite, Tome II).

appeared dangerous to them.[41] This is not to say that the Tahitians did not know any conflict. As will be seen in Bougainville's narrative in particular, there were wars between these natives and their neighboring tribes.[42] Commerson chose to focus, however, on the positive traits of the island, which was further elaborated in the next text that appeared on the topic.

Sur la découverte de la Nouvelle Isle de Cythère ou Taïti (1769)[43]

Taillemite's ensemble of Commerson's manuscripts surrounding his voyage to Tahiti, include a manuscript entitled: *Post-Scriptum sur l'isle de la Nouvelle-Cythère ou Tayti*[44] This 'Postscript' was essentially the same letter published under the title, "Sur la découverte de la Nouvelle Isle de Cythère ou Taïti." This letter was published for the first time in the *Mercure de France* in 1769 as a first person eyewitness description of the island. Drawing on much of the same information seen in the preceding manuscripts, Commerson creates a concise, complete, portrait of Tahiti and its natives. As a result, readers had access to the most significant observations of the island paradise, including information about the landscape, customs, food, and language. Liebersohn points out the propagandistic nature of the text, which was directed at the officials in charge of travel expeditions: "This journal had the tone of a government servant's report, designed to

[41] Commerson 499. (Taillemite, Tome II).

[42] Initially, Bougainville claimed that there were no wars on Tahiti, but later corrected this supposition in his narrative after observing civil wars among various inhabitants of the island.

[43] This text appeared as a letter in the November 1769 edition of the Mercure de France, pgs. 197-206. It was entitled: "*Lettre de M. Commerson, docteur en médecine, & médecin botaniste du Roi à l'Isle de France, le 25 Février 1769. Sur la découverte de la Nouvelle Isle de Cythère ou Taïti"*.

[44] This text figures in as part of ms. 1927 of Commerson's travel manuscripts. (Bideaux and Faessel 28). Taillemite describes manuscript 1927 as a "petit cahier de 9 pages de la main d'un copiste" (Tome I 135).

make a favorable impression on authorities at home in search of colonies and friendly ports of call."[45] This is evident in the tone of praise and awe Commerson uses to describe the island and the natives, in spite of any negative evidence to the contrary.[46]

In this "letter," Commerson attested to the reading public that his voyage with Bougainville indeed led him to a magical place that would be sure to capture their attention: "Parmi les choses singulières & qui doivent le plus intéresser le public, il n'y a rien de plus remarquable que la découverte d'une Isle nouvelle de la mer du Sud."[47] Commerson further elaborated that this island can be likened to a "utopia," along the lines of the famous one described by Thomas More, therefore warranting the name of "la nouvelle Cythère":[48] "Le nom que je lui destinois convenoit à un pays, le seul peut-être de la terre, où habitent de hommes sans vices, sans préjugés, sans besoins, sans dissensions."[49]

In Commerson's *Lettre*, the reader is also confronted with his account of sexual mores, which closely resembled that of Bougainville's: "La honte ni la pudeur n'exercent point leur tyrannie; la plus légère des gazes flotte toujours au gré du vent & des désirs. L'acte de créer son semblable est un acte de religion..."[50] The comparison between an

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[45] Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006) 25. It is important to note that this type of propaganda was especially critical to this voyage since it marks a colonial loss and that Bougainville was to reluctantly relinquish the Falkland Islands to the Spanish (87).

[46] Later in the text Commerson will mention that while it is true that the Tahitians stole from the crewmates, it was only another example of their virtue and lack of personal property laws, by which what they have belongs to anyone and everyone (*Lettre* 204).

[47] Commerson, *Lettre* 197.

[48] Commerson, *Lettre* 197-8.

[49] Commerson, *Lettre* 198. Lansdown asserts the importance of Commerson's 'Postcript', with which the *Lettre* shares its content, "was a key document of "noble savage" speculation in mid-eighteenth-century France" (81).

"act of procreation" and an "act of religion" was obviously troublesome for European readers because the event described above is regarded as a beautiful manifestation of "natural" human behavior rather than a sinful crime. It is also an act in which anyone, including outsiders, may participate:

> Tout étranger est admis à participer à ces heureux mystères; c'est même un des devoirs de l'hospitalité que de les y inviter, de sorte que le bon Taïtien, jouit sans cesse ou du sentiment de ses propres plaisirs, ou du spectacle de ceux des autres.[51]

Commerson explains that this is essentially the natural state of man, who is born good, but becomes more evil as a victim of civilization. Tahitians are good because, unlike the Europeans, they have not yet "dégénéré[s] en raison."[52]

However, Commerson is quick to note that the lack of European "raison" is not to be interpreted as a lack of intellectual capacity. He asserts: "Ce n'est point ici une horde de sauvages grossiers & stupides; tout chez ce peuple est marqué au coin de la plus parfaite intelligence."[53] After discussing the linguistic simplicity that renders their language more efficient and logical, Commerson offers testimony to the Tahitians' intelligence, citing their sophistication in the areas of navigation, construction, and planting.

Commerson confirms the value of iron in this society, supporting Wallis' initial descriptions of trade with the natives, often including nails and iron-cast tools. He also exploits the islander's fascination with the material as an opportunity to make a

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[50] Commerson, *Lettre* 198.

[51] Commerson, *Lettre* 198.

[52] Commerson, *Lettre* 199.

[53] Commerson, *Lettre* 199.

comparison with European society, which in this case favors Tahiti: "Avec quelle industrie ne traitoient-ils pas déjà le fer, ce métal si précieux pour eux qui ne le tournent qu'en des usages utiles, si vil pour nous qui en avons fait les instruments du désespoir & de la mort!"[54] This refers back to notion of the Tahitian native far removed from dangerous weaponry in the manuscript *Description...*

The reading public was also greeted with images of Europeans and Tahitians trading grains and teaching one another how to grow, harvest, and prepare these grains. For the Tahitians, this was bread, for the Europeans, they were given vegetable seeds. This was yet another opportunity for Commerson to reflect on the virtues of the island society, for he found that the natives avoided alcohol, or anything that was not solely a product of nature. He notes: "Hommes sages en tout, ils reçoivent fidellement des mains de la nature leurs alimens & leurs boissons; il n'y a chez eux ni liqueurs fermentées, ni pots à cuire..."[55] Commerson credited their natural diet for the Tahitians' handsome appearance, even adding his disappointment that the "specimen" that was brought back to France was truly a substandard representation of the island population.[56]

In addressing the question of the origin of the Tahitians' ancestors, Commerson wholeheartedly admits that he cannot be sure of their origin. However, he indicates that several of the words in their language have a Spanish root and recognizes that some of their ways of life could be European-influenced. Interestingly enough, the naturalist also offers a contradictory message regarding the idea that a society can be rendered virtuous

[54] Commerson, *Lettre* 200.

[55] Commerson, *Lettre* 201.

[56] Commerson, *Lettre* 201. Here he is referring to Ahutorou, who upon arriving in France, became infamous for his "uncivilized" and vulgar behavior, particularly toward women.

by returning to a "natural state". In analyzing the state of the colonies, Commerson posits: "Une société d'hommes une fois corrompue, ne peut se régénérer en entier. Les Colonies portent partout avec elles les vices de leur métropole."[57] In the case of Tahiti, Commerson clearly struggles in trying to represent Tahiti as untouched by civilization, meanwhile reporting the miscellaneous similarities between the island and Western culture. After proposing the possibility of a European shipwreck whose crewmembers influenced early Tahitians, Commerson lends credence to the idea that the Tahitians adopted these practices from a nearby island with which they had direct contact.[58]

Finally, Commerson dispels prior reports about the Tahitians' tendency toward theft. While admitting that the crews' property went missing on several occasions, he transforms these criminal acts into another positive aspect of the island society: no personal property. The scientist explains that one can't technically "steal" when the idea of ownership does not exist:

> Le Taïtien qui n'a rien à lui, qui offre & donne généreusement tout ce qu'il voit désirer, ne l'a point connue ce droit exclusif ; donc l'acte d'enlevement qu'il nous fait d'une chose qui excite sa curiosité, n'est, selon lui qu'un acte d'équité naturelle pas lequel il sçait nous faire exécuter ce qu'il exécuteroit lui-même.[59]

Commerson even goes so far as to call the Tahitian prince a "plaisant voleur," citing how the prince brought food and supplies to the crewmates, taking away the items he fancied from the ship.[60]

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[57] Commerson, *Lettre* 202.

[58] Commerson, *Lettre* 204. The Tahitian chief confirms that his people have made contact with this nearby island.

[59] Commerson, *Lettre* 204.

This alluring depiction of Tahiti was followed several years later by Bougainville's narrative. We will explore below how the voyager's travel notes ultimately result in another literary production that may have been considered mediocre in the scientific community, but compelling with the reading public.

Louis-Antoine de Bougainville

Louis-Antoine de Bougainville departed France in November of 1766 on a voyage that had the express purpose of handing over colonial acquisitions to Spain. He expanded the focus of this voyage, where he spent time in the South Seas and ultimately discovered Tahiti in April 1768.[61] Frost outlines the circumstances of his voyage that lasted until the spring of 1769, noting that the Minister of Marine had given Bougainville two ships, "the frigate *Boudeuse* and the storeship *Étoile,*" with which he would carry out his colonial mission and continue exploring in the Pacific with the naturalist, Commerson, aboard.[62] And while O. H. K. Spate explains that Bougainville's voyage ultimately had more literary than scientific value, there was also a political motive as well: "Bougainville's voyage was a move for French *revanche* after the loss of Canada, in the defence of which he had played a gallant part."[63]

Several editions of the narrative, *Voyage autour du monde*, were published beginning in 1771, whereas the travel log that Bougainville kept remained unpublished

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[60] Commerson, *Lettre* 204.

[61] John Dunmore, Trans. and Ed, *The Pacific Journal of Louis Antoine de Bougainville 1767-1768* (London: Hakluyt Society, 2002) ix.

[62] Frost 25.

[63] O. H. K. Spate 95. "Bougainville was to search for new lands suitable for colonisation, to open up a new route to China, and to seek spice-plants to be taken to Ile de France."

until the late 20th century. Dunmore discusses how the phenomenon of the Tahitian myth made Bougainville well-known to the reading public, but that he failed to gain recognition for his other more "scientific" achievements outside of the success of the literary *Voyage.*[64] Dunmore speculates that this may be a result of Bougainville's emphasis on the literary quality of his account and the lack of detailed data in the reports.[65]

The fact still remained, however, that the Tahitian myth did win over the French public, especially in light of the ongoing debates about the "noble savage" and the virtues of a natural state. O. H. K. Spate contends that the Nouvelle-Cythère was more than a geographical datum: "Bougainville's glowing account and Commerson's dithyramb made it a potent hallucinatory symbol, men and women displayed in the naked simplicity of their natural goodness."[66] Once again, as Lansdown points out, Bougainville was one voyager who had been exposed to the notable Enlightenment writings of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, to name a few.[67] Therefore his interpretations of what he observed were bound to be influenced by these ideas about humanity, religion, and nature.

Travel Journal

Bougainville documented his experiences in Tahiti in a travel journal that was unpublished until 1977. The journal consists of chronological entries that include mostly

[64] Dunmore lxxv.

[65] Dunmore lxx.

[66] O. H. K. Spate 98.

[67] Lansdown 66.

nautical and geographical information, that seem fairly scientific in tone apart from the interspersed ethnological observations, including praise of Tahiti. Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*, published in two segments in 1771 and 1772, was based on these travel notes. Therefore, the narrative, which will be discussed below, was the text the French public would view as the authentic, scientific travel journal.[68]

Bougainville first furnishes Tahiti with the title of the "New Cythera" in this travel journal: "These people breathe only rest and sensual pleasures. Venus is the goddess they worship. The mildness of the climate, the beauty of the scenery, the fertility of the soil everywhere watered by rivers and cascades, the pure air unspoiled by even those legions of insects that are the curse of hot countries, everything inspires sensual pleasure. And so I have named it New Cythera [Nouvelle Cythère]..."[69]

One of the main criteria Bougainville relies on for this comparison is the difference in sexual mores between the Tahitians and the French, a topic that he will exploit in both the journal and the narrative. In the journal, he shows that intimate acts among the inhabitants of Tahiti are not subject to European moral standards. One example of this Bougainville gives is the lack of stigma associated with a young girl losing her virginity: "There is no question of mysteries or secret ceremonies in its worship: it is celebrated in public and one cannot describe the happiness of these people every time they witness the raptures of an intertwined couple whose sighs are the only

[68] Dunmore explains that Bougainville's "Pacific voyage of 1767-1768 lay unpublished in the Archives Nationales in Paris until 1977". They were published by the Archives' chief Conservator, Étienne Taillemite. (Preface ix).

[69] Bougainville, Dunmore 63.

offering that is pleasing to the god. Each moment of enjoyment is a festive occasion for this nation."[70]

Another key component in identifying Tahiti as an island paradise is the scenery itself, both the island's natural beauty and the handsome natives that inhabit it. In concluding his section on Tahiti, Bougainville claims: "I cannot leave this fortunate island without praising it once more. Nature has placed it in the finest climate in the world, embellished it with the most attractive scenery, enriched it with all her gifts, filled it with handsome, tall and well-built inhabitants."[71]

Voyage autour du monde (1771)

In *Voyage,* the paradisiacal elements highlighted in his travel account are further exploited. Despite the fact that Bougainville does correct some of his erroneous initial impressions, the constraints of scientific accuracy are loosened in favor of the seductive account of island life, the latter of which interested readers most. The form of the text was also significant to how it was received. Dunmore discusses several factors that worked against the success of the narrative in the context of the scientific realm. Among them, he finds that the style Bougainville chose to relay his experiences in *Voyage* may also have been a detriment to his reputation. Dunmore explains that the narrative was written to appeal to a varied audience, which in turn, diminished its scientific credibility:

> The lack of navigational details, of precise latitudes and longitudes, which guaranteed that his narrative would flow and captivate the reader, was criticized

[70] Bougainville, Dunmore 73.

[71] Bougainville, Dunmore 72.

by the savants, and even seen as some as evidence that his claim to have made new discoveries in the South Seas was suspect.[72]

Whatever the response of scientists to the narrative, the general reading public was fascinated with island civilization, which was exactly what Bougainville offered them for the most part. In fact, the reader sees that much of Bougainville's description of Tahiti depicts it as a mythological paradise. This is not to say he doesn't offer evidence of some negative aspects of their civilization. War, theft, social hierarchy, and "bizarre" burial rituals for the dead are among some of the undesirable elements found in Tahiti. In addition, after communicating with the native who came to France, Aotourou, he was able to interpret and correct some of his previous naive visions of Tahiti.[73] However, Bougainville's portrayal of pleasure and paradise in Tahiti, particularly in the sexual domain, was undoubtedly the most provocative and memorable element for the reading public.

He retains the image of the utopian "Nouvelle Cythère" in his narrative, particularly in the example of the young girl who comes aboard: "La jeune fille laissa tomber négligemment une pagne qui la couvrait et parut aux yeux de tous, telle que Vénus se fit voir au berger phrygien. Elle en avait la forme céleste." [74]

In *Voyage*, Bougainville elaborates on the topic of virginity, but with a twist that would intrigue an eighteenth-century reader. He cited that virginity has no relevance to marriage suitability in Tahiti: "Une fille n'éprouve à cet égard aucune gêne; tout l'invite à

[72] Dunmore lxx-lxxi.

[73] Bougainville returned to France with Aotourou, a Tahitian, who on his own free will pleaded to join the voyage. Dunmore comments that his stay in Paris contributes to the sensation of Tahiti: "It is fair to say that New Cythera, together with the presence of Ahutoru in Paris, acquired an importance that was somewhat out of proportion" (lxxv).

[74] Bougainville, *Voyage* 253.

suivre le penchant de son coeur ou la loi de ses sens, et l'applaudissements publics honorent sa défaite. Il ne semble pas que le grand nombre d'amants passagers qu'elle peut avoir eu l'empêche de trouver ensuite un mari."[75] These observations would certainly be considered outrageous by European mores which condemned such conduct. Examples such as these will provoke Diderot to consider the possibility of sexual freedom as a characteristic of "natural man" in his *Supplément*.[76]

The physical descriptions of Tahiti and its inhabitants are equally powerful in creating images of fantasy in *Voyage*. Building on what he initially revealed in his *Journal,* Bougainville goes a step further and emphasizes the seductive side of this civilization with an alluring image of the customary dress: "On voit souvent les Taitiens nus, sans autre vêtement qu'une ceinture qui leur couvre les parties naturelles. Cependant les principaux s'enveloppent ordinairement dans une grande pièce d'étoffe qu'ils laissent tomber jusqu'aux genoux. C'est aussi là le seul habillement des femmes, et elles savent l'arranger avec assez d'art pour rendre ce simple ajustement susceptible de coquetterie."[77] While Bougainville may have been relating what he had seen in Tahiti, he undeniably succeeded in presenting the details of his findings in an appealing fashion.

Conclusion: What was the danger of eyewitnesses "supplementing" Tahiti?

It is possible through a study of both travel accounts and travel narratives during this period to highlight some of the significant themes of this literature that made it so

[75] Bougainville *Voyage* 258.

[76] In *Nous et les autres*, Todorov proposes: "Ce que cherche Diderot, c'est à fonder le comportement humain; et il décide de s'appuyer sur la "nature", à savoir ce qui constitue l'homme comme tel (33)". *Nous et les autres: La réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).

[77] Bougainville *Voyage* 253.

enticing to the eighteenth-century reader. Perhaps the most sensational was the notion of the "noble savage," as outlined by Rousseau, which emphasized the virtuous characteristics of man who is not tainted by civilization and modernity, and lent itself well to a description of island natives. This topos that permeated the discourse of each of these travel texts did incite the eighteenth century reader to consider the debates on man and civilization, but the question still remained: To what extent was the "scientific" goal of these explorations compromised?

The "eyewitness" supplement, as exemplified here by Commerson, gave credibility to the anthropological and ethical observations surrounding Tahiti to make it "work" as an island utopia. The academies recognized that there was very little scientific contribution in the way of data about longitudes and latitudes, etc. In spite of this, the reading public was presented with a wealth of speculation about the new discovery that closely resembled fact in that a naturalist was willing to back up hearsay with his own awe-struck account. In the end, the literary tradition of Tahiti leaves behind a legacy that may not be rich in scientific value, but rather "perceived" scientific value. More valuable than science, however, was the sensational and persuasive "myth" of Tahiti, which served to spark public interest in the exploratory voyages and help attain the underlying goal of winning support for colonial expansion.

CHAPTER II

THE "FICTIONAL NARRATTIVE SUPPLEMENT": BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE'S *PAUL ET VIRGINIE*

Although he is best known for his fictional narrative masterpiece, *Paul et Virginie*, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre preceded this work with a travel journal based on his voyages to the Île de France during 1768-1770.[78] In his letters and journal entries, he outlines his experiences while occupying a post as an officier du Roi to the Gouverneur in what is present-day Mauritius.[79] The polemically frank account is an exercise in realistic reporting, as Bernardin outlines the good and bad characteristics of the island. This is a distinct rupture from the over-idealized, sensationalized accounts that we see in the portraits of island life in Tahiti created by his contemporaries. Jean-Michel Racault cites:

> Il en a donné une relation fidèle dans le *Voyage à l'île de France* de 1773, non pas oeuvre de fiction, mais scrupuleuse description botanique, zoologique et géographique doublée d'un reportage lucide, quoique dépourvu d'aménité, sur la société insulaire. L'ouvrage constitue certainement le meilleur témoignage

[78] Jean-Michel Racault indicates in his article, « De l'Île réelle à l'île mythique: Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et l'Île de France », that « Avant de se constituer en mythe romanesque, l'île a d'abord été une réalité observée : Bernardin a effectué un séjour d'un peu plus deux ans à l'île de France (du 14 juillet 1768 au 9 novembre 1770) suivi d'une escale beaucoup plus brève à l'île Bourbon (du 21 novembre au 21 décembre 1770) » (79). *L'Ile Territoire Mythique: Etudes rassemblées par François Moureau* Littérature des Voyages III Ouvrage publié avec le concours du C.N.R.S. (Paris : Amateurs de Livres, 1989).

[79] Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Nostalgies Tropicales: Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et les littératures francophones de l'Océan indien," *Études littéraires* 31.2 (1999): 41.

d'ensemble dont disposent les historiens sur l'île de France aux débuts de l'administration royale.[80]

The detail and objectivity of the observations found in *Voyage* are perhaps what still earn it a well-deserved place today in the literary history of Mauritius. It is also important to consider that Bernardin's *Voyage*, and later *Paul et Virginie* were early additions to the island's francophone publication history, and therefore earned much recognition and scrutiny on that basis alone.[81]

Paul et Virginie was published in 1788 to a popular reception.[82] It was originally included as volume 4 of the third edition of Bernardin's philosophical series *Etudes de la Nature*.[83] Even today, Bernardin's fictional narrative is considered to be an integral part of the Mauritius's literary tradition, and has enjoyed great success both on the island and abroad. *Paul et Virginie* has been translated many times into the island's different languages, including Hindi in the 1960's.[84] It is also widely recognized that this narrative evolved from Bernardin's voyages to Mauritius, which has in turn provoked many comparisons between *Paul et Virginie* and Bernardin's travel account.[85] Generally

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[80] Racault, « De l'Île réelle » 79-80.

[81] Joubert indicates, « Une activité littéraire en français naît à Maurice (encore l'île de France) à l'extrême fin du XVIIIe siècle, favorisée par la conjonction de divers facteurs : introduction de l'imprimerie, création de sociétés d'écrivains et d'intellectuels, publications en Europe de textes sur Maurice, écrits par des voyageurs, qui suscitent les réactions parfois vives de leurs lecteurs mauriciens... ».UREF (Universités Francophones) *Histoire littéraire de la francophonie : Littératures de l'Océan Indien*. Jean-Louis Joubert avec la collaboration de : Jean-Irénée Ramiandrasoa (Vanves : EDICEF, 1991) 105-106.

[82] Lüsebrink 44.

[83] Malcolm Cook, "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie*: 'Premier essai autographe de la conversation de Paul et du Vieillard," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9 (1997): 155.

[84] Joubert 105.

[85] Racault discusses the relationship between the two texts, "L'image "réaliste" et "référentielle" de l'île de France est pleinement conforme aux données de l'observation vécue consignées dans le *Voyage*, dont

speaking, however, in spite of the parallels between these works, *Paul et Virginie* was, and still is, more well known and appreciated than *Voyage à l'île de France* by reading audiences of yesterday and today.

While the text of *Voyage* may not have been a literary sensation for the reading public, it inspired several other noteworthy accounts of the Île de France both during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite what is known about how other voyagers influenced Bernardin's travel journal, there is indeed something ingenious about the meticulous and frank account of Mauritius.[86] Joubert argues, "Son récit de voyage, sous forme de lettres, trouve un ton qui sera pour longtemps le modèle de l'exotisme littéraire: vibration et vivacité de l'écriture, précision des descriptions (un exotisme non vaporeux!), sens des paysages...".[87] It is important to point out, however, that this "precision" of his descriptions also extends to the inhabitants of the island and their practices. Bernardin even goes as far as to embed controversial commentaries on slavery in innocuous descriptions of indigenous plants and marine life.

Bernardin's merging of social commentary with geographical and anthropological descriptions is arguably deliberate, as it is clear that the voyager anticipated some type of backlash against the inclusion of the unsavory elements of colonial life. In his "Avant-

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Bernardin n'hésite pas à réutiliser certains éléments descriptifs, voire à développer, en les transposant, des amorces de récits" (85).

[86] One element that reflects the author's originality in *Voyage* according to Édouard Guitton is his casual use of sea-faring terms that adds to the 'illusion' of veracity, "L'auteur ne cherche point à paraître savant et employant un jargon inaccessible au profane. Un souci d'authenticité le pousse à montrer l'idiome des gens de mer dans sa double nature technique et populaire: on y trouve des mots rares, voire compliqués, des tournures spéciales, un vocabulaire et une syntaxte particuliers, mais l'inverse d'un langage académique." "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre écrivain maritime du *Voyage à l'Île de France* à *Paul et Virginie*," *Littérature des Voyages II: La Mer au Siècle des Encyclopédistes; Actes recueillis et présentés par Jean Balcou* (Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1987) 485-486. This implies that Bernardin consciously chose his objective strategy in order to attract his reader, further reinforcing the proposition to come that he was forced to adopt another approach when this one didn't win him praise from the reading public as he may have hoped.

[87] Joubert 108.

Propos," Bernardin addresses the potential for criticism of the text, which is essentially a combination of a journal describing the voyage to the Île de France, and a series of letters that he wrote to his friends about what he observed on Mauritius. He first outlines the plan that he followed in describing the physical attributes of the island landscape and climate:

> Voici le plan que j'ai suivi. Je commence par les plantes et les animaux naturels à chaque pays. J'en décris le climat et le sol tel qu'il était sortant des mains de la nature. Un paysage est le fond du tableau de la vie humaine.[88]

These descriptions include such categories as "Observations nautiques" (Lettre V) and "Des animaux naturels à l'île de France" (Lettre IX). The letters, and similar ones that discuss the natural surroundings, are comprehensive, well-written and reflect the critical tone of a careful observer reporting his findings to the homeland. [89] While Bernardin praises what is found to be extraordinary, the voyager does not hide his lack of enthusiasm for the unimpressive aspects, including parrots of "une beauté médiocre" and an abundant rat population.[90]

This candor is perhaps best witnessed, however, in the descriptions of the island's inhabitants, where again, depicting the island's virtues and vices in a realistic light is paramount to delivering a contrived, popular account. For these reasons, Bernardin continues to explain in the *Plan* that he is acutely aware of the potential reception of the text as a social satire:

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[88] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, "*Voyage à l'île de France*," *Ile de France: Voyages et Controverses* (Paris: Éditions AlmA,1996) 11.

[89] Bernardin, *Voyage*, 47;59.

[90] Bernardin, *Voyage*, 60. Bernardin even goes as far to attribute the rat population to European visitors to the island: "Ils ressemblent à nos rats d'Europe. Peut-être y ont-ils été apportés par nos vaisseaux."

> Je passe ensuite aux caractères et aux moeurs des habitants. On trouvera, peut-être, que j'ai fait une satire. Je puis protester, qu'en parlant des hommes, j'ai dit le bien avec facilité et le mal avec indulgence.[91]

One could argue that this was the perspective that was the greatest detriment to the journal's reception, further supported by the later success of *Paul et Virginie* which incorporates the utopian elements of his voyage to Mauritius with a narrative depicting colonial island life.[92] Robinson contends that the focus on accuracy in *Voyage*'s descriptions detracted from the popularity of the travel account. He explains that while Bernardin sought recognition for his text, it fell short because of its competition with other more "literary" travel texts:

> Bernardin hoped, with the help of this text, to win the favour of the French government. It was a vain hope, precisely because his objective observations differed so markedly from the exaggeration and embroidery of most previous 'extraordinary voyages'.[93]

Robinson is likely making reference here to the British and French accounts of Tahiti that were published in the late 1760's through the 1770's, a legacy that is discussed in greater detail in the first chapter of this project. The voyagers who wrote these accounts succeeded in masking the negative aspects of their experiences with unbelievable tales of

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[91] Bernardin, *Voyage*, 11.

[92] Yves Bénot, *Voyage à l'île de France : Un officier du roi à l'île Maurice 1768-1770* Introduction et notes. (Paris : La Découverte/Maspero, 1983) 7. Bénot cites that after *Voyage*, Saint-Pierre « was not a success-he wouldn't be until 1784 with Etudes sur la nature (I, II, III) and even more with Paul et Virginie in 1778. This will not reappear until 1818 in volumes I and II after the death of the author » (7).

[93] Robinson, Philip. *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: Paul et Virginie*. Critical Guides to French Texts. (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd., 1986) 13-14.

Tahitian sexual mores that shocked and fascinated the reading public.[94] Conversely, Robinson points out that Bernardin allowed many of the negative details of his island experience to be included in *Voyage*, particularly those pertaining to slavery. He even proposes that *Voyage* "has considerable merit and importance as a piece of travel writing and as an anti-slavery tract."[95]

Despite the acknowledgement of the journal's "importance as a piece of travel writing", it was evident that *Voyage* was a disappointment for Bernardin. This perceived failure had a discernable effect on the motives and methods of how Bernardin constructed his "supplement" to the travel journal, which became *Paul et Virginie*. In studying these two texts, one may conclude that as an author, Bernardin employed the strategy of "supplementing" in a deliberate manner in order to link the works. Moreover, whether it was to elaborate on scientific findings, or to continue a debate, after studying more of Bernardin's works, it is clear that the connection between *Voyage* and *Paul et Virginie* was not an isolated incident, but is also prevalent in subsequent works, such as *La Chaumière indienne* in 1790. In fact, we will see in the Avant-Propos of *La Chaumière indienne* that Bernardin outwardly reveals his intention to follow up his travel journal:

> Voici un petit conte indien qui renferme plus de vérités que bien des histoires. Je l'avais destiné à augmenter la relation d'un voyage à l'Ile de France, publiée en 1773, et que je me propose de faire réimprimer avec des additions.[96]

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[94] I make allusion here to accounts by Cook, Bougainville, Commerson, and even Diderot in his *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, to name a few.

[95] Robinson 13-14.

[96] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *La Chaumière indienne* (Paris: Lefèvre, 1828)1.

Another often noted example of Bernardin's "supplementing" is the placement of *Paul et Virginie* in the *Etudes*, which may have had the goal of providing a more readable version of the philosophic notions Bernardin constructs in these volumes. Malcolm Cook argues that**,** "The *Etudes* were not simply a convenient vehicle on which the novel could ride; the novel is very much an exemplification of the ideas expressed in *Etudes*...".[97] For instance, Bernardin includes a short chapter of the *Études* entitled "Paul et Virginie," in which the reader is given a short glimpse of the two main characters of his novel. In the several pages where Bernardin recounts the tales of the children's goodwill in offering slaves food and dancing to lift their spirits, the author concludes that the only philosophy Paul and Virginie know is "faire du bien à tout le monde, & de se résigner à la volonté de Dieu."[98] When the story of the two children is later expanded into a novel that explored the same themes, it contained less philosophical debate and even greater plot detail, including a tragic denouement that appealed to the reading masses. This is undoubtedly a link that *Voyage* and *Paul et Virginie* share as well where, once again, Bernardin's critical views of European society and slavery are stripped away in the novel in favor of the fictional love story.

In the case of why Bernardin would "supplement" *Voyage*, the question of motive is fairly straightforward. One may clearly argue that a fictional travel narrative such as *Paul et Virginie* has a primary goal of attracting a reading public. Fiction was considered

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[97] Malcolm Cook, "Philosophy and Method in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*," *The Enterprise of Enlightenment: A Tribute to David Williams from his Friends* (2004) 106.

[98] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Études de la Nature*: Abrégé des oeuvres de Jacques-Henri-Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (London: Baylis, 1799) 116. Bernardin also uses the virtuous examples of Paul and Virginie as a foil for European shortcomings: "Vous autres Européens, dont l'esprit se remplit, dès l'enfance, de tant de préjugés contraires au bonheur, vous ne pouvez concevoir que la nature puisse donner tant de lumières & de plaisirs. Votre ame, circonscrite dans une petite sphère de connoissances humaines, atteint bientôt le terme de ses jouissances artificielles; mais la nature & le coeur sont inépuisables" (115-116).

to be a powerful tool of persuasion in pre-revolutionary France as a means of creating an "ideal reality" through the transformation of mundane facts into a creative representation that will entice the reader.[99] Furthermore, a voyager who has published a travel account with a somewhat disappointing reception may be inclined to think that by attracting readers to a fictional narrative about travels to a faraway island by virtue of a popular narrative, they may become interested in other details of the voyage. This, in turn, renews interest in the former work and solidifies the voyager's importance as having encountered a spectacular locale that will be a contribution to the genre of travel writing and above all, to the history of exploration in general. In the case of *Paul et Virginie*, the fictional love story and contrived pastoral descriptions of life on Mauritius were instrumental in generating interest about Bernardin's discoveries on the island, including his work in *Voyage*.

Identifying the method of how the author makes the transition from travel journal to popular narrative is somewhat more complex. The Enlightenment reader wanted to participate in the ongoing political and cultural debates surrounding travel, but if it was possible to gain the pertinent information from a more accessible, less controversial, and more sensational source, this was certainly preferable to a text that recounted solely the "business" of voyage.[100] There are stock themes that are exploited in this genre of travel narrative, which will be explored below: island utopias, sentimental love stories,

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[99] Malcolm Cook further explores the relationship between reality and representation in his *Fictional France: Social Reality in the French Novel, 1775-1800* (Oxford: Berg, 1993). He argues: "The difficulty of balance between representation of a dull and basic reality is extreme, and many authors will reach some compromise. The real world is the starting-point for the great majority of contemporary authors, and the poet/novelist will attempt to render it in a poetic transformation" (4).

[100] In his article "Philosophy and Method...", Malcolm Cook argues that "the major reason for the novel's outstanding success was the author's ability to appreciate the demands of a readership which sought a coherent philosophical narrative and also the pleasure derived from a fiction that was, at the same time, both serious and poetic" (95).

classifications of nature, and colonial debates.[101] In some of these cases, Bernardin has added a new motif to his narrative, or has embellished on an existing one. In others, he has chosen to leave out a controversial or unpleasant aspect of his travel account, or at the very least, shift the focus of the story away from their importance.

Racault explains that with *Paul et Virginie*, Saint-Pierre successfully created an enticing island paradise in a similar tradition to those of his contemporaries by combining this popular theme with the veritable facts of his prior voyage.[102] Malcolm Cook cites the evidence that Bougainville even visited Mauritius during Bernardin's stay, further indicating outside influences from the same literary tradition.[103] What Bernardin creates is a narrative travel "supplement," where his scientific observations about the island and its inhabitants are recast in the form of a fictional narrative that embraces the utopian qualities of nature. This new representation of old material is well-received since it speaks to the current literary vogue, and as Cook indicates, is one that "can be explained, to some extent, by the curiosity excited by a sequence of travellers on round-the-world voyages."[104] However, the innovation of this text largely lies in the author's first-hand

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[101] Chateaubriand's *Atala* will be discussed later in the chapter as one such work that employs the stock motif of a sentimental love story.

[102] Racault discusses the transition from *journal du voyage* to narrative fiction: "Tout en puisant abondamment dans la documentation accumulée pour la rédaction du *Voyage*, Bernardin s'abandonne aux résonances imaginaires du thème insulaire et ce faisant, à bien des égards en inverse le sens: l'île devient paradis préservé de l'enfance, terre du profusion et d'innocence placée sous la tutelle d'une nature-providence maternelle" (80).

[103] Malcolm Cook, "Bougainville and One Noble Savage: Two Manuscript Texts of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre," *The Modern Language Review* 89 (1994): 842. Cook stresses that, "What has, until now, never been fully appreciated is that he met Bougainville when the great mariner stopped in the Ile de France for replenishment of stocks and for repairs. Bernardin was able to study the Tahitian who Bougainville was taking back to Paris and to write a description of him, on the paper on which he was writing a draft for the *Voyage à l'Île de France* and which was not included in the final version."

[104] Cook, "Bougainville and One Noble Savage..." 844. In this same article, Cook understands the evolution from Bernardin's travel journal to his fictional narrative as, "an experimental laboratory which would,

knowledge of the setting for his narrative, and his creative means of incorporating it. Robinson argues:

> Bernardin is original in taking the setting for his fiction from his own personal observations during a stay on Mauritius (then the Île de France) between 1768 and 1770, and in not embellishing it with fanciful and extraordinary detail. Memory may add lustre to his scenes, as compared, say, to his *Voyage à l'Île de France*, but his eyes have beheld what his pen describes.[105]

Therefore, Bernardin offers a more reliable narrative because it is based on first-hand observations made while visiting the island.

The relationship between what Bernardin has seen and what he chooses to recount is evident in several key moments of the plot of *Paul et Virginie* that have an identifiable factual basis in *Voyage*. For instance, the slave mistreatment witnessed by Paul and Virginie, which will be discussed in detail later, found its origins in the highly controversial section, "Des Nègres," in the travel journal. And while the deplorability of the slave's condition is not explored at great length in the narrative, the small portion of the novel that does depict slave life is rich, provocative, and based on Bernardin's experience. This example proposes one preliminary conclusion: the genre of a travel narrative "supplement" may involve an element of transforming fact into fiction on the part of the author, but the text will ultimately retain the candor of what was initially observed in reality. Even voyagers who later write about their works from a subjective

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eventually, provide the author with the precision and skill which was required to produce a living landscape for his young fictional creations" (854).

[105] Robinson 12.

standpoint, choosing which aspects they will present and how, will not be able to escape this "truth trap."

In analyzing the transition between the original source*, Voyage à l'Île de France,* and narrative supplement, *Paul et Virginie*, it will be crucial to consider what Saint-Pierre has decided to omit from, or add to, the latter. It is also significant to highlight which aspects of Bernardin's observations remain untouched from the journal to the narrative, even if the literary function of these aspects may be different. For example, in *Paul et Virginie*, Saint-Pierre exploits the paradisiacal motifs from previous accounts of island "utopias" and invents a love story between Paul and Virginie based on "natural," virtuous love. He also softens his description of the anti-colonial sentiment and the harsh living conditions in Mauritius, particularly concerning the interactions between black and white inhabitants.[106] The reader will notice, however, that faithful representations of the island flora and fauna can be found in both accounts.

Aside from adding or deleting material, another key strategy that Bernardin exploits in order to make the transition between his travel journal and his narrative is a change in the style of narration. The journal is a first person account of what Bernardin sees and encounters on Mauritius, whereas the fiction is predominately a third person narration of an old man who tells the story of the two families living on the island. This is significant because in the journal, Bernardin is held more accountable for what he has chosen to report. The travel account reflects an editorial tone and is overtly biased against the white inhabitants of the colony and French social mores, positioning it to be more

[106] It may be noted, however, that despite the omission of explicit anti-colonial discourse, a colonial critique is ever-present in *Paul et Virginie*. This further elucidates the visible link between culture and politics that the supplement weaves. In contrast to his travel journal, Saint-Pierre's observations are widely read and well-received in *Paul et Virginie* when the debate on slavery is personified as a harmless, wayward slave in the example to follow.

readily criticized by readers. In *Paul et Virginie*, Bernardin's shift to a third person narrator alleviates some of the author's responsibility, since it gives the illusion that the events of the story, good and bad, are experiences that someone else is reporting.

Additions: Terrestrial Paradise and the Arcadian Myth in Paul et Virginie

In considering the themes of paradise and utopia, the question persists: How did an account with so much "reality" succeed in making its readers forget the vices in favor of the virtues? Bernardins's narrative "supplement" incorporates several factors that may have contributed to the new interest in a story about this same island, including the potential "mapping" of a terrestrial paradise, a valorization of nature, and a tragic denouement that appealed to the literary trend of sentimentality.

Some of the most significant additions seen in Bernardin's narrative are the well-known "Edenistic" characteristics that have been discussed prolifically in contemporary literature and have elicited many comparisons between the characters of Paul and Virginie and Adam and Eve. From a religious standpoint, recreating a "Garden of Eden" on Mauritius in *Paul et Virginie* appealed to one of the greatest cartographic challenges, putting Eden on a map. This challenge rested largely on the task of locating the divine in the terrestrial, or as Scafi explains, "mapping a place on earth but not of earth."[107] This held a significant religious implication: "In accepting the cartographic paradox of putting Eden on a map of the world, the map maker was both allowing people to 'see' Paradise and thereby offering direct evidence of scriptural revelation, thus assisting their entry into

[107] Alessandro Scafi, "Mapping Eden: Cartographies of the Earthly Paradise," *Mappings*. Ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion,1999) 56.

Paradise itself."[108] This rationale does not seem too far off from Bernardin's beliefs in Providence, and it was an attractive tool for winning the interest of the reader, as the literary epoch reflected a fascination for utopias and physical proof of a "perfect" state of nature. [109] This popular topos of terrestrial paradise was largely fueled by mid to late century maritime expeditions, where voyagers thought to have found proof of its existence in the uncivilized locales and virtuous natives who appeared to be untainted by modernity.

In order to understand how terrestrial paradise may be arbitrarily located on an island in the Indian Ocean, it is first important to explore further the link between nature and religion for Bernardin. Malcolm Cook reasons: "In Bernardin's philosophy the desire for happiness comes from nature, which, in turn, offers the means of satisfying the desire. In Bernardin's philosophy, it is God who guarantees the harmony of nature and who links natural phenomena in a harmonious chain."[110] This influence is evident in how Bernardin conceives of the spiritual quality of the nature he has observed in his first account of L'île de France. In his Avant-Propos, he remarks: "J'ai cru y voir les caractères sensibles d'une providence; et j'en ai parlé, non comme d'un système qui amuse mon esprit, mais comme d'un sentiment dont mon coeur est plein".[111]

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[108] Scafi 53.

[109] R.A. Francis considers "Providentialism" to be *Paul et Virginie*'s second overarching theme: "Though no orthodox Christian, Bernardin shared with his friend and mentor Rousseau a warm emotional deism, seeing God manifest in nature and believing in a Providence which has ordered everything in man's best interests." "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's 'Paul et Virginie' and the Failure of the Ideal State in the Eighteenth-Century French Novel," *Nottingham French Studies* 13.2 (1974): 51-52.

[110] Cook, "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre..." 155.

[111] Bernardin, *Voyage*, 12.

The themes of Providence and terrestrial paradise were even more pronounced in *Paul et Virginie*. The main way that these were manifested are in the island's ability to render virtuous the societal outcasts and mainland sinners by means of an insular rebirth. Virginia's mother, Mme de la Tour, comes to the Île de France after her marriage to a man of lower class excludes her from her family's fortune. Having eschewed social mores and her family's wishes, she arrives on the island with the necessity to start over, only to lose her husband shortly thereafter while he is on a trip to Madagascar. Her island existence, devoid of the accusations of libertinage in her former society, transforms her into a mother fit to bear the virtuous Virginia, a girl who would have been sure never to encounter strife or adversity in her own life had she not left her island utopia to pick an apple from the tree of knowledge. Furthermore, we learn at the beginning that even after the death of her husband, Mme de la Tour does not seek other suitors, a discussion that further enhances the virtuous portrait Bernardin is trying to depict: "Ne voulant rien solliciter auprès d'aucun homme après la mort de celui qu'elle avait uniquement aimé, son malheur lui donna du courage."[112] Instead, Mme de la Tour is content to lead a chaste lifestyle in the platonic company of Marguerite, and their children and servants.

It can not be overlooked, however, that Bernardin sets up his fictional narrative as a utopia, only to play out its demise. Wendy Knepper hypothesizes why this "fall" is inevitable, "The utopia remains openly engaged in a dialogue with both home and colonial imperatives. Indeed, one might argue that the utopia fails because its inhabitants fail to stop communicating and translating the culture of home into a more idealized

[112] Bernardin, *P & V* 112.

place. They remain colonized but apart-exiles who idealize their marginalized status."[113] In other words, in spite of the "transformations" that the two mothers have made, the fact remains that they did formerly reside in France, and therefore have already experienced the social ills from which they are hoping to escape on Mauritius. As a result, neither Marguerite nor Mme de la Tour will ever truly be able to start over again tabula rasa[114]

This characteristic of Bernardin's utopia is a shrewd literary manipulation in that he manages to execute his critique of mainland France through the mothers and their decisions that sway the fate of their children. In one instance, Paul sadly muses with "Le Vieillard" about why he has not received word from Virginie in France in over eight months, and then endearingly and naively speculates on how to win her back:

> Elle est riche; je suis pauvre: elle m'a oublié. J'ai envie de m'embarquer: j'irai en France, j'y servirai le roi, j'y ferai fortune; et la grand-tante de mademoiselle de la Tour me donnera sa petite-nièce en mariage, quand je serai devenu un grand seigneur.[115]

When "Le Vieillard" questions Paul as to where he got these notions about "la naissance" and social standing, Paul replies, "Ma mère me l'a dit; car pour moi je ne sais ce que c'est que la naissance."[116] In strategically placing the responsibility with the mothers for the traces of social inequality that may be present among the two families, the imperfections

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[113] Wendy Knepper, "Translation Theory, Utopia, and Utopianism in *Paul et Virginie, Aguirre: Wrath of God, Candide* and *New Atlantis*," *Dalhousie French Studies* 37 (1996): 42.

[114] Francis, 55. This tension between the two "homes" of France and the Île de France is best expressed by the distinction R.A. Francis makes between Arcadia and Utopia. He explains that the struggle evolves from how Paul and Virginie's mothers look to create an Arcadian environment for their children despite the island's vices and more importantly, despite their role as "utopians" who have witnessed corruption and have fled to an ideal state.

[115] Bernardin, *P & V* 198.

[116] Bernardin, *P & V* 199.

found in Bernardin's "ideal state" do not distract the interest of the reader significantly. This is because the focus of the plot rests on the tragic love story between Paul and Virginie who remain, for the most part, innocently unaware of this sub-dialogue.

Additions: The Tradition of "Sensibilité" in Paul et Virginie

Perhaps the biggest leap from *Voyage* to *Paul et Virginie* was the addition of the sentimental love story between Paul and Virginie. This feature, which was an entirely new addition to the fictional narrative "supplement," was arguably what rendered it exponentially more popular than its predecessor. The exotic local, the excess of virtue, and the tragic denouement created a literary recipe that appealed to eighteenth-century sensibilities. In a preface to the 1820 edition of *Paul et Virginie*, Louis Aimé-Martin brings to light Bernardin's success in establishing a credible illusion with his readers that prompted them to empathize with the protagonists of the narrative:[117]

> Sans doute la plupart de ces [des] lecteurs ne s'informent guère si cette délicieuse pastorale est l'ouvrage d'un grand philosophe, ou d'un politique habile ; ils ne se réfléchissent pas, ils pleurent. Dès-lors la fiction s'évanouit, et le livre n'est plus pour eux qu'une histoire véritable. C'est ainsi que tous les personnages de *Paul et Virginie* deviennent des êtres réels que l'on chérit, dont on partage les affections.[118]

[117] According to Malcolm Cook, Aimé-Martin was Bernardin's secretary and friend, whose work on the writer's manuscripts continued posthumously. (Aimé-Martin's efforts will later come under attack, as there is question to whether or not he maintained the integrity of Bernardin's manuscripts or inserted his own material.) Malcolm Cook, *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: A Life of Culture* (London: LEGENDA, 2006) 1-2.

[118] L. Aimé-Martin, Paul et Virginie *par Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, précédé d'une NOTICE INÉDITE SUR SA VIE, écrite par lui-même* (Paris: Werdet et Lequien Fils, 1829) II-III.

The new additions to the plot, namely the story of Paul and Virginie, allowed readers to become more personally invested in the text, rendering the story "real-life". This reading experience contrasts with *Voyage*, where Bernardin's own voice and editorial commentary dominate the account, sealing its fate as *his* exclusive reality.

The story of *Paul et Virginie* opens with a European narrator who offers a brief description of the landscape, even motioning to the two small vacant huts that had belonged to Marguerite and Mme de la Tour. After his idyllic remarks about the island, he makes mention of the solemn peacefulness of his surroundings, and invoking Rousseau, the narrator claims: "J'aimais me rendre dans ce lieu où l'on jouit à la fois d'une vue immense et d'une solitude profonde".[119] It is in these opening pages of the narrator's description that Bernardin's presence in the text is clearly distinguishable. The narrator then meets an old man with a "noble" and "simple" physiognomy, whom he begs to recount the story of the two families in such a way that it reveals "the principal motif of the story and simultaneously announces its place in the Romantic Movement".[120] The European narrator asserts, "...Croyez que l'homme même le plus dépravé par les préjugés du monde aime à entendre parler du bonheur que donnent la nature et la vertu.[121] This

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[119] Bernardin, *P & V* 110.

[120] Richard H Grove. *Green Imperialism : Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1995.
"The Romantic scientists of Mauritius, and above all Pierre Poivre, Philibert Commerson and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, can in hindsight be seen as the pioneers of modern enviromentalism" (9). Note 26 continues on to say: "Furthermore, all three were early advocates of the abolition of slavery and were highly critical of the corruption and absolutism of the ancien régime. The strong association between early enviromentalism and programmes for social reform were particularly conspicuous. Pierre Poivre's collected works, for example, were published in 1797 as revolutionary tracts. Indeed, the connections between the colonial physiocratic conservationists and Jean-Jacques Rousseau could hardly have been closer. Thus, after he left Mauritius, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre went on to become a confidant of Rousseau as well as the first major French Romantic novelist." (9).

[121] Bernardin, *P & V* 111.

sets the stage for the introduction of the two protagonists, Paul and Virginie, who appear destined from their birth to be soulmates:

> Rien en effet n'était comparable à l'attachement qu'ils se témoignent déjà....La nuit même ne pouvait les séparer; elle les surprenait souvent couchés dans le même berceau, joue contre joue, poitrine contre poitrine, les mains passées mutuellement autour de leurs cous, et endormis dans les bras de l'un de l'autre.[122]

This "attachement" grows as the children get older, finally culminating in Virginie's illness, which is clearly tied to her longing for Paul. Once the mothers witness this, and sensibly realize that the children have no means with which to begin a life together, they decide to send Virginie on her fatal voyage to her wealthy aunt in order to "gagner quelques années sur l'âge de ces jeunes gens en les éloignant l'une de l'autre."[123] After several years of awaiting Virginie's return, Paul witnesses her demise from a distance during a storm in the harbor of their island. She waives to him from her sinking ship, and clutching the portrait of St. Paul that he had given her against her heart, drowns when she refuses to remove her dress in order to be saved by a sailor.

Jean-Michel Racault ventures one possible explanation for Virginie's ill-fated return to her island paradise of Mauritius. In what he stages as a struggle between "Nature" and "Virtue," he argues that "Nature" is really what is to blame for Virginie's death, not only because of the storm that caused the shipwreck, but because of the temptation that initially provoked Virginie to leave the island in the first place. Racault elaborates this idea, "Avec le passage de l'enfance à l'adolescence, c'est la fin de l'innocence et l'entrée dans l'univers de la faute. L'amour fraternel est devenu amour

[122] Bernardin, *P & V* 120.

[123] Bernardin, *P & V* 164.

coupable, parce que potentiellement incestueux...Le règne de la Vertu succède à celui de la Nature."[124] This is to say that although Virginie remained virtuous, her "natural" biological tendencies awakened her from her innocent ignorance with respect to her relationship with her brother and her role in womanhood.

In addition to the biological awakening that Racault discusses, there is one other significant factor that distanced Virginie from her innocent youth, her enlightenment. When she departed from L'Île de France she could neither read nor write, or rather, she received "l'éducation d'une servante" as her aunt claimed.[125] Virginie returned to the island educated, both socially and academically. She gained a title of comtesse, changed her name, and wore fashionable dresses that her aunt provided. And although Virginie claimed to not have much success with her lessons, she was exposed to "l'histoire, la géographie, la grammaire, la mathématique, et à monter à cheval."[126] Like Aotourou, Bougainville's Tahitian companion who met his tragic fate before returning home, the "noble savage" had been civilized, making Virginie no longer fit to live in her Arcadian paradise.[127] The reader is left to wonder if it was Providence who orchestrates Virginie's end, as it would be potentially more tragic to consider the effects of her newly found reason and experience on her island life and her bond with Paul. This struggle further intensifies the emotional experience for the reader.

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[124] Racault, "De l'Île réelle" 95.

[125] Bernardin, *P & V* 185.

[126] Bernardin, *P & V* 185.

[127] Cook discusses the link between Bougainville's Aotourou and the character of Virginie. He highlights that Bernardin met the Tahitian while he was in Paris and that "it may not be too speculative to suggest that the phenomenon of the native being taken to France to see civilization inspired the young Bernardin with the central idea of his fictional masterpiece." "Bougainville and One Noble Savage", 855.

Constants : Accounts of Flora and Fauna on Mauritius in Voyage and Paul et Virginie

The abundance of plant and animal accounts in both *Voyage* and *Paul et Virginie* is a testament to Bernardin's expertise as a naturalist, and to his talent for botany in particular. Despite the similar presence of these elements across the two works, one may conclude that the function of the natural descriptions differed in each text. Whereas the images of the natural surroundings in *Voyage* appear didactic and passive as they are carefully taken in and detailed by Bernardin, those found in *Paul et Virginie* play an active role in the narrative. In *Voyage,* the reader is confronted with lists of observations about the ocean, animals, plants, fish, etc., that Bernardin took care to inventory while on Mauritius. In *Paul et Virginie*, the natural descriptions are once again extensive, but they are used as symbolic reinforcement for the sentiments or events taking place in the narrative.

In *Voyage*, Bernardin offers lengthy accounts of the flora, fauna, and natural surroundings with which he is met on Mauritius. Janine Baudry explains, "On sait que Bernardin avoue ne rien connaître en botanique à son arrivée dans l'île en 1768 et décrire les choses comme il les voit. C'est d'abord le caractère exotique de la flore qui le frappe."[128] Bernardin proposes this as his initial objective, "Je ne peux vous donner de connaissances plus étendues d'un pays où j'arrive. Je compte passer quelques jours à la campagne, et je tâcherai de vous décrire ce qui concerne le sol de cette île avant de vous

[128] Janine Baudry, "Un aspect mauricien de l'oeuvre de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: la flore locale," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 89 (1989): 782.

parler de ses habitants."[129] After revealing his premise, he launches into the frank, detailed reports for which this work was known.

In the opening descriptions of the geography of the island, Bernardin constructs a bleak and somber portrait of the topography of Port-Louis, the capital of L'Île de France. He remarks that the city, described more accurately as a town, is situated near a mountain valley:

> Ce vallon est formé en cul-de-sac par une chaînes de hautes montagnes hérissées de rochers sans arbres et sans buissons. Les flancs de ces montagnes sont couverts pendant six mois de l'année d'une herbe brûlée, ce qui rend tout ce paysage noir comme une charbonnière. Le couronnement des mornes qui forment ce triste vallon est brisé.[130]

This representation of the port city lacks any paradisiacal appeal, as its landscape appears to be infertile, with an absence of foliage and water. Although Bernardin expresses that he wishes to highlight the geographical traits of the island before describing the inhabitants, the reader might surmise that a dark and unproductive locale would be populated by unsavory men.

In the first few pages of *Paul et Virginie*, the reader is greeted with a conflicting image of Mauritius. The European narrator catches his first glimpse of the two cabins that belonged to Madame de la Tour and Marguerite on the eastern side of the mountain range, which rises behind the city of Port-Louis. He explains that the cabins are protected from wind by the surrounding rocks, and then goes on to give a picture of the scenery from the vantage point of the valley basin:

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[129] Bernardin, *Voyage* 51.

[130] Bernardin, *Voyage* 50.

> Des bouquets d'arbres croissent à leurs bases, dans leurs fentes, et jusque sur leurs cimes, où s'arrêtent les nuages. Les pluies que leurs pitons attirent peignent souvent les couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel sur leurs flancs verts et bruns, et entretiennent à leurs pieds les sources dont se forme la petite rivière des Lataniers.[131]

In contrast to his initial impressions in *Voyage*, Bernardin's narrator expresses a fondness for the landscape in *Paul et Virginie* in so much that he mentions returning regularly for peaceful solitude. There is a marked change in vocabulary and tone between the two portraits, from dull and desolate to lush and dynamic. The lack of trees in *Voyage* becomes a picturesque "bouquets d'arbres" at the foot of the mountains. The mountainside is transformed from a "paysage noir comme une charbonnière" to show "les couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel".

These two descriptions may very well represent the geographical phenomenon of the leeward (dry) versus the windward (windy and rainy) sides of a mountain, which would correspond to the topographical characteristics found in *Voyage* and *Paul et Virginie*, respectively. However, Bernardin's choice to commence the story on this part of the island, which represents a more "utopian" setting is undoubtedly intentional. The idyllic scenery witnessed by the European narrator serves to infuse the contrast between the serene surroundings and the tragic fate that would befall the two families.

In *Paul et Virginie*, Bernardin uses many of the same types of flora and fauna previously observed and reported in *Voyage*, but the goal has less to do with scientific accuracy and more to do with creating a symbolic landscape.[132] For example, Wendy

[131] Bernardin, *P & V*, 110.

Knepper suggests that the natural landmarks that Bernardin names in *Paul et Virginie* figure into the construction of the island myth. She claims, "The allegorical naming of places in the utopia calls the reader's attention to the moral and mnemonic fixtures in the collective psyche of the utopia."[133] The contrast that was established earlier between the pastoral background and the tragic denouement is also present between the innocent elements of nature and the personified qualities that are superimposed on them through the characters' experiences. Each instance of "named" nature in the novel functions as a microcosmic reminder of the double-meaning of the natural descriptions, where the correspondence between the objects of nature and human sensibility create pathos for the reader.

One instance of symbolic naming in the narrative is the "REPOS DE VIRGINIE," which is located at the foot of a rock named, "DÉCOUVERTE DE L'AMITIÉ." It is here that Paul and Virginie's mothers plant the two coconut trees which grow as the children do and which, symbolically, are the only two things that remain living in this garden at the end of the story.[134] Another key example is in the European narrator's initial description of the landmarks in the surrounding areas to the north of the capital, Port-Louis. "La baie du Tombeau" and "le cap malheureux" stand apart from an otherwise

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[132] Racault, "De l'ile réelle" 88. Racault develops this idea further by claiming that the natural landmarks in *Paul et Virginie* may be regarded as living symbols of the characters and emotions they represent in the narrative. Racault cites, « Tout en se pliant à la nomenclature géographique la plus scrupuleusement documentaire, la toponymie de l'île se charge d'une valeur symbolique...D'entrée, le drame était inscrit dans la configuration de l'île, dont les noms constituent à la fois la trace d'une histoire passée et la promesse d'un récit à venir. »

[133] Knepper 41.

[134] Bernardin, *P & V* 143.

optimistic portrait of the island, as they foreshadow the tragic fate of the two families. The reader will discover later that this is where Virginie is found after her death.[135]

Bernardin also creates the presence of the mainland on the island in designating Mauritian landmarks with European nomenclature. Racault discusses another dimension to the geographical naming of natural sites by positing that those that share a name with French provinces reflect the mothers' inability to rupture completely with the home continent. Racault offers this example: "Les noms de BRETAGNE et de NORMANDIE, donnés à des sites du domaine où l'on a fait pousser du blé, des fraises et des pois, tentent pathétiquement de recréer dans l'ailleurs insulaire un substitut de la patrie perdue."[136] This sets their children even further apart from the mothers' upbringings as innocent products of the island utopia that has been the only home they have known. However, there are indications that Virginie's innocence has been compromised after her voyage to France when she includes planting seeds from Normandy in a letter to her mother, symbolically allowing her European education to invade the island space.[137]

Even though one may contend that the inclusion of exotic flora and fauna in both texts was a draw for the reading public, it is ultimately *Paul et Virginie* that was more captivating to the reading audiences because Bernardin actually placed two European

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[135] Bernardin, *P & V* 109.

[136] Jean-Michel Racault, "Bonheur et retrait social: trois expériences de la solitude insulaire à l'époque des Lumières," *Solitudes, écriture et représentation,* eds. Andre Siganos, Marie Blaise et al. (1995): 38.

[137]Bernardin, *P & V* 187. Virginie writes to her mother, " Ce sera une grande joie pour moi si vous avez un jour de satisfaction de voir des pommiers croître auprès de nos bananiers, et des hêtres mêler leurs feuillages à celui de nos cocotiers. Vous vous croirez dans la Normandie, que vous aimez tant." Virginie's identification with her mother's homeland is an acknowledgement that she is in some part linked to this legacy. This rupture makes it impossible for her to return to a virtuous, albeit ignorant, existence on Mauritius.

women in this locale and told their stories in these surroundings.[138] At a time when women's literacy was on the rise in France, particularly among the class to which Madame de la Tour would have belonged, the juxtaposition of the two European women in a "natural" setting would have enticed female readers.[139] What is more, the fact that these women still fulfilled their roles in the domestic sphere in this virtuous, natural environment reduced its controversial undertones for the male reader. [140] Secondly, the functions of nature set the travel journal and the narrative distinctly apart. The nature in *Paul et Virginie* serves a literary function as a symbolic device, which further engages the reader's interest in these descriptions.

Deletions: What Remains of the Portrait of Colonial Life and Slavery in *Paul et Virginie*?

In comparing the island's descriptions found in both texts, one significant difference between the text of *Voyage* and that of *Paul et Virginie* lies in the depiction of colonial society. In *Voyage*, one of the most negative portraits of the island's inhabitants is found in Lettre XI, "*Moeurs des habitants blancs,*" which describes the evolution of the island's population.[141] Bernardin explains how the initial working class, agrarian

[138] In "Philosophy and Method", Cook asserts that "Bernardin uses the local knowledge acquired during his stay on the Ile de France to dazzle the European reader with his description of the wild exotic plants and those which are grown by the exiled families. But he goes a stage further than the purely descriptive by showing the relationship between the plants that grow and the young lovers who attract our attention" (109).

[139] Coincidentally, Madame de la Tour is the only one among the family members who is literate. This is brought to light when she reads aloud Virginie's aunt's unfavorable response to the letters written on her daughter's behalf. (Bernardin, *P & V* 125).

[140] James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 98. Melton explains that the eighteenth-century novel "was preoccupied with the realm of domestic experience and validated the household – an arena that in the eighteenth century was increasingly associated with women – as a legitimate focus of literary concern" (98).

community developed its share of vices as marines, military, missionaries, and merchants visited the island, often for brief periods, and typically motivated by short-term financial gain.[142] He also comments on how the loss of colonies in India at the end of the Seven Years' War commenced an influx of undesirable and loathsome newcomers to the island, who quickly lowered the moral substance of the island's inhabitants:

> Enfin la dernière guerre de l'Inde y jeta, comme une écume, des banqueroutiers, des libertins ruinés, des fripons, des scélérats, qui chassés de l'Europe par leurs crimes, et de l'Asie par nos malheurs, tentèrent d'y rétablir leur fortune sur la ruine publique. A leur arrivée, les mécontentements généraux et particuliers augmentèrent: toutes les réputations furent flétries avec un art d'Asie inconnu à nos calomniateurs; il n'y eut plus de femme chaste ni d'homme honnête; toute confiance fut éteinte, toute estime détruite.[143]

Bernardin's negative bias toward the thieves and libertines who wreaked havoc on the virtues of the colony is evident in the intensity of the words he chooses to describe the newcomers and their avariciousness. This renders his account more compelling, as it is no surprise to the reader that men of such low character engaged in despicable behavior toward one another, and in particular, toward the black slaves in the colony.

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[141] In *Voyage,* Lettre VI, pg. 49, Bernardin cites that "L'île de France fut découverte par un Portugais de la Maison de Mascarenhas, qui la nomma l'île Cerné. Ensuite elle fut posédée par les Hollandais qui lui donnèrent le nom de Maurice. Ils l'abandonnèrent en 1712, peut-être à cause du Cap de Bonne-Espérance où ils s'établissaient. Les Français qui occupaient l'île de Bourbon qui n'est qu'à 40 lieues de l'île de France, vinrent s'y établir."

[142] Bernardin points out that the island did at one time have "respectable" inhabitants: "L'île de France était déserte lorsque Mascarenhas la découvrit. Les premiers Français qui s'y établirent furent quelques cultivateurs de Bourbon. Ils y apportèrent une grande simplicité des moeurs , de la bonne foi, l'amour de l'hospitalité et même l'indifférence pour les richesses. M. de la Bourdonnais, qui est en quelque sorte le fondateur de cette colonie, y amena des ouvriers, bonne espèce d'hommes, et quelque mauvais sujets que leurs parents y avaient fait passer; il les força d'être utiles" (78). It is ironic that Mme de la Tour's husband in *Paul et Virginie* was one of these very same fortune-seekers looking for financial gain in the colonies.

[143] Bernardin, *Voyage* (AlmA) 79-80.

Based on Bernardin's accounts, the most striking manifestation of the evils in this "corrupted" society was the exploited institution of slavery. The testimonies of colonial slave life were scathing admonishments of the methods white slave-holders employed to maintain order among their "property." In his description of "Des nègres," Bernardin describes the punishments that are carried out on a daily basis for slaves who have committed the slightest infraction, if any at all. In one case, he describes the fate with which the slaves who hide from their masters are met:

> Quand on attrape les noirs fugitifs, on leur coupe une oreille, et on les fouette. A la seconde désertion ils sont fouettés, on leur coupe un jarret, on les met à la chaîne. A la troisième fois ils sont pendus ; alors on ne les dénonce pas ; les maîtres craignent de perdre leur argent.[144]

These gruesome images alone would be enough to shock the sensibilities of the modern reader.[145] However, what is perhaps more surprising is Bernardin's polemical conclusion to his slavery discourse, where he condemns the lack of responsibility exhibited by the "enlightened" man in the face of these tragedies. Bernardin states his views frankly, "Je suis fâché que des philosophes qui combattent les abus avec tant de courage, n'aient guère parlé de l'esclavage des noirs que pour en plaisanter."[146] It was likely this tendency to provoke social consciousness that rendered Saint-Pierre's travel journal unpopular with

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[144] *Voyage* 86. (AlmA)

[145] In his article, "Nostalgies Tropicales...", Lüsebrink discusses the impact of Bernardin's slavery discourse on public opinion, "L'ouvrage de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre contient une critique acerbe de l'esclavage des noirs, la première à connaître un impact d'envergure sur l'opinion française du XVIIIe siècle et la seule émanant d'un écrivain et philosophe ayant connu personnellement, à travers une expérience prolongée, les colonies de plantations françaises outre-mer" (42).

[146] *Voyage* 89. (AlmA) Bernardin adds to his critique of the 'philosophe' : « Ils se détournent au loin. Ils parlent de la Saint-Barthélemy, du massacre des Mexicains par les Espagnols, comme si ce crime n'était pas celui de nos jours, et auquel la moitié de l'Europe prend part. Y a-t-il donc plus de mal à tuer tout un coup des gens qui n'ont pas nos opinions, qu'à faire le tourment d'une nation à qui nous devons nos délices ? »

colonial propagandists, especially since the journal resembled an editorial report more closely than a restrained scientific account.[147] His observations on the institutions of slavery are without exception negative, with little to no allowance made for slavery's economic "benefits." He even goes so far as to question, "Pourquoi n'y a-t-on pas de laboureurs blancs!" and to hypothesize that the system of slavery guarantees ruin for the colony due to its lack of freedom and equality.[148]

There is a dramatic difference in how slavery is depicted in *Paul et Virginie.* Though there are certainly moments where one is reminded of the ugly truths that were a part of colonial life, Saint-Pierre manages to soften his colonial critique by presenting his reading public with his paradisiacal references to the natural beauty and innocence of the island. He also shows a society where, in the case of the principal characters, white and black inhabitants are able to coexist harmoniously, despite evidence to the contrary in *Voyage*. Cook definitively concludes, "It will come as no surprise to those who know the novel that Bernardin was clearly not simply trying to create an authentic picture of colonial reality in his allegorical text."[149]

The most significant difference seen in *Paul et Virginie* regarding the slavery issue is the slave's transformation from object to subject. In Bernardin's narrative, the slaves play an active role in the colony by participating in family discussions, helping set

[147] Ramiandrasoa explains that « Les contemporains ont souvent retenu du roman et surtout du *Voyage* les pages vibrantes dénonçant les réalités de l'esclavage à l'île de France....Ce sont ces pages que ses lecteurs à l'île de France ne lui ont pas pardonnées. Les insulaires étaient particulièrement attentifs aux textes qui dérivaient les îles et brossaient le portrait des « créoles » (108).

[148] *Voyage* 88. (AlmA) Bernardin opens his sections entitled "Réflexions sur l'esclavage" with a negative image of slavery: "Je ne sais pas si le café et le sucre sont nécessaires au bonheur de l'Europe, mais je sais bien que ces deux végétaux on fait le malheur de deux parties du monde. On a dépeuplé l'Afrique afin d'avoir une nation pour les cultiver" (*Voyage* 88). AlmA

[149] Cook, "Bougainville and One Noble Savage..." 844.

up house, and forming families of their own. The slave's role as property is marginalized and is shifted into that of an active member of the community.[150] The descriptions of Marguerite and Mme de la Tour's slaves reinforce their positive image. For example, Bernardin makes the following portrait of Marguerite's Domingue:

> [Il] était un noir yolof, encore robuste, quoique déjà sur l'âge. Il avait de l'expérience et un bon sens naturel. Il cultivait indifféremment sur les deux habitations les terrains qui lui semblaient les plus fertile, et il y mettait les semences qui leur convenaient le mieux.[151]

Mme de la Tour's Marie is described in the same virtuous light as a faithful, resourceful domestic who even possesses an entrepreneurial spirit in selling the plantation's surplus goods in town.[152] Marie and Domingue marry after the birth of Virginie, and in many ways become a stable support system for the two single women and their young children.

In a contradictory account of slave life, Paul and Virginie become lost in an unfamiliar territory of the forest surrounding their homes and they encounter a hungry slave. The woman explains that she has run away from her cruel master and shows Paul and Virginie the scars from her beatings. After giving the slave something to eat, for which the woman expresses sincere gratitude, Virginie demands grace from her master for the slave's flight. The reader learns, however, that Virginie's good deed actually has the opposite of her intended effect. When the household servant, Domingue, finds Paul

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[150] Lüsebrink also discusses the omission of the traditional portrait of the colonial slave, with the small exception of the runaway Paul and Virginie find. He argues, "Même le phénomène de l'esclavage, caractéristique d'une société de plantation de style ancien comme la société mauricienne, semble ici à la fois effacé-grâce à l'intégration des deux esclaves noirs, Domingue et Marie, dans la sociabilité familiale des Blancs..." "Nostalgies tropicales..." 43.

[151] Bernardin, *P & V* 116.

[152] Bernardin, *P & V* 117.

and Virginie in the forest he indicates that he has seen the slave in question in a more condemnable state than before. Domingue exclaims, "Quel grâce! il me l'a montrée attachée, avec un collier de fer à trois crochets autour du cou."[153]

The slave characters in these examples illustrate a clearly defined dichotomy of human ethics combined with animal imperfectability, much in the same way Rousseau's "noble savage" is depicted as a naturally moral being, but an uncivilized and incorrigible one as well. In order to create this dichotomy, Bernardin positions Marie and Domingue on one end of the spectrum as "noble" and "civilized," while the character of the runaway slave remains in an "imperfect" state, which is reflected by her inability to escape her deplorable condition. The most interesting aspect of Bernardin's portrait of slave life in the colonies in *Paul et Virginie* is that they are received rather well in their new form despite the fact that Bernardin still includes some of the "realistic" elements that originally detracted from the reception of his *Voyage* text. While it is understood that Bernardin purposefully inserted these elements into his narrative to make a link to his colonial critiques in *Voyage*, it must be pointed out that the inclusion of such details was unavoidable if the voyager wished to maintain the verisimilitude of the narrative. [154]

In discussing the obvious discrepancy between the myth of island paradise and the harsh reality of slavery cited above, Racault comments on the two different portrayals of the "slave" present in the narrative, "*Paul et Virginie* présente deux images contrastées, l'une en gros fidèle aux déprimantes réalités de l'économie de plantation, l'autre, celle

[153] Bernardin, *P & V* 134.

[154] Racault argues, "L'île mythique et rêvée est aussi une île réelle et qui n'a rien 'idyllique, souillée qu'elle est des mesquineries de la société coloniale et des horreurs de l'esclavage, que l'auteur a peut-être adoucies ou camouflées, mais qu'il n'a pas pu ou pas voulu éluder complètement." "De l'Île réelle" 80.

qu'offrent Domingue et Marie, membres de la famille plutôt que serviteurs..."[155] How is this incongruity resolved in the narrative in such a way that readers are not critical of the unsavory slave accounts? In this case, it may be argued that frequency, or lack thereof, plays a major role in the reception of these elements. The case of the runaway slave is an isolated incident, a reminder. However, the reader is quickly whisked back into the "reality" of the island for the remainder of the narrative where Marie and Domingue live idyllically in paradise until they meet a similar fate to that of their mistresses.

Conclusion : Why is it significant to classify *Paul et Virginie* as a "supplement"?

Why is *Paul et Virginie* as popular of a read today as it was in the eighteenth-century? What is the continuing appeal? What is the engaging element missing from *Voyage?* Cook posits that, "The outstanding quality of *Paul et Virginie* is that in the novel Bernardin has managed to achieve an artistic device for his fiction which allows the reader to be edified while being able, at the same time, to marvel at the poetic vision of the author through his ability to render the melancholic, tragic sensibility of what we now call the Romantic age."[156] One important characteristic of *Paul et Virginie* that differentiates it from *Voyage* is how integral the natural descriptions are to the plot of the story. This emphasis on the function of landscapes may also be seen in other well-known texts of the period, such as Chateaubriand's *Atala*, where the opening descriptions of the American landscape closely resemble those witnessed in the first few pages of *Paul et Virginie* about Mauritius.

[155] Racault, "De l'Île réelle..." 90.

[156] Cook, "Philosophy and Method" 103.

To understand fully *Paul et Virginie*'s appeal, however, it is essential to take what Cook says a step further and say that part of this "artistic device" he proposes is Bernardin's use of the "supplement," and while the fictional narrative reveals the author's "poetic vision," more importantly, it reveals his philosophical one as well. In this case, the term "supplement" is a powerful literary nomenclature. For one, it comes with the expected question of sequence; what came before and after? In many ways, in studying *Paul et Virginie* as a supplement, it may be regarded as a device to perpetuate the debate of slavery or colonialism by linking it to its controversial roots in *Voyage*, and opening the floor for debate by popularizing the oppressed colonial locale. The objective eye of observation may be too severe, but the harmless voice of narration does not assume the same level of responsibility. The notion of "supplement" also links *Paul et Virginie* to Bernardin's other texts, such as *La Chaumière indienne*, a later work of Bernardin's that is often cited as being a complementary text to his Mauritian love story.[157]

The "supplement" is also powerful for an author/voyager like Bernardin because of the "truth trap" mentioned earlier. Bernardin's fictional narrative about Mauritius can *not* be read without calling to mind his previous observations about the island; however, his harsh critiques succeed when minimized or softened with a creative literary touch. Finally, in only reading *Paul et Virginie* as a stand alone work, it is inevitable that one will miss out on the political and philosophical dimensions hidden in the narrative. [158]

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[157] Roseann Runte 774. 'La Chaumière indienne': Counterpart and Complement to 'Paul et Virginie' *The Modern Language Review*. 75 (1980): 774-80. Runte relates the story of Paul and Virginia to the tale of the old hermit that saved a Brahmin woman and took her as his bride to live together in "la chaumière indienne" in solitary paradise. She points out that in many ways the latter "realize the idyllic dreams of Paul and Virginie" that were lost with Virginie's death (775).

[158] Malcolm Cook argues that Bernardin "used his own ideas in different ways in different texts" and that *Paul et Virginie* is "essentially, a fictional exemplification of the political and philosophical ideas expressed in *Études [de la Nature]*". "The novel represents the most persuasive, literary presentation of Bernardin's

What distinguishes *Paul et Virginie* from being a complex literary masterpiece or just another sentimental love story is reading it as a "supplement," where the reader experiences the text as one imagines Bernardin wrote it: images of Mauritius in his head, literary vogue in sight, and a pen in his hand.

philosophy; it may indeed be the work which encapsulates the ideas expressed in a variety of other ways. But clearly the novel can only be understood as part of an entire process. In other words, the novel represents a popularization of the ideas of the author..." "Premier essai autographe de la conversation de Paul et du Vieillard" 156.

CHAPTER III

THE "ANTHOLOGY SUPPLEMENT": DEMEUNIER'S *L'ESPRIT DES USAGES ET DES COUTUMES DES DIFFÉRENTS PEUPLES*

By the time Jean-Nicholas Demeunier's *L'Esprit des usages et des coutumes des différents peuples* reached the reading public in 1776, anthologies had already established a place in eighteenth-century French cultural history. The many voyages leading up to and during the mid- to late- eighteenth-century left readers, editors, and philosophers with a perhaps even larger task than that of the voyagers themselves. With the wealth of information collected, a need to examine, categorize, and diffuse this data gave way to the rise of anthologies, encyclopedias, and translations that bring together the scientific information in a way that would contribute to its utility and to the good of the public. While these large, multi-volume works may not have focused solely on voyages of exploration, those portions that did offered several interesting angles to consider in the context of defining travel supplements. Namely, when anthologists grouped together examples of exceptional behavior within diverse indigenous cultures, such practices revealed that they were not in fact particularly exceptional. The application of universal categories of the western Enlightenment to diverse cultures called for further anthropological consideration.

Demeunier's *L'esprit des usages et des coutumes des différents peuples* was published in three volumes in 1776.[159] Here, Demeunier undertook the task of classifying data collected from previous travel accounts into global divisions, or "usages," that he

[159] Three editions of *L'Esprit* were published in 1776, 1785, and 1786. Lemay "Naissance", 153.

established. His sources included a variety of voyage accounts, particularly those in Prévost's collection, which he used to create categories such as "Beauté," "Pudeur," and "Société." Demeunier believed that an anthology organizing observations about the customs of other cultures was important because voyage accounts often contained contradictory facts, or exaggerations to render them more interesting to the reader.

Demeunier's volumes may be considered "supplements" to the travel accounts, journals, and compilations that are cited. This is because the author has added an ethnological commentary that is either absent or generalized in the original works, in addition to a simple assembling of travel texts. However, there lies a contradiction in Demeunier's project. The global categories he has chosen as the divisions of the anthology belong to the same ideology that Demeunier was seeking to deconstruct: universal values. While the anthologist brings to light many of the particularities of native cultures, he undermines his work by trying to organize this data into groupings that reflect "mankind in general."[160] By using Todorov's discussions on universalism and relativism, we will explore some of the reasons why these categories are problematic. Through studying how Demeunier confronts this contradiction in light of eighteenth century philosophy, it becomes clear why cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss hailed the anthology as "le premier manuel d'ethnographie paru en France."[161]

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[160] Todorov, *Nous et les autres: La réflexion française sur la diversité humane* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989) 20. Todorov notes, "Il faut dire d'abord que le grand courant de la pensée à cette époque s'attache à représenter l'homme 'en général', par-delà ses variantes" (20).

[161] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Réflexions sur la liberté", an address to the French National Assembly in 1976. Edna Lemay points out that this is not the only time when Lévi-Strauss lauded the young ethnographer: "En 1960, le professeur Claude Lévi-Strauss mentionnera Démeunier dans sa *Leçon inaugurale* au Collège de France, comme un de ceux que l'anthropologie sociale en France a injustement oubliés." "Naissance de l'Anthropologie sociale en France" *Dix-Huitième Siècle* (Paris: Garnier, 1970) 2:149.

The eighteenth-century anthology and source material

There are numerous well-known anthologies that belong to the eighteenth-century, both travel and non-travel related. Between 1751 and 1781 Diderot and d'Alembert reorganized the "arbre des connaissances" to encompass the whole of human knowledge in the multi-volume *L'Encyclopédie*. Raynal assembled pivotal moments in travel and colonial history in *Histoire des deux Indes* for its first appearance in 1770. And perhaps the greatest undertaking in French travel literature, *Histoire générale des voyages*, chronicled voyages of exploration from antiquity to the Enlightenment. Prévost served as an editor and collaborator on the first fifteen volumes of the *Histoire* between 1746 and 1759, with another five volumes published after Prévost's death under another editor's careful hand. Finally, in 1773 Hawkesworth's volumes on voyages to the southern hemisphere, which emphasized British involvement, but highlighted the French, introduced the public to new places and cultures encountered during voyages around the world and colonial pursuits.

These multi-volume works provoked debates about the effects of civilization, slavery, and the origins of race, often through data and observations gathered from voyages of exploration. The compilers of travel anthologies may have employed the literary "supplement" as a means of simplifying a complex history in order to make new information more accessible to the reading public. However, as we will see, the grouping of selected texts into a given context often revealed cultural or scientific agendas as well.

There are several writers and voyagers whose influence played a major role in Demeunier's anthology. In terms of travel material, perhaps the most widely cited is l'abbé Prévost and the *Histoire générale des voyages*. The first seven volumes of

Prévost's work were a translation from English sources, after which the volumes were compiled by him until his death in 1763. Edna Lemay notes that there were three main goals in mind for constructing these anthologies: "Selon Prévost, les trois buts que les auteurs anglais se sont données, d'après leur Préface, sont: 1. empêcher la perte d'un grand nombre de livres précieux; 2. rendre communs les livres rares; 3. former un corpus des meilleurs auteurs qui ont écrits sur les différentes parties du monde."[162] These goals also apply to Demeunier's work, although he approached his project from a more ethnographically engaged angle. Nonetheless, a great deal of the source material for *L'Esprit des usages* on various voyagers came from Prévost's collection.[163]

From a utilitarian standpoint, Diderot's influence is evident from the onset of the work.[164] Diderot's *Encyclopédie* originated in 1745 when he was asked to translate an English encyclopedia by Ephraim Chambers.[165] From this, his own encyclopedia project grew and with the collaboration of d'Alembert, Diderot sought to create a work with a specific goal. His entry *encyclopédie* elaborates:

> Le but d'une encyclopédie est de rassembler des connaissances éparses sur la surface de la terre; d'en exposer le système général aux hommes avec qui nous

[162] Lemay 347.

[163] In her article "*Histoire générale*", Lemay cites that in *L'Esprit des usages*, "sur un total de 179 récits de voyageurs, 119, soit les deux-tiers, se retrouvent dans l'*Histoire générale des voyages*" (350).

[164] Diderot's *Encyclopédie* will also be an inspiration for the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, to which Demeunier contributed, which is evident in the multi-volume work's system of "renvois".

[165] Daniel Brewer, *The Discourse of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 1993) 13. Brewer discusses the enormous scope of the Encyclopedic project: "Conceived initially in 1745 as a business venture consisting of a two-volume translation of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopedia* of 1728, the *Encyclopédie* project had already outstripped all original plans by the time the first volume of articles appeared in 1751. When completed a quarter-century later, this monumental work comprised twenty-eight folio volumes containing 71,818 articles and 2,885 plates. Five subsequent editions were printed in Switzerland and Italy before 1789; roughly one-half of these 25,000 copies went to readers in France" (13).

> vivons, & de le transmettre aux hommes qui viendront après nous; afin que les travaux des siècles passés n'aient pas été des travaux inutiles pour les siècles qui succéderont; que nos neveux, devenant plus instruits, deviennent en même temps plus vertueux et plus heureux, et que nous ne mourions pas sans avoir bien mérité du genre humain.[166]

Demeunier's project claims a similar goal in assembling a significant portion of anthropological observations from travel accounts from antiquity to the Enlightenment into one anthology where it may be immortalized for centuries to come.

Montesquieu's ideas offered a philosophical basis for Demeunier to debate prior observations made about faraway civilizations. Lemay explains that Montesquieu's influence permitted Demeunier to present a new history of man by conveying his customs and practices.[167] In spite of this influence, there are many moments when Demeunier refutes Montesquieu's philosophy, particularly what pertains to predetermined values according to race and climate, and notions about despotism. In his *Avertissement*, Demeunier reveals:

> On ne pouvoit pas omettre les Loix qui établissent des coutumes, & on cite celles qu'a oubliées M. de Montesquieu: on n'envisage pas toujours les autres de la même manière que cet illustre Ecrivain, & la suite de cet Ouvrage en explique plusieurs dont il ne donne point.[168]

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[166] Extrait de l'article "Encyclopédie" Tome V cité dans : René Pomeau, *Diderot: Sa vie, son oeuvre avec un exposé de sa philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1967) 49.

[167] Edna Hindie Lemay, "*Histoire générale des voyages:* Démeunier et l'abbé Prévost" *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000) 11: 345. In her article, "Naissance de l'Anthropologie sociale", Lemay also points out the parallel between Demeunier's title and Montesquieu's "*l'Esprit des lois*" (153).

[168] Demeunier (I) xj.

Here Demeunier is referring to the sections in his anthology on war, social class, and slavery.

It is interesting to note that in his preface to the 1988 edition of Demeunier's volumes, Pouillon indicates the central weakness of the writer's strategy was actually the selection of source material.[169] Since Demeunier's selection is from a variety of sources, there are some that are no doubt more credible than others, and the author does make notes of this whenever possible. Pouillon argues:

> Il s'efforce toujours de distinguer le fait inventé ou mal vu du fait vrai mais qu'on n'a pas les moyens d'expliquer soit parce qu'on ignore le contexte social et l'histoire du peuple considéré, soit- et il y insiste à plusieurs reprises- parce que, pour comprendre, il faudrait aller sur le terrain, comme nous disons aujourd'hui.[170]

This may be overlooked as the inconsistency between truth and fiction, an unavoidable characteristic of the genre of travel literature. Demeunier himself attests in the *Avertissement:* "Les Voyageurs ne donnent que les faits: on ne doit réctifier ce qu'ils voient mal, & comme ils se trahissent presque toujours, il y a dans leurs récits des contradictions à débrouiller."[171] Demeunier notes that any of these contradictions are a result of the voyagers' superficial conclusions about what they have encountered that often beg for more in-depth study and observation.

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[169] Jean Pouillon, "Le Sauvage et les lumières"(Preface), *L'Esprit des usages et des coutumes des différents peuples*. (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1988) VII. Pouillon explains, "Le matériel dont dispose Demeunier est considérable mais de valeur très inégale en ce qui concerne tant la qualité des informations et des descriptions-souvent il ne peut citer qu'un trait isolé de tout contexte-que la confiance que l'on peut faire aux sources" (VIII).

[170] Pouillon VIII.

[171] Demeunier (I) viij-ix.

Creating universal categories: Demeunier's ethnological project

Lemay argues that Demeunier's strategy for *L'Esprit des usages* was to group together the practices and customs of all civilizations according to different categories of human existence in order to better understand them.[172] Pouillon elaborates on Demeunier's organization by emphasizing that these categories were not constructed by looking for similarities among native peoples, but rather by Demeunier's conception of what the true function and "sense" of these customs and practices were. [173] One may contend that this subjectivity is at the root of the ethnocentric bias of the anthology in that Demeunier's determination of the function and sense of these customs was inadvertently linked to his own ideas about the universal nature of mankind.

Therefore, Demeunier's categories are generic groupings that do not reveal the particularities of the civilizations and societies of which they consist. At the onset, there is already a questionable quality to Demeunier's project in notions such as "courage" and "servitude," qualities that may not be found, or defined as such, across all societies. Pouillon also indicates another challenge to Demeunier's strategy by highlighting that his categories really only work if there are several examples of a particular "usage" within the same social context, an easily recognizable challenge.[174]

Finally Pouillon discusses how Demeunier arrived at his list of "usages":

> D'une part, l'usage raisonnable répond à un besoin "naturel" comme celui de manger, de se reproduire, etc.; de l'autre, il répond à une nécessité sociale:

[172] Lemay "Naissance", 159.

[173] Pouillon X. Demeunier mentions that he has not included religion in any of his categories. Pouillon speculates that was likely a tactic to keep his work safe from censorship and his fledging reputation in good standing in the event that a portion of his observations be received unfavorably, particularly since he was a mere 25 years old and a virtual unknown at the time of publication.

[174] Pouillon XI.

marquer les relations, les distances, les articulations du groupe où on le constate. La valeur fonctionnelle et relationnelle d'une coutume, volià donc son 'ésprit.'[175]

The emphasis on identifying "usages" based on "natural man" implies a universal human nature. In considering Demeunier's creation of "universal" categories, it is useful to consider Tzvetan Todorov's notions of "universalism" and "relativism".[176] According to Todorov, universalist thinking maintains that all societies have the same basic values. Furthermore, the universalist bases his system of common values on what is relevant to his own society. Todorov argues:

> Ce qu'on appelle sagesse dans chaque pays n'est que la folie qui lui est propre. Par conséquent les jugements que portent les nations les unes sur les autres nous informent sur ceux qui parlent, non sur ceux dont on parle: dans les autres peuples, les membres d'une nation n'estiment que ce qui leur est proche."[177]

The discrepancy between the particularity of the Other and the portrait of the "uncivilized European" becomes even more pronounced when considering the anthologist's task of making arbitrary choices to represent a culture or civilization. This was Demeunier's biggest challenge to overcome as an ethnographer, and one of which he was acutely aware: "Les Compilateurs recherchent encore moins que les Voyageurs l'origine des usages, & l'on n'imagine pas quel est leur caractère."[178]

Todorov debates Lévi-Strauss's attempt to create a structural anthropology, meanwhile bringing to light a central contradiction: "On n'observe que le particulier;

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[175] Pouillon XVI.

[176] Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).

[177] Todorov 28.

[178] Demeunier (I) ix.

mais on ne comprend qu'en faisant le détour par le général."[179] It is in this paradox that one may draw a parallel between Lévi-Strauss's work and Demeunier's fledgling ethnology. Both recognized the superficial and potentially unethical quality of travelers' observations about cultures that the explorers either did not understand or that were subjected to value judgments born from humanist philosophies. However, as ethnographers both also thought that the only means by which to tackle such a vast amount of data was to organize these observations into global categories of patterns and customs.

L'Esprit des usages et des coutumes des différents peuples

Although Demeunier's anthology is already organized into categories according to customs or practices, it is most useful to consider the universalist elements of this body of work in the context of dominant topoi in travel literature that reflect the subjective representation of the Other. The juxtaposition of voyagers' accounts with third-person ethnographical commentary further demonstrates the tension between travel writing and anthropological accuracy and reinforces the anthology as a form of supplement in travel literature. Below we will examine how the popular notions of the "natural" man, the exotic "Other," and the despotic ruler were all constructs that had roots in European social critique and most importantly, European ideas of "universal values." It will also be important to show how the context of the anthology was a vehicle for the deconstruction of these values and for an ethnographer's plea to Enlightenment readers to consider

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[179] Todorov, *Nous et les autres* 83.

voyagers' observations about a singular society as a particular moment in an interwoven tradition in place of a cultural generalization.

"Natural" Man

Many travel accounts documenting primitive civilizations emphasized customs and practices that were in accordance with the "laws of nature" as a foil for European society. The emphasis on natural societies gave rise to the myth of the noble savage, which as William Cohen suggests, "was created to remind Europeans of the virtuous existence that was thought to be possible in a simpler, more natural environment."[180] These peoples lived in a state of natural bliss, uncorrupted by civilization and motivated only by their basic needs and desires. Rousseau's notion of the "noble savage" built on the idea of a "natural" existence and insisted that the savage was different from animals in that he possessed free will and the potential for "perfectibility," the latter of which would be fundamental when judging a native peoples' potential for civilization.[181] However, the most compelling aspect of this myth was that it ultimately revealed more about European society than about what it was describing. Todorov supports this position in his analysis of the role of the noble savage in travel literature:

> On ne s'étonnera donc pas de trouver l'image du bon sauvage et sa contrepartie obligée, la critique de notre propre société, abondamment présentes dans les relations de voyage. Un tel choix a quelque d'automatique: à preuve le fait que,

[180] William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans* : *White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880*, Foreword by James D. Le Sueur (Bloomington : Indiana UP, 2003) 71.

[181] Todorov elucidates Rousseau's philosophy in *Nous et les autres*: "La *perfectibilité*, c'est-à-dire quelque chose qui n'a aucun contenu positif mais qui permet à l'être humain d'acquérir tous les contenus. Voilà qui donne aux concepts de 'nature humaine' et d' 'universalité' un tour inattendu: ce qui est commun aux hommes n'est pas tel ou tel trait particulier...mais sa liberté, sa capacité de se transformer (éventuellement en bien)" (39-40).

> pour les voyageurs français, tous les 'sauvages' se ressemblent: peu importe qu'ils habitent l'Amérique ou l'Asie, qu'ils viennent de l'océan Indien ou du Pacifique: ce qui compte, en effet, c'est qu'ils s'opposent à la France.[182]

Regardless of the particular locale that was selected to serve as the contrast to European society, each shared the common characteristic of being a civilization that was founded on natural laws. However, the task of defining what "nature" meant was dangerous insofar as it implied there was only one universal nature with universal values, values of which coincidentally resembled those of the Europeans.

In his *Avertissement*, Demeunier acknowledges the inherent weakness in this genre of ethnological discourse during this epoch: "Un secret amour-propre nous séduit; il semble que nos Coutumes & nos Loix doivent servir de modèle à toutes les contrées; mais on sait que les pays les plus polis de l'Europe ont des usages qui nous surprendroient si nous les trouvions en Amérique ou parmi les Nègres."[183] This insight sets the anthologist's collection of travel accounts apart from the accounts of the voyagers themselves; and in spite of his relativistic approach, Demeunier does achieve an important feat in his work. The negative observations about primitive societies that Demeunier includes in the volumes, such as cannibalism, torture, and homicide, have a crucial impact on the representation of the "Other": These observations, juxtaposed with the romanticized idealistic traits, dispel the myth of the "noble savage." In dismantling this myth, Demeunier forces the reader to question the "true" nature of the culture being evaluated.[184]

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[182] Todorov, *Nous et les autres* 303-304.

[183] Demeunier (I) viij.

Cannibalism

The practice of cannibalism made its debut in travel literature long before Enlightenment voyages of discovery. In one of his most well-known essays, "Des cannibals," Michel de Montaigne depicts a native civilization killing, roasting, and then eating the enemy. Montaigne then uses his observations in conjunction with a list of virtues that this noble people possesses to make a critique of European society: "Je pense qu'il y a plus de barbarie à manger un homme vivant, qu'à le manger mort."[185] However, Todorov brings to light an inherent flaw in Montaigne's first-person observations, which is that one may only observe what is actually seen, but not what is absent. Todorov questions, "D'où vient cette énumération de traits dont ils sont dépourvus. puisqu'elle ne peut évidemment pas s'originer dans l'observation? Ne serait-ce de notre société à nous?"[186] This Eurocentric view is once again one of the central challenges Demeunier needed to address in representing his "usages," in this case cannibalism.

Demeunier first analyzes the type of food and meal customs that are found in different parts of the world according to the voyagers who have observed them. His first chapter, which focuses on "différens sortes d'Alimens," offers a portrait of the bizarre food items consumed among primitive civilizations. Demeunier mentions that vermin "les poux" are eaten in various parts of the world by Hottentots, Mexicans, and Tahitians, the latter for whom he claims, "Les enfans & la populace d'Otahiti les mangent

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[184] I italize "true" in this context to acknowledge that voyagers' accounts often contained misconceptions and untruths.

[185] Michel de Montaigne, *Essais de Montaigne, avec les notes de M. Coste*. Nouvelle édition Vol.2 (Londres: Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 1771) 234.

[186] Todorov, *Nous et les autres* 298.

également, & cette habitude se retrouve ainsi dans toutes les parties du monde."[187] Demeunier adds, "Des nations entières se nourissent ailleurs des ordures les plus sales."[188] He elaborates that certain societies will eat the entrails of animals, or carcasses that are not cleaned. This culminates in the observations of Captain Sharpey who, "atteste que ces Africains mangerent jusqu'aux excréments des bestiaux qu'ils lui vendoient, & des charognes remplies de vers" or "plusieurs [qui] n'aiment la chair des animaux que lorsque'elle est à demi pourrie; ainsi que nous ne mangeons certains fromages que quand ils sont avancés."[189] These images, taken from volumes I and III of Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*, are largely different than one would expect from Rousseau's "noble savage," but still excusable on the grounds of "natural tendencies."

Extraordinary food customs give way to a discussion about the cannibalistic tendencies of certain societies, because of the debates in ethnological discourse at the time about the existence of this practice:

> Les auteurs anciens & modernes citent en vaine des peuples qui mangent de la chair humaine; on a répondu que *cela est impossible*, & ceux même qui accusoient l'homme de quelque méchanceté, le croyoient incapable de cet *excès de dépravation*. Mais l'origine de cette habitude n'announce aucune perversité, & l'on a fait sur cette matiere de bien mauvais raisonnemens. Le témoignage du capitaine Cook, & de MM. Banks & Solander dissipe enfin tous les doutes.[190]

[187] Demeunier (I) 6. Demeunier cites that this observation is taken from Cook's Voyage.

[188] Demeunier (I) 20.

[189] Demeunier (I) 10.

[190] Demeunier (I) 13. Later Demeunier will cite an excerpt of their journal from Cook's 1770-1771 voyage where they encountered cannibalism in New Zealand.

According to Demeunier, hunger, revenge, and religion were all potential reasons for cannibalism. Furthermore, the numerous voyage accounts that cited this practice lend credence to its existence, in spite of exaggerated or erroneous elements of their descriptions. Certain travel accounts even highlight the variability of this practice, as one is reminded of James Cook's fateful return to Hawaii during the season of Ku, the god of war and human sacrifice. Instead of the warm welcome he received when mistaken for a god during the peaceful season, Cook was greeted with contempt, murdered by the natives and cannibalized.[191] Incidents such as this exclude cannibalism from being reduced to a general "usage."

Demeunier's most significant questioning of voyagers' perceptions of cannibalism among native civilizations is directed toward the travelers' assessments of which species of man would be predisposed to this "usage":

> Enfin on a prétendu qu'il y a des Nègres à physionomie de tigres qui sont antropophages par instinct; & qui déchirent même sur les vaisseaux, les autres esclaves avec lesquels ils se trouvent à bord. Cette assertion est dénuée de preuves; mais on a voulu expliquer par la constitution physique de l'homme, pourquoi il y a des antropophages, & un auteur a examiné, si l'usage de vivre de chair humaine, est conforme ou opposé aux intentions de la nature.[192]

Demeunier once again indicates that this act is with exception in many locales, and may be attributed to a war or rite. However, in his refusal of the biologically deterministic

[191] Alan Frost, *The Voyage of the Endeavor: Captain Cook and the Discovery of the Pacific* (Sydney: Allen, 1998).

[192] Demeunier (I) 20-21. This was based on Roëmer's account of New Guinea.

perspective of savage civilizations, he takes an important step away from a universalist approach.

Torture and Homicide

The pacific portrait of the noble savage is challenged in Demeunier's references to methods of torture among primitive civilizations, where the anthologist exhibits a pejorative tone toward the savage. In his discussion of various means of this act, Demeunier claims that this study is one that showed the reader, "le caractère des nations en particulier & de l'homme en general."[193] Demeunier also explains that at the risk of boring the reader, he will avoid showing the relationship between torture practices and the customs of the country since the reader is already well-accustomed to this task. However, Demeunier comments that "On remarque dans les supplices des Sauvages une cruauté lente & froide, ou bien une dureté grossiere qui ressemble à leur caractère."[194] It is significant to point out that learning about "l'homme en général" contradicts how the savage is portrayed, as this type of behavior is viewed as shocking and not in accordance with natural human tendencies. Demeunier confirms that these practices belong to a morally deficient savage who considers these acts appropriate and a form of divertissement: "Dans les siecles de barbarie, le supplice des criminels étoit un spectacle qu'on donnoit au peuple, & l'on choissoit souvent les jours de fête."[195]

In addition to Tavernier's tales of murderers being thrown into busy streets with their hands and feet cut off in India, Demeunier also cites extensive examples of

[193] Demeunier (III) 180.

[194] Demeunier (III) 180.

[195] Demeunier (III) 204.

homicides and suicides among primitive civilizations.[196] Referencing one of Cook's voyages, Demeunier illustrates how murder is an integral part of the habits of certain societies: "Les Indiens s'enyvrent d'opium, & se précipitant au milieu des rues une arme à la main, ils tuent les hommes qui se trouvent sur leur chemin, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient tués ou arrêtés eux-mêmes."[197] This example is especially striking in that it not only emphasizes the violent nature of the Indiens, but also a lack of rationality and mastery of their free will which renders them ultimately "inperfectibile."

The Female "Other"

The female "other" in travel writing was manifested in several popular forms: the island beauty who was willing to engage in sexual encounters with foreigners, the subservient harem wife who fulfilled her husband's wishes, or even the noble Indian who lived in an exotic state of nature. These stereotypes in travel writing developed out of exaggerated or misguided observations made by travelers, which trickled down into mainstream fictional narratives of the eighteenth-century, influencing such works as Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets* and *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, Voltaire's *L'Ingénu*, Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*, and later, Chateaubriand's *Atala* and *René*. In these stories, authors exploited sensational female roles in order to gain the reading public's interest in their work which may have been a satirical social commentary, a praiseworthy account of land in favor of colonization, or a pre-Romantic love story. More often than not, the ideals these fictional women embodied were based on a European value or fantasy regarding the female

[196] Demeunier (III) 194.

[197] Demeunier (III) 224.

nature. Demeunier perpetuates these European values in the anthology's sections on "*Des femmes,*" "*Beauté,*" and "*Pudeur,*" where women of many different origins are portrayed. Among the descriptions, Demeunier excerpts a good deal of observations about Tahitian women made by Cook during his voyages to the South Seas, a legacy that was more closely analyzed in Chapter 1.

Beauty

First, it is significant to understand how Demeunier determined the manner in which beauty was to be valued across different societies and how it was relevant to his ethnographical project. In his opening chapter on standards of beauty, Demeunier reveals his objective: "On a dit souvent que les idées sur la beauté ne sont pas les mêmes chez les différens peuples; & le but de ce chapitre est d'en mieux rapprocher le contraste."[198] However, it becomes apparent that Demeunier's approach to evaluating standards of beauty implies hierarchal values based on the level of civilization each society has attained. First he argues, "Le beau dans les arts, ne peut être senti que par ceux qui sont éclairés."[199] Then he takes this idea a step further to argue that there exists a continuum for judging beauty along which each society moves, "Les sauvages ne le connoissent en aucune maniere, & en suivant les progrès des peuples dans la civilisation, on peut imaginer une échelle de développement sur les idées qu'ils se formeront de la beauté."[200] While this notion rejects the idea that there is one universal standard of beauty, it

[198] Demeunier (II) 277.

[199] Demeunier (II) 179.

[200] Demeunier (II) 179. Demeunier elaborates on how island life affects beauty standards: "Enfin, le goût d'un homme, qui, dès l'enfance, vivroit seul dans une île, deviendroit désordonné, & des animaux auroient à ses yeun un caractere de beauté qu'ils n'ont pas aux nôtres."

inherently proposes that one would exist if all societies attained the same degree of "civilization." How Europeans may have viewed their less than civilized counterparts had they observed their real attributes was inconsequential. The savages they saw were those whom voyagers depicted, modeled after their fancy and their readers' tastes. Demeunier's supplementary commentary brings to light the ethnographical trap in demystifying voyagers' exaggerated and invented tales about savage beauty.

Virtue and Modesty

There were a fair amount of travel accounts that did not depict the female Other as a conventionally "beautiful" women. Rather, her intrigue was in great part based on her openly compliant demeanor toward European custom and taboos. This behavior was often attributed to her "natural" way of life. Douthwaite proposes that, "Some theorists saw the organization of savage societies as manifestations of an ideal order of natural ethics (*le droit naturel*) embodying all human freedoms, including sexual liberation."[201] For example, Cook's account of the practices he witnessed in Tahiti with his crew reinforces this notion. Demeunier includes this extract:

> La pudeur est inconnue chez quelques sauvages....Les Otahitiens n'ont aucun lieu retiré dans leurs cabanes, on voit de dehors tout ce qui s'y passe, & ils satisfont devant les autres leurs desirs & leurs passions, avec aussi peu de scrupule que

[201] Julia Doutwaite, *Exotic Women: literary heroines and cultural strategies in Ancien Régime France* (Philadelpihia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992) 145. She elaborates the fascination with Tahiti in particular: "While the French women suffer under the chains of ill-suited monogamous marriages demanded by Christian morality, Tahitian women remain free to pursue the partners of their choice under the natural, polygamous system of Tahitian morality" (141).

> nous appaisons notre faim en mangeant nos parens & nos amis. Cette licence de l'état de nature dure assez long-tems...[202]

Demeunier does point out, however, that James Cook observed that the Tahitians were not nude, but rather covered by leaves, tree branches, or garments they have fashioned out of these items.[203] Whilethis standard of dress may not be interpreted as "modest" by Europeans, it does show some discretion on the part of the liberated islanders.[204] Furthermore, in the original account of his first voyage from 1768-1771, Cook observes that how much islanders wear, if anything at all, depends largely on their age and place in Tahitian society. For example, children don't typically wear clothing, "the boys untill they are Six or Seven years of Age and the girls untill 3 or 4," because "at these ages they begin to cover what nature teaches them to hide."[205] Once again, this offers proof that the islanders did have a conscious conception of modesty which is revealed in their customs about dress. More important is Demeunier's use of Cook's extracts to make the argument that modesty is a value that is determined by nature.

The Despotic Ruler

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[202] Demeunier (II) 284. "Voyage de Cook."

[203] Demeunier (II) 265. "Les Otahitiens. Voyages de Cook."

[204] These observations about Tahitian customs of dress may be interpreted as a potentially interesting commentary about a "Paradise Lost", or a loss of innocence analogous to the story of creation. Formerly lauded as a terrestrial paradise where only pleasure and virtue reigned, the islanders' practice of covering up may be a moment that illustrates how Tahiti has been spoilt by outside visitors bringing new influence to the island.

[205] J.C. Beaglehole, Ed, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, Vol. I : The Voyage of the *Endeavor* 1768-1771 (Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 1955) 126. Cook does note that nudity did still have a place in various ceremonies, such as the fertility ceremony with the Plantain trees Cook describes earlier in his journal where two women approach Mr Banks and disrobe, leaving their cloths behind (93).

Images of despotic rulers and tyrannical slave states appeared in *L'Esprit des usages* in books such as "*Chefs, Souverains,*" "*Esclavage, Servitude,*" and "*Lois Pénales.*" Demeunier describes the characteristics of these rulers and the conditions they established for the subjects who lived under them in great detail, while in many cases insisting that these states were contrary to the basic needs and desires of man. One locale that appears frequently in these accounts is the Middle East, with its share of despotic princes and servile subjects, including the obedient women of the royal harem. The influence of Montesquieu on Demeunier's project is best seen in this context, where some of the main points of his philosophy found in *Lettres persanes* and *De l'Esprit des lois* appear as examples in the anthology. For example, Montesquieu insists in *De L'Esprit des lois* that despotism is contrary to man's universal desire for freedom and peace: "Il sembleroit que la nature humaine se soulèveroit sans cesse contre le gouvernement despoti que. Mais, malgré l'amour des hommes pour la liberté, malgré leur haine contre la violence, la plupart des peuples y sont soumis."[206] Demeunier builds on this idea in *L'Esprit des usages*. In his section on "*Chefs, Souverains,*" Demeunier makes a link between propriety and freedom. He explains, "Enfin l'homme n'est plus qu'un esclave qui ne possede rien: sa vie & sa personne appartiennent à son maître."[207] As we will see, the "man" who did not possess anything at the hands of a despotic ruler was often exemplified in literature as a "woman" who did not have free will at the hands of a despotic husband.

The Sultan and the Obedient Harem

[206] Montesquieu 297.

[207] Demeunier (II) 389.

Demeunier explores the negative side of voyagers' accounts of the situation of oriental women with the inclusion and consideration of examples of women's inferiority and violence at the hands of their spouses, as well as their propensity toward commodity-driven roles. The oriental woman is an alluring and a mysterious enigma, even to her spouse. In his chapter *Comment on devient esclave*, Demeunier gives the example of Tavernier's observation that "Elles [Les femmes] sont si bien enfermées dans l'Arménie, que plusieurs maris n'ont jamais vu le visage de leurs épouses."[208] This mystique, combined with the notion that these women lacked personal freedom and were considered the property of their husband, lead to a controversial yet enticing literary figure. In discussing *Lettres persanes*, Douthwaite suggests that, "In popular stereotypes of the eighteenth century, the Orient was notorious as a place of sexual and political despotism. Oriental women were commodified as sex objects: courtesans, harem wives and slaves."[209]

In *De l'Esprit des lois,* Montesquieu discusses how these stereotypical roles purportedly played out in the oriental women's real-life counterparts: "Dans les états despotiques, les femmes n'introduisent point le luxe; mais elles sont elles-mêmes un objet du luxe. Elles doivent être extrêmement esclaves."[210] The extracts Demeunier presents in his anthology reinforce how slave-like obedience in these societies is demanded of women. In one instance the ethnographer offers the example, "Le roi de Perse étoit gardé autrefois par des femmes qui ne le quittoient pas même pendant la

[208] Demeunier (I) 122.

[209] Douthwaite 102.

[210] Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois*. Oeuvres complètes v.2. Bibliothèque de la Pléaide, 86. (Paris: Gallimard, 1951) 341.

nuit."[211] The reader has the impression that the women in this case filled what resembled the role of a loyal and obedient watch animal keeping sight of his master. In a more extreme and comical example, Demeunier cites that, "Khosrou, roi de Perse, avoit trois mille femmes libres & douze mille esclaves, en sorte que les quinze mille femmes les plus belles de l'empire gémissoient dans la prison de ce prince."[212] He insists in his footnote that this is a true historical detail.

Conclusion

Was Demeunier's "supplement" really a success? Demeunier's volumes were successful with the reading public, evident in the publication of two subsequent editions. However, it may be argued that the ethnographical value was overlooked. Lemay contends,

> Au XVIIIe siècle, il n'existait pas encore d'anthropologues sociaux aptes à comprendre la nouveauté et l'originalité du jeune Démeunier. Mais il y avait un public friand des récits de voyages, auquel l'ouvrage de Démeunier offrait une compilation commode de ce qu'il y avait de plus intéressant et de "piquant" dans la masse des récits.[213]

Though Demeunier offers some well-informed observations, Pouillon points out that his cultural bias impeded his understanding of some of the customs voyagers witnessed during their travels. For instance, he asserts that Demeunier does not get much

[211] Demeunier (II) 347-348.

[212] Demeunier (II) 383. Bib. Orient. d'Herbelot. The ethnographer points out in his footnotes that "On craint qu'il n'y ait ici de l'exagération."

[213] Lemay "Naissance" 153.

from his information about marriage and kinship "parce qu'il ne connaît que la famille nucléaire, ce qui empêche de découvrir le caractère systématique de la parenté et d'analyser des formes de mariage trop différentes des nôtres, celles des Nayar de l'Inde par exemple."[214] Pouillon also notes the influence of Enlightenment philosophers, particularly Montesquieu:

> Demeunier attribue la diversité des coutumes d'une part à cause naturelles (climat, qualité des sols, "âpreté du ciel," organisation physique), d'autre part à une évolution complexe, gouvernée par des représentations mentales plus ou moins arbitraires, qui les éloigne progressivement de leur simplicité et de leur transparence originelles.[215]

This is especially seen in Demeunier's depiction of despotic societies, where he cites many of the same geographical locales as Montestquieu that have been affected by climate.

One significant critique of Demeunier's project is the blatant inclusion of religious traditions in spite of what he had indicated in his *Avertissement*. The anthologist claims to have omitted this "usage" because of his age and status as an unknown writer, though there are many moments in the three volumes where the religion of a savage civilization is called into question. Perhaps this is an ethnocentric refusal to recognize any religion that is not of his country. However, it more likely that this is further evidence that the portrait of the "Other" is an inverse portrait of European society. If Demeunier exposes the consideration of primitive religions as a primary aspect of his project, he is

[214] Pouillon XIV.

[215] Pouillon XV.

openly admitting to making comparisons to his country's own which would indeed be a controversial subject for a man of his position.

In light of the universalist influence on the anthological project, Demeunier announces his rupture from the relativistic accounts of voyagers in accepting that different customs manifest themselves differently in each society. The sole reason that Europeans traditionally found the customs of the "Other" shocking or fantastic was their unfamiliarity and lack of understanding. Demeunier claims:

> En étudiant les circonstances, on est surpris de la simplicité des coutumes les plus extraordinaires: les unes renferment des allégories grossieres & des moralités que nous n'entendons point, & qui ne seroient plus ridicules à nos yeux, si nous les connoissons; & d'autres enfin ne nous paroissent étranges que parce que nous n'y sommes point accoutumés.[216]

It is not certain that Demeunier really achieves the multicultural understanding he is striving to attain that is free from the constraints of ethnocentrism. His anthology "supplement" does, however, offer an important negotiation between travel accounts and ethnographical discourse that begs a reconsideration of stereotypical cultural topoi in travel literature. To the modern reader, his project offers another challenge: To what extent was this project flawed from the beginning in the anthologist's creation of categories based on universal values of man? We will see in the final chapter that Diderot also struggles with the notion of universal values in his invitation to the French reading public to draw comparisons between Tahiti and France.

[216] Demeunier (I) 33.

CHAPTER IV

THE "POSTMODERN SUPPLEMENT": SITUATING THE HYBRID AESTHETIC OF DIDEROT'S *SUPPLÉMENT AU VOYAGE DE BOUGAINVILLE* IN THE TRADITION OF TRAVEL "SUPPLEMENTS"

The preceding chapters of this thesis focused on redefining literary travel supplements in a broader sense in order to identify texts that may have been generally overlooked in the tradition. The travel supplement has thus far proved to be a unique moment in literary history which has manifested itself in multifarious forms, such as prose fiction, eyewitness newspaper articles, anthological commentaries, imaginary travel journals, and pedagogical literature. In order to conclude this study of travel supplements, it is necessary to examine a problematic text that employs a hybrid aesthetic which eliminates the possibility of its classification into a neatly defined subcategory. A close reading of Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* indicates that a search for multiple origins and a detailed textual analysis is essential in order to extrapolate the philosopher's message from this rich text.

Furthermore, the *Supplément*'s departure from the other travel texts cited in the preceding chapters lends support to the notion that Diderot's text is a "supplement" to the tradition of travel supplements. Until this point, the supplements that have been analyzed establish a clear link between the source and the resulting supplementary text with regard to the manner in which they have interacted with the original text. *Voyage à l'île de France* metamorphoses into *Paul et Virginie* through the alteration of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's previous observations and the incorporation of a new narrative form. The

naturalist Philibert de Commerson's letter recounting the same events found in Bougainville's account of their voyage to Tahiti serves as an addition to the credibility of the claims found in *Voyage autour du monde*. Diderot's *Supplément* is a "supplement" to this tradition in the sense that the philosopher's intent is clearly beyond furnishing additions, deletions, or even corrections to the original source text. Instead, Bougainville's Tahiti is used as backdrop for a literary and philosophical agenda that preceded its claimed source text. The confusion that arises in the reader's attempt to draw links between the two texts results in a supplement where one is forced to trace multiple paths to the source, or sources, none of which provide the complete picture individually.

In light of these considerations, one may contend that Diderot is purposefully supplementing more than Bougainville's travel narrative, though the *Supplément* claims to identify a specific source. William W. Stowe argues that the *Supplément* "never questions the fact of Bougainville's voyage or his text, but it does advocate continual supplementation and re-supplementation in order to bring texts to life and relate them to present circumstances."[217] To appreciate fully the relationship of the *Supplément* to Bougainville's *Voyage,* it is necessary to consider what other texts or cultural dialogues that Diderot is supplementing, which begs an investigation of literary and non-literary sources.

The multiplicity of sources introduces an arguable correlation between the philosopher's aesthetic and postmodern debates regarding source and origin.[218] In *De la*

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[217] William W. Stowe, "Diderot's Supplement: A Model for Reading," *Philological Quarterly* 62.3 (1983): 360.

[218] As highlighted in the introduction, for the purposes of this thesis, *source* is to mean the text from which a supplement results, whereas *origin* is an absolute beginning that is unidentifiable, but recognizable as the theoretical genesis.

grammatologie, Derrida poses the question, "...Qu'est-ce que la descendance dans l'ordre du discours et du texte?"[219] This is a central theme in tracing the lineage of travel supplements. Derrida denounces the proposition that the genealogy of discourse to text can be determined through the retracing of a finite set of roots because of the inherent contradiction it presents:

> ...Dire qu'un texte n'est jamais qu'un *système de racines*, c'est sans doute contredire à la fois le concept du système et le schème de la racine. Mais pour n'être pas une pure apparence, cette contradiction ne prend sens de contradiction et ne reçoit son « illogisme » que d'être pensée dans une configuration finie – l'histoire de la métaphysique – prise à l'intérieur d'un système de racines qui ne s'y termine pas et qui n'a pas encore de nom.[220]

It is doubtful that Diderot intended his identification with Bougainville's voyage to be considered as an exclusive source. It is also not likely that Diderot conceived of his text as a reproducible, closed formula by identifying his text as a "supplement". For these reasons, the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* presents a unique set of challenges to the reader looking to identify sources and authorial intentions. The source text, Bougainville's *Voyage*, is explicitly identified in the title of Diderot's *Supplément*. While this appears to resolve the question of what is being supplemented, this tactic only proves to be a manipulation of the reader. If Diderot's title claims that the philosopher's satiric account and contemplation of island mores are a supplement to Bougainville's narrative, then the reader ought to heed the title as a forewarning that a search elsewhere for sources is necessary.

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[219] Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit) 149.

[220] Derrida 150.

Moreover, the presence of a subtitle announces from the onset that there is more than one source to identify.[221] It also edifies the importance of a theme which runs through the *Supplément,* as well as many other works by Diderot: the danger of assigning morality arbitrarily to actions that are in accordance with the laws of nature. Finally, the structure of the *Supplément* renders the text even more obtuse, as the reader is confronted with a narrative about encounters with the Tahitians, dialogue between Europeans regarding social customs, and a seemingly unrelated anecdote about a woman named Polly Baker. Ultimately, Diderot's idiosyncratic style gives the reader the responsibility of tracing the *Supplément*'s genealogy in a search for meaning. Through the creation of an autonomous reader, Diderot, at least initially, cleverly absolves himself of linking his text with controversial discourse.[222] It is the reader's task to bring to light other sources by dismantling the text and analyzing the various structural elements to look for clues that indicate what other texts or traditions Diderot may be supplementing.

In utilizing a variety of literary styles, genre-mixing, intertextuality, and borrowing from a well-known voyage of discovery, the question remains: What is Diderot supplementing? Diderot's text cannot be read simply as a supplement to Bougainville's *Voyage*. One may argue that the *Supplément* is a supplement to Diderot's own philosophy and preceding literary works. However, from a global perspective, the critiques and fantasies reflected in the *Supplément* link it to Enlightenment ideology in general, which was arguably a driving force behind Bougainville's initial impressions and

[221] The implications of the complete title, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville , ou Dialogue entre A. et B. sur l'inconvénient d'attacher des idées morales à certaines actions physiques qui n'en comportent pas*, will be discussed further later in this chapter.

[222] "Autonomous reader" is one who plots their own literary path, seeking out sources that are revealed explicitly or implicitly in the text.

subsequent account. The task of finding the origin, or origins, is confounded as the process of identifying sources becomes cyclical with no clear origin or destination.

This self-guided literary circumnavigation sets Diderot's *Supplement* apart in a classification of its own, where several pertinent questions are begged: How may this text be considered a "supplement" to the genre of literary travel supplements? How does the *Supplément* interact with its claimed source text in ways in which other supplements did not? While structural and aesthetic diversity is also present across other supplementary texts in the tradition, the degree of innovation found in the *Supplément* with regard to juxtaposing styles is unparalleled. Or is Diderot simply recording the discourse of his epoch by textually depicting his fellow countrymen's reactions to the fashionable tale of Tahiti in relation to modern France? The conjecture surrounding Diderot's inspiration and intention is limitless. While a definitive conclusion may not be possible, a close study of the text next to several of its probable sources fosters a better understanding of Diderot's place and time in the tradition of travel supplements.

A "hybrid" supplement: the question of origin in Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*

The *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* is not the first time the reader is presented with one of Diderot's "supplements."[223] Diderot exploited the technique of supplementing as an integral part of the aesthetic of many of his works, particularly as a means of transmitting his philosophical notions. Furbank affirms, "His works, as we shall see, frequently take the shape, and sometimes even the title of a 'Contribution' or a

[223] Georges Daniel attests: "Une bonne dizaine d'oeuvres de Diderot ... sont, se veulent ou se donnent des suites, des suppléments et des additions, et cela découle de la manière même dont plusieurs d'entre elles ont été composées. " *Le Style de Diderot: Légende et Structure* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1986) 135.

'Supplement,' presenting themselves as an addition to some work, real or imaginary, that has gone before."[224] For instance, there is a clear connection to 1749's *Lettre sur les aveugles* in the 1751 essay *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, where in the opening "Lettre à Monsieur ***" Diderot admits, "Je conviens encore qu'il est fait à l'imitiation d'un autre qui n'est pas trop bon."[225] The philosopher also includes a supplement entitled "Additions pour servir d'éclaircissements à quelques endroits de la Lettre sur les sourds et muets" at the end of the essay.[226]

In 1769, the philosopher appended *Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot* and *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* with the *Suite de l'entretien*. The latter was arguably the most satirical dialogue of the trilogy where Diderot punctuates his abstract thoughts on materialism and biological determinism with a social critique of civic and religious institutions.[227] *Les Salons*, appearing between 1759 and 1781, supplemented well-known works of art. Paintings by artists such as Greuze and Vernet were transformed by narratives and dialogue, telling the story of the various painted subjects from where the canvas left off. Diderot's art critiques also demonstrated the importance of considering the cultural periphery in the interpretation of art.[228] "Meaning" can only be found in the

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[224] P.N. Furbank, *Diderot: A Critical Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992) 58.

[225] Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et muets", *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Yvon Belaval, vol. 2 (Paris: Société Encyclopédique Française et le Club Français du Livre, 1969) 519.

[226] Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et muets" 569.

[227] Here Diderot takes up his familiar stance on the basis of laws. When asked by Mlle de Lespinasse about what he would change with regard to civic and religious laws, Bordeu replies, "Qu'on les a faites sans équité, sans but et sans aucun égard à la nature des choses et à l'utilité publique." Diderot, *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, eds. H. Dieckmann and J.Varloot, vol. 17 (Paris : Hermann, 1987) 669.

[228] Daniel Brewer highlights the link between relationship and interpretation, citing the *Encyclopédie* article "Beau": "Diderot appears to argue here that beauty does indeed exist in an objective sense, independently of the individual subject's relative perception of things. Thus beauty can be understood in two ways, existing 'hors de moi' and 'par rapport à moi'...Beauty can be defined objectively-'hors de moi'-only in

relationship between the work and that with which it comes in contact. This is a hypothesis that is well-tested in the *Supplément*, where Diderot averts the issue of cultural subjectivity by relying on claims of an objective "universal" nature of man with corresponding laws.

Finally, the multi-collaborator work that spanned nearly two decades, *L'Encyclopédie*, produced several different types of supplements in its construction. Aside from the supplement edition, which contained indexes to the tedious volumes, "renvois" at the end of many articles intended to create cross-references among certain entries. As a supplement to many articles concerning machinery, instruments, tools, etc., there were also eleven volumes of engravings. Fittingly enough, several entries on "supplement" were included as encyclopedic entries.[229] Among them, a literary definition, not claimed by any one collaborator, defines a "supplément" as "une addition faite pour suppléer à ce qui manquoit à un livre."[230] If this was Diderot's understanding of a supplement, one may conclude that looking at the *Supplément* in relation to the

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relation to-'par rapport à'-a subject, which is the very definition of subjective beauty." *Discourse of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France: Diderot and the Art of Philosophizing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 145. This questioning of an artificial objectivity is a great subject of debate in Derrida's literary theory, as we will see later when discussing the textual tensions that ultimately lead to the need for a deconstruction of Diderot's text.

[229] Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert. University of Chicago : ARTFL Encyclopédie Projet (Spring 2010 Edition), Robert Morrissey (ed), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/. The definitions listed for "supplément" in the *Encyclopédie* are:
SUPPLÉMENT, (*en Grammaire*) [Grammaire] {Generated Class: Grammaire} [Beauzée].
Supplément d'un arc, (*en termes de Géométrie ou de Trigonométrie*) [Géométrie | Trigonométrie] {Generated Class: Géométrie} [de La Chapelle].
Supplément, (*en matiere de Littérature*) [Littérature] {Generated Class: Histoire naturelle} [author unknown].
Supplément, arc de, [unclassified] {Generated Class: Géométrie} [author unknown].
Supplément, (*terme de Finances.*) [Finances] {Generated Class: Jurisprudence} [Jaucourt].

[230] Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert. University of Chicago : ARTFL Encyclopédie Projet (Spring 2010 Edition), Robert Morrissey (ed), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/. Supplément (*en matiere de Littérature*) [Littérature] [author unknown]

philosopher's previously written works is essential to its interpretation by allowing the reader to witness the interplay between the texts and to determine what had been "missing" from its sources and why?

In citing the "supplement" as a prevalent characteristic of Diderot's style, it is important to discern what it was about this technique that spoke to Diderot. Was it the opportunity to manipulate the preceding material in a different form or from a different point of view? What did a "supplement," "suite," "addition," and "continuation" indicate in relation to the preceding text? Could it be argued that supplements offered a dialogue between the literary creation and influences outside of the text, resulting in some of the most poignant social critiques of the time? Georges Daniel captures the complexity of the questions of origin and source in Diderot's works with his analysis of the philosopher's style of linking texts together: "Pour Diderot, un discours s'enchaîne à un autre discours, qu'il continue, qu'il complète, qu'il développe, qu'il peut même développer indéfiniment, au risque, à chaque instant, de l'infléchir en le faisant déborder vers on ne sait quelles questions et régions étrangères au sujet."[231] Daniel's observations lead one to consider the possibility that Diderot regards the text as a personified entity, capable of imitating the process of authorship, and deliberate in its intentions to lay out a path for the reader to follow according to its own literary agenda.[232] For instance, in the *Supplément* it is the dialogue between two European men, A and B, which guides the course of Diderot's text, bringing to light the most notable aspects of Bougainville's voyage and engaging the

[231] Daniel 135.

[232] Brewer affirms this idea of a text writing itself autonomously: "More a writer than an editor, Diderot senses most acutely how one text can rejoin and rewrite another, perhaps even unbeknownst to the writer." *The Discourse of Enlightenment* 62.

reader in a provocative state of contemplation of how these encounters compare against their own society.

Personification of the text will be an important point to revisit later in this chapter when discussing the dialogic aspect of the *Supplément*, but as a preliminary conclusion one may argue that the author's aesthetic in creating a supplementary text calls for a confounding of origins. As previously mentioned, one principal complication of the question of origin is set forth in the subtitle of the work, "Ou Dialogue entre *A.* et *B.* sur l'inconvénient d'attacher des idées morales à certaines actions physiques qui n'en comportent pas." This subtitle reveals Diderot's text is not strictly a "supplement" to Bougainville's voyage, but also to the cultural framework surrounding it. Éliane Gandin supports this notion, "Le sous-titre donné par Diderot au *Supplément* révèle l'intention de traiter avant tout d'un problème de morale, et non pas d'intérêt ethnographique...".[233] From this point, the reader is left to reconcile the link between the voyager's description of island paradise and a social critique of morality.

Furthermore, the subtitle functions as what Genette considers a "paratexte public" by giving the reader a "point de repère" from which the supplement should be read.[234] However, a deliberate element of confusion is created since the title implies a relationship between the *Supplément* and Bougainville's text, though the subtitle suggests the continuation of a moral debate. That said, it is not clear at the onset to whom that moral

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[233] Éliane Gandin, *Le Voyage dans le Pacifique de Bougainville à Giraudoux* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1998) 55.

[234] Gérard Genette explains: "Certains éléments de paratexte s'adressent effectivement ... au public en général, c'est-à-dire à tout un chacun: c'est le cas ... du titre, ou d'une interview. D'autres s'adressent (même réserve) plus spécifiquement, et plus restrictivement, aux seuls lecteurs du texte: c'est typiquement le cas de la préface. D'autres, comme les formes anciennes de la prière d'insérer, s'adressent uniquement aux critiques; d'autres aux librairies; tout cela constituant (péritexte ou épitexte) ce que nous appellerons le paratexte *public*." *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 14.

debate belongs: Bougainville or Diderot? Genette argues that subtitles functioning as paratexts serve as a revelatory tool in clarifying authorial intention and resolving ambiguity about genre designation.[235] In the case of this work, the paratext further confounds Diderot's intentions, and the only conclusion that may be drawn is that the philosopher's intention is that of creating the confusion.

This lack of focus inhibits the reader's ability to oversimplify the origin- an act that would impede the full appreciation of the text in question since much of the interpretation does lie in the exchange between the various sources. This is to say, the text cannot be analyzed in a vacuum apart from its numerous sources. Diderot wanted to invite as many variables as possible to the table to engage in discourse and for this reason, it is difficult to dismantle the interlocking pieces of the *Supplément* and trace their origins, situate them in a chronological timeframe, or differentiate those that are literary, philosophical, ethical, scientific, and so forth. However, it is useful to approach the questions of origin and source from the links the pieces present within the text in order to gain a perspective into the influences which give it a life of its own, as well as to achieve a better understanding of the work as a synergistic whole. This section will consider the most readily identifiable sources of the *Supplément*, and how their impact influences a reader's comprehension of the text.

A supplement to Louis Antoine de Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*

One may argue that the primary source of Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* is Bougainville's narrative adaptation of his travels between 1766-1769, *Voyage autour du monde*, which was published in 1771. It is significant to mention once

[235] Genette 92.

again that Bougainville's travel journals on which his narrative was based were not assembled and published until the second half of the 20th century. However, in addition to Bougainville's travel narrative, Commerson's "Lettre à Tahiti" and surreptitiously published versions of Cook's voyage was part of the reading culture of the epoch and served to further elucidate Diderot's notions about Bougainville and Tahiti.

Diderot's deliberate selection of Bougainville's voyage as a backdrop for his critiques is an interesting one. Unlike other fictional travel supplements, such as l'abbé Coyer's *Supplement to Lord Anson's Voyage round the world* or l'abbé Prévost's fantastical adventures of Capitaine Robert Lade, Diderot chose Bougainville's real-life historical voyage as an inspiration.[236] Moreover, in the supplementary text Diderot retained an appreciable amount of the 'realities' the voyager had observed in spite of the apparent exaggerations and fictional discourse. Roger Célestin points out that, "In the *Supplément* at least, Diderot finds it necessary to refer, even if obliquely, to 'facts' (which he manipulates extensively) in order to produce his own (partially) imaginary Tahiti from the (already constructed) Tahiti of Bougainville."[237] Ultimately, these inclusions served an important function in the philosopher's text.

The first-hand details about Tahitian culture that Diderot borrowed from Bougainville: the sexual rituals and freedom, the lack of property laws, the altruistic nature of the inhabitants, etc.; breathed an air of plausibility into the framework of Diderot's fictional supplement. In addition, the fact that Bougainville's voyage had

[236] Roger Célestin cites: "The infinitely greater scope, detail, and number of new texts about the exotic written by those who have a first-hand knowledge of it leads to a massive use of the exotic by-precisely-those who have not been there but avidly consume the new wealth of information about it: the philosophes." *From Cannibals to Radicals: Figures and Limits of Exoticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 65.

[237] Célestin 69.

indeed taken place and was in theory, "scientific," reinforces the verisimilitude of the Tahitian customs in Diderot's fiction. Why was this important? Even if Diderot only conceived of the *Supplément* as a playful satire, the many seemingly real-life variables facilitated the readers' suspension of disbelief with regard to the tales of Tahiti. This rendered the text even more compelling to an audience mostly comprised of the philosopher's contemporaries, who maybe wanted to fantasize about a utopian society far removed from France, or perhaps become an "active participant" in a unique reader-driven text through its many dialogues.[238]

This last point is particularly profound. The authenticity of a literary encounter employing readers' participation further implicates the importance of preconceived notions and cultural biases, a necessary condition for a successful satire. Dena Goodman asserts that the *Supplément* was very much a politically driven experiment which was manifested in the form of a critical dialogue.[239] She contends that this call to consciousness relies on active reader participation in the form of dialogue: "When Diderot transformed his review into a dialogue between A. and B., he made of the reader an active participant in the analysis of that text, making explicit the implicit exigencies of the reader which guide the writer."[240] As previously discussed, the autonomous reader is tasked with tracing the sources of the *Supplément*. However, Diderot must have been aware that subjectivity enters into the question of which sources the reader may actively seek out. In choosing a popular and sensational text such as Bougainville's that appears

[238] Dena Goodman points out the limited readership of the *Supplément* in its initial publication in the *Correspondance littéraire* before it was distributed to a wider audience in 1796. *Criticism in Action: Enlightenment Experiments in Political Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 172.

[239] Goodman 174.

[240] Goodman 177.

to tout universal values, Diderot ensures that his "principal" source text established common ground amongst his reading public. From this point of cultural relativity, the philosopher employed dialogue to extract other various sources that may not have been as readily recognizable in order to construct a critique.

Diderot's choice of dialogue as one of the *Supplément*'s main literary devices heightens the sense that the events discussed in a flashback conversation by the Europeans, A and B, were not simply a fable. Diderot's dialogic critiques also prove to be a powerful driving force in how the portrait of Tahiti is represented. Susan Pinette proposes, "The dialogic genre does not simply provide a transparent medium through which the truth of the text can be expressed. Dialogue, especially for Diderot, informs the text. His texts demand that their meaning be understood in terms of the literary form they hold."[241] In this case, Diderot hopes to engage the reader in the cultural critique he is constructing through the captivating elements of Tahitian culture that are revealed over the course of A and B's conversation. In the *Supplément,* the philosopher manages to convert some of the raciest aspects of Bougainville's text into speech, perhaps as a calculated strategy on Diderot's part to strengthen the intensity of the Tahitian "characters" he employs to unfurl his critique. While Bougainville's narrative strove to depict a "Paradise Found" from the first-hand experiences he had on the island, Diderot's work was used as a springboard to generate modern debate and discussion pertaining to ideas of a civic system based on the laws of nature and the societal role of women.[242]

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[241] Susan Pinette, "Diderot's Dialogic Difference," *The French Review* 81.2 (2007) 342-43.

[242] Richard Lansdown explores the divergences between Bougainville's and Diderot's works: "As we shall see, Enlightenment voyagers looked at Islander women and their relations with Islander men and European sailors with deeply enquiring eyes, whether "anthropological" or speculative. Such relations raised questions of nature (sexual instinct) versus repression (morality) and of the treatment of women ("the weaker vessel") as an index of cultural sophistication. They also-as the *philosophe* Diderot's work

This is to say that Bougainville's account appeared to be more anthropologically driven with propagandistic goals, whereas that of Diderot was more philosophical and interactional in tone.[243]

In spite of the notable divergences between *Voyage* and the *Supplément*, Bougainville and Diderot share one commonality in that neither had an accurate grasp of Tahitian mores. Bougainville's observations about Tahiti were gathered in such a short period of time that rendered full cultural comprehension of this people difficult, presuming it would be possible in the first place. In addition, the voyager had an incentive to idealize the discovery of Tahiti to appeal to those who had sent him on a quest for colonial propaganda, especially after the sensation that James Cook's account created in France at the period. Finally, in comparing Bougainville's posthumously published journal to his 18th-century narrative, there are clearly fabrications on the voyager's part of what ultimately appeared in his account.

Anthropological accuracy was less of a priority in Diderot's work. The Tahitians were most valuable to Diderot as "porte-parole" for the diffusion of the philosopher's ideas. The main goal was to create the illusion of a society that was capable and worthy of this task. Andrew Curran contends, "In short, the Tahitian, unlike he European, and unlike other more warlike *sauvages* evoked in the *Supplément*, was unique in that he had achieved a form of unaffected wisdom based on natural values, desires and collective needs-needs that, on this island paradise, did not involve the cannibalism or

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suggests-raised questions of a more searching kind about European society, such as the purposes that institutions like marriage and the nuclear family were designed to serve: the retention and transmission of property, requiring the patriarchal control of women's fertility." *Strangers in the South Seas: The Idea of the Pacific in Western Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006) 71.

[243] The goal of Bougainville's account may have been scientific, but the lack of detail and accuracy in *Voyage autour du monde* was a point that was criticized by academics of the time.

infanticide practised in other states of nature."[244] What the reader ultimately finds is that the *Supplément* is written by an author who had not set foot on Tahiti, but who instead breathed philosophical discourse into allegorical figures of a near-"utopian" civilization. As Christie V. McDonald points out, Tahiti's perfection was based on its divergences from European culture, rather than its own merit as a true "utopia." McDonald explains, "It is the negative relationship-that of contradiction and antithesis-rather than the concept of perfection which interests us here. Utopia, it would seem, arises from a series of oppositions-here/elsewhere, real/imaginary, etc.-which constitutes the fundamental contradiction."[245] As we will see, Tahiti's contradiction to Europe offered Diderot the requisite success story of "natural laws" that will be the basis for the philosopher's calling for an emphasis on universal values.

Assigning speech that represented the cultural reflections and colonial apprehensions of the natives was further complicated from an anthropological and linguistic standpoint. It is revealed in both *Voyage* and the *Supplément* that Tahitian language differed greatly from French. In fact, one could argue that Diderot's contrived dialogue may not have been much further from accuracy than Bougainville, considering neither could claim to have a consummate understanding of the native language. In spite of the potentially arbitrary linguistic representation of the natives, Diderot still undertakes a rewriting of Bougainville's narrative from both a structural and rhetorical standpoint that reflects the philosopher's new agenda.

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[244] Andrew Curran, "Logics of the human in the *Supplément*," *New Essays on Diderot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 163.

[245] Christie V. McDonald, "The Reading and Writing of Utopia in Denis Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*," *The Dialogue of Writing: Essays in Eighteenth-Century French Literature (*Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984) 64.

The credibility of Bougainville's exaggerations and Diderot's linguistic liberties are a compelling testament to the pervasive power the myth of Tahiti had on the reading public. While it has been argued in Chapter 1 that Commerson lent credence to Bougainville's claims as an eyewitness and naturalist, and here that Diderot used Bougainville's experiences as a recognizable motif for his social critique, the question of whether or not Tahiti resonated as a plausible utopia with French readers was not critical to the texts' successes. Jonathan Lamb outlines the potential motives Diderot had in promoting an island myth based on *Voyage*:

> In brief, he [Diderot] proposes that the discovery of a terrestrial paradise is not necessary because the Church Fathers proposed it, or because Columbus sailed to the most extreme point of the east, but because the restraints of civilization require a corresponding fantasy of erotic liberation. Bougainville, he suggests, has not discovered an alternative to Paris; rather, he has located its imaginative core.[246]

Even as a fantasy, the Tahitian illusion is compelling enough to exploit as an allegorical alternative to civilized France, similar to Montesquieu's Troglodytes before their demise into civilization.

Diderot's use of a hybrid aesthetic enables the philosopher to launch several debates simultaneously, thus giving readers a first-hand glimpse as they unfold. Civic law is one important component of Diderot's debates, particularly in the sense of comparing and contrasting laws governing property, marriage, and sexuality. There is an apparent disdain for the hypocritical principles governing religion, and the flawed institution of

[246] Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas :1680-1840* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001) 530.

marriage that runs contrary to human biology. Above all, there is a questioning and deconstruction of the romanticized notion that the footprint of European visitors was welcomed by the entire island population.

The impact of Diderot's rewriting of Bougainville's narrative rests largely on the philosopher's use of several literary techniques. First, Diderot incorporates the dialogue between A and B, which provides insight into the questions and commentaries that the philosopher's contemporaries would likely have following a critical reading of Bougainville's text at the epoch. In this regard, the reception of Bougainville's text is no longer tangential and "hors-texte," but rather the driving force behind the genesis of Diderot's *Supplément*.[247] Secondly, one may remark that the reading undertaken by A and B is in fact not Bougainville's narrative, but rather Diderot's *Supplément*. The dialogic representation of the voyager's general Tahitian observations informs the reader that the text A and B find lying on a table must contain veritable details about Bougainville's voyage. This notable shift from passive to active characters in the *Supplément* is manifested in the philosopher's depiction of the old man's lamentation on European "civilization" and influence, as well as in conversations about religion and sexuality between a native, Orou, and a European chaplain. Finally, there is evidence that Diderot's *Supplément* is comprised of several "mini-supplements." Structurally, the *Supplément* is broken into five sections, two of which are entitled "suite."[248] The latter sections consider Tahitian customs within a philosophical framework that undeniably belongs to Diderot.

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[247] Derrida 227.

[248] Denis Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, *Diderot: Oeuvres*, vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1994). Section IV: *Suite de l'entretien de l'aumônier avec l'habitant d'Otaïti* (563), and Section V: *Suite du dialogue entre A et B* (569).

Dialogic aesthetic

Dialogue between A and B: Typical European reception to Bougainville's voyage?

In the first section of the *Supplément*, "Jugement du voyage de Bougainville," the reader is confronted with what appears to be an assessment of Bougainville's capacity as a voyager, as well as a review of *Voyage autour du monde*, published after the completion of an expedition around the world. This was not coincidental, as Peter Jimack notes that a review Diderot wrote of Bougainville's voyage in 1771 "was to become an early draft of the first two sections of the *Supplément.*"[249] During the period, there had been some musings amongst luminaries about Bougainville's lack of scientific detail in *Voyage*. This was one reason why it was so significant to have the accompanying naturalist Commerson corroborate the voyager's Tahitian account. In the *Supplément*, it is a reason for Diderot to make mention of the voyager's background in mathematics during the initial dialogue between A and B in order to assert Bougainville's suitability. Claudia Moscovici asserts that "Readers are informed that Bougainville was a mathematician: that is, a specialist in the science that, during the Enlightenment, epitomized objectivity and universal knowledge."[250] In spite of this, the reader notices a critical undercurrent in the opening scene of the *Supplément* within the first pieces of dialogue between A and B stemming from the perceived incompatibility of a mathematical mind and a voyage of exploration. For instance, without having read the

[249] Peter Jimack, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, Critical Guides to French Texts Ser. 75 (London: Grant & Cutler, 1988) 11.

[250]Claudia Moscovici, "An Ethics of Cultural Exchange: Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*," *CLIO* 30.3 (2001) 292. Interestingly, Moscovici argues that "while mathematics may have truth-value..the two characters [A and B] imply that it has very little use-value" (292). She postulates that Diderot would have considered rigid objectivity an impediment to anthropological observation.

text, A, who has obviously been apprised of Bougainville's voyage in social circles, remarks:

> Je n'entends rien à cet homme-là. L'étude de mathématiques, qui suppose une vie sédentaire, a rempli le temps de ses jeunes années; et voilà qu'il passe subitement d'une condition méditative et retirée au métier actif, pénible, errant et dissipé de voyageur.[251]

B's assertion that an ocean-locked life on a ship may be considered sedentary does not appease A's skeptical appraisal of Bougainville's potential as a proper voyager. From what was arguably a personal encounter with the voyager at some point, A attests that, "Bougainville a le goût des amusements de la société; il aime les femmes, les spectacles, les repas délicats...".[252] For A, this type of personality presented a contradiction that could not be overlooked: "Il est aimable et gai: c'est un véritable Français lesté, d'un bord, d'un traité de calcul différentiel et intégral, et de l'autre, d'un voyage autour du globe."[253]

After B defends Bougainville's contradictions as normal comportment for a man in his situation, he is confronted with A's question, "Que pensez-vous de son *Voyage*?"[254] B's response highlights the importance of the scientific and political goals behind the notable voyage, which seem to reflect Diderot's own principles:

> Autant que j'en puis juger sur une lecture assez superficielle, j'en rapporterais l'avantage à trois points principaux: une meilleure connaissance de notre vieux

[251] Diderot, *Supplément* 541.

[252] Diderot, *Supplément* 542

[253] Diderot, *Supplément* 542.

[254] Diderot, *Supplément* 542.

domicile et de ses inhabitants; plus de sûreté sur des mers qu'il a parcourues la sonde à la main, et plus de corrections dans nos cartes géographiques.[255]

To the voyager's travel goals, B adds that Bougainville left with "les lumières nécessaires," "le désir de voir, de s'éclairer et d'instruire," as well as aptitude in a wide range of math and sciences.[256] These qualities reflect Enlightenment ideology and appealed to Diderot's emphasis on the importance of utility and reason.

While A and B are discussing Bougainville's voyage account, B points out that there is a copy of Diderot's *Supplément* on a nearby table.[257] Together, they decide to embark on a reading of the text, beginning with the philosopher's depiction of Bougainville's reception by the natives when first arriving on Tahiti. The appearance of an already completed *Supplément* within the text that is still unfolding creates the impression that the process of supplementation is ongoing and reinforces Diderot's dynamic and relational aesthetic. It also presupposes the *Supplément*'s existence in the current reading culture, further adding to the verisimilitude of the work. B attests that, "Ce n'est point une fable; et vous n'auriez aucun doute sur la sincérité de Bougainville, si vous connaissiez le *Supplément* de son *Voyage*."[258]

The "concurrent supplement" formula also substantiates postmodern arguments regarding external tensions interfering with the text itself. Thus far, it has been discussed that a number of source texts are indicated throughout the *Supplément* from which certain "external" ideas may be referenced. But what happens when one of these texts are the

[255] Diderot, *Supplément* 542.

[256] Diderot, *Supplément* 542.

[257] Although unnamed, similar exchanges will be seen between what are purportedly the same two characters in Diderot's "contes", which are said to comprise a trilogy with the *Supplément*. This notion will be further elaborated in the next section.

[258] Diderot, *Supplément* 546.

text itself? Diderot's creation of the peripheral dialogue surrounding the reception of the *Supplément* enables the philosopher to contrive an appearance that the polemic debate between A and B that runs the course of the work is somehow separate from the already present work that they begin reading in the first part. In spite of this illusion, the dialogic additions become a means of linking the philosopher's ideas with the historical text. Moreover, the simultaneous supplements become a way for Diderot to link the supplementary text with cultural discourse at the epoch. Dena Goodman notes that "the dialogue between A and B, which shows the reader how to read, is an instance also of the criticism of the text being read: first of Bougainville's *Voyage* and later of the supplement to it."[259] B's reflections on Bougainville's voyage as he reads and discusses the *Supplément* highlight the impressions and questions surrounding the text at the epoch by the reading public.

These relationships are played out through the two sets of readers, A and B and the "outside" reader, whose reading exists simultaneously, but not independent from one another. When the "outside" reader approaches the text, the dialogic additions are now a part of the *Supplément* in its written form.[260] The additions cannot be regarded as dialogue "outside of the text," but rather, within a fictional reality that exists because of its relationship to the text. The paradoxical state of a supplement that appears within the text it is supplementing calls upon Derridean theory that there is no "hors-texte":

[259] Goodman 174.

[260] Goodman explains, "The doubting and questioning that lead to the reading of the text continue through and after it, and thus show reading to be part of a larger critical project of which it is the center. This centrality is reproduced structurally in the placing of the supplement within the *Supplément*, the text within the crticism" (175).

> Et pourtant, si la lecture ne doit pas se contenter de redoubler le texte, elle ne peut légitimement transgresser le texte vers autre chose que lui, vers un référent (réalité métaphysique, historique, psycho-biographique, etc.) ou vers un signifié hors texte dont le contenu pourrait avoir lieu, aurait pu avoir lieu hors de la langue, c'est-à-dire, au sens que nous donnons ici à ce mot, hors de l'écriture en général... *Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*.[261]

The supplementary text that A and B read that appears to exist prior to their dialogues is not outside of the text, but rather an indication that the resulting *Supplément* is another text in the chain of supplements. This perpetual nature of the supplement serves as a testament to Diderot's cumulative aesthetic. Stowe proposes:

> Diderot sees in the process of supplementation as consisting primarily of expansion rather than substitution, of completing an original, not cancelling it. Rather than concentrate on the supplement's tendency to remove the tension between itself and its original by replacing the original altogether, Diderot affirms the tension by insisting that supplement and original coexist and interact.[262]

Stowe notes that Diderot's process of supplementation indicates a divergence from Derrida's notion that a supplement will create a chain of signifiers that seek to substitute for the former. Perhaps it would be more accurate to consider that the idea of an "original" is problematic in Diderot's *Supplément* because of the number of sources one may cite with regard to the text. Along these lines, perhaps one may interpret Derrida's thoughts on substitution as a thoughtful recognition that the location of a pure origin is

[261] Derrida 227.

[262] Stowe 355.

tedious, if not impossible. The text is already a supplement when the reader receives it, and it will continue to cease to exist and come into being with each new reading. Supplements, Derrida argues, will continue to supplement infinitely: "...Il n'y a jamais eu que des suppléments, des significations substitutives qui n'ont pu surgir que dans une chaîne de renvois différentiels, le "réel" ne survenant, ne s'ajoutant qu'en prenant sens à partir d'une trace et d'un appel de supplément, etc."[263] A and B's reflections on Tahiti act as a "substitution" for Bougainville's observations, for Diderot's philosophies, for readers' opinions about Tahiti, and so forth. Diderot's addition of A and B's dialogue serves as an evolving set of referents to the *Supplément's* sources.

The Tahitian "voice": Les adieux du vieillard

"Tahitian" dialogue and speech comprise a large portion of Diderot's dialogic additions to the *Supplément*. Drawing on several allegedly factual observations about the natives, Diderot exploits the most titillating aspects of Bougainville's *Voyage* to the greatest advantage by creating provocative dialogues attesting to the hedonistic ways of life on Tahiti. Though the Tahitian discourse is a creation of Diderot, it offers a conversational counterpart to the Europeans, allowing for an intelligent cultural exchange that showcases the philosopher's ideas on a wide variety of themes. The old man, Orou, and the passive female characters, all act as porte-paroles for Diderot. In the case of the old man's speech, which constitutes the first glimpse of an islander's perspective, Jimack notes that "...It is relevant to remember that the speech given in the *Supplément* to the old man had formed part of the original review of Bougainville's *Voyage*, where it was an

[263] Derrida 228.

apostrophe to Bougainville by Diderot himself."[264] Therefore, while it may seem that Diderot is desperately attempting to restore equity to Bougainville's account of Tahiti by illustrating the voice of the "Other," the sentiments depicted by the natives must be considered at least in part to be driven by the relativistic values of the author. This becomes evident in the calculated additions that Diderot makes to Bougainville's arrival account of the Europeans on Tahiti.

Bougainville's description of how the Tahitians greeted European voyagers upon their arrival illustrates a scene of goodwill, fascination, and an instantaneous awareness on the part of the island community that they were receiving a people who were in some way superior to them:

> Nous y fûmes reçus par une foule immense d'hommes et de femmes qui ne se laissaient point de nous considérer; les plus hardis venaient nous toucher, ils écartaient même nos vêtements, comme pour vérifier si nous étions absolument fait comme eux; aucun ne portait d'armes, pas même de bâtons. Ils ne savaient comment exprimer leur joie de nous recevoir.[265]

Perhaps the only wrinkle in this illusion comes in the form of an old man of whom Bougainville made note in his preliminary remarks about Tahiti. In the voyager's description of "le vieillard," the reader is presented with a wise, respectable member of the community whose point of view carried weight among the natives. This character appears to be representative of the "old regime," perhaps a purer, less civilized form of the potentially diluted modern island culture resulting from various voyagers' visits to the

[264] Jimack 17.

[265] Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate du Roi* La Boudeuse *et la flûte* L'Étoile (Paris:Gallimard, 1982) 229.

island. Bougainville's depiction of the old man touts the minimal effects of old age when living in a natural paradise and the respect this stage of life commanded in the Tahitian community. Nonetheless, it also reflects an islander who may not have been entirely blissful upon the Europeans' arrival.[266] Bougainville cites :

> Cet homme vénérable parut s'apercevoir à peine de notre arrivée; il se retira même sans répondre à nos caresses, sans témoigner ni frayeur, ni étonnement, ni curiosité; fort éloigné de prendre part à l'espèce d'extase que notre vue causait à tout ce peuple, son air rêveur et soucieux semblait annoncer qu'il craignait que ces jours heureux, écoulés pour lui dans le sein du repos, ne fussent troublés par l'arrivée d'une nouvelle race.[267]

Although one cannot be certain whether or not Bougainville was accurate in what was read to be a perceived disdain on the part of this old man, the speech created by Diderot in the *Supplement* exploits the vieillard's hypothetical discontent to the philosopher's advantage.

Here, the reader notices that similarities exist between how this initial encounter was represented by the voyager and how it is being presented by Diderot:

> Lorsque le vaisseau de Bougainville s'approcha d'Otaïti, un nombre infini d'arbres creusés furent lancés sur les eaux; en un instant son bâtiment en fut environné; de quelque côté qu'il tournât ses regards, il voyait des démonstrations de surprise et de bienveillance.[268]

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[266] Bougainville's description of the old man is highly romanticized: "Le vieillard était père de notre hôte. Il n'avait du grand âge que ce caractère respectable qu'impriment les ans sur une belle figure. Sa tête ornée de cheveux blancs et d'une longue barbe, tout son corps nerveux et rempli, ne montraient aucune ride, aucune signe de décrépitude" *(Voyage* 229).

[267] Bougainville, *Voyage* 230.

This description reflects the same positive sentiment toward the European visitors that Bougainville expressed in *Voyage*.[269] Furthermore, Diderot does not necessarily deviate from how Bougainville described the vieillard in his *Supplément* in terms of description. Prior to the vieillard's speech, Diderot illustrates the man in a similar manner to that which was seen in the voyager's narrative: "C'est un vieillard qui parle. Il était père d'une famille nombreuse. A l'arrivée des Européens, il laissa tomber des regards de dédain sur eux, sans marquer ni étonnement, ni frayeur, ni curiosité."[270] The old man's contempt for the European interlopers in the *Supplément* validates the potential unhappiness that Bougainville claimed to have observed in this man when faced with his unwelcome guests.

However, the social critique that comes to light in this text will require a more blatant opposition to European culture. Diderot seizes the opportunity to create this opposition through the invention of a monologue delivered by the old man.[271] In the *Supplément*, the vieillard issues a warning to his fellow natives:

> Pleurez, malheureux Otaïtiens, pleurez; mais que ce soit de l'arrivée et non du départ de ces hommes ambitieux et méchants. Un jour vous les connaîtrez mieux. Un jour ils reviendront, le morceau de bois que vous voyez attaché à la ceinture

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[268] Diderot, *Supplément* 551.

[269] There is a point where B remarks to A that, "Le voyage de Bougainville est le seul qui m'ait donné du goût pour une autre contrée que la mienne..." (*Supplément* 545).

[270] Diderot, *Supplément* 546.

[271] In her article, "Voyage vers l'autre pour une image de soi dans le *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* de Denis Diderot", Marie-Jeanne Boisacq attests that, "La mise en scène d'un vieillard éloquent n'est pas originale. Deux antécédents littéraires ont dû influencer Diderot. En 1572 le poète portugais Camoens donne la parole à un vieillard hostile à Vasco de Gama qui se prépare à quitter le port de Lisbonne...En 1578, Jean de Lery dans son *Histoire d'un voyage en terre de Brésil*, met en scène un vieillard qui se moque de la cupidité des Français (Lery 1994)." *French Studies in Southern Africa* 34 (2005) 29 n.8.

de celui-ci, dans une main, et le fer qui pend au côté de celui-là, dans l'autre, vous enchaîner, vous égorger, ou vous assujettir à leurs extravagances et à leurs vices. Un jour vous servirez sous eux, aussi corrompus, aussi vils, aussi malheureux qu'eux.[272]

The vieillard's speech is powerful as the reader may imagine what the Tahitian people *really* thought of their European visitors, discrediting superficial assumptions made by a voyager who had no true understanding of their customs. Kate Turnstall summarizes the impact of this character to the illusion of Tahiti in the *Supplément*:

> Quoique avant pour modèle un vieil homme tahitien véritable, dont Bougainville fait mention dans son *Voyage*, le personnage du Vieillard tient un discours plutôt familier aux Européens: bougainvillo-rousseauiste, il confirme l'image de Tahiti comme île de l'amour libre, mais pour la dire perdue, détruite, comme l'état de la nature, par l'arrivée de l'homme européen, civilisé, chrétien.[273]

In this regard, the vieillard's speech supports Diderot's utopian portrait of Tahiti through a description of what was lost because of European vices. The destructive influence of the European voyager on the island paradise offers further support for the critique of French society.

Dena Goodman considers the effect of this supplementary dialogue on the status of the Tahitian voice in subsequent conversations with the Europeans: "The Vieillard's speech thus implies formally the dialogue that follows. It both establishes the Tahitian as a thinking subject rather than a mute object and it establishes the dialogue as the

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[272] Diderot, *Supplément* 547.

[273] Kate E. Turnstall, "Sexe, mensonges et colonies: les discours de l'amour dans le *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*," *Littéraires Classiques* 69 (2009): 21.

interaction between two thinking subjects."[274] Goodman proposes that the *Supplément* takes on a "reversed chronology," thus inverting the meaning of Bougainville's discovery by presenting it from a Tahitian point of view. [275] Whereas the Tahitian voice was marginalized in Bougainville's narrative, the *Supplément* transforms the natives into active proponents of their island culture, as well as into civilized conversationalists. Unfortunately, the example of the old man's speech does not reveal much about true Tahitians either. Even with descriptive textual support from Bougainville that the islander's demeanor indicated a contempt for European influences, there is no way to be certain of the old man's thoughts. However, it will serve as a counterpoint to the issues with which Diderot chooses to engage, providing a safe, distant context for the philosopher's ideas about marriage, property laws, and religion, to name a few.

Another key element that adds to the uncertainty of Diderot's accuracy in creating the Tahitian "voice," while further affirming the satirical angle of the dialogic additions, is the inherent language dilemma. In Bougainville's account, the voyager includes an analysis of the Tahitian language in his description, employing a native whom he befriended, Aotourou, as his subject of study. Bougainville attests that "La langue de Tahiti est douce, harmonieuse et facile à prononcer," but that the Tahitian could not succeed in articulating a number of sounds in French.[276] The voyager cites, "Les mêmes causes qui font accuser notre langue d'être peu musicale la rendaient inaccessible à ses organes. On eût plutôt réussi à lui faire prononcer l'espagnol ou l'italien."[277] In the

[274] Goodman 188.

[275] Goodman 186.

[276] Bougainville, *Voyage* 269.

Supplément, Diderot needed to find a way to overcome the language barrier in order to complete the illusion of the Tahitian interlocutor.

Diderot acknowledges the linguistic difficulties Aotourou faced while visting France through the character of B. In the midst of explaining some of the setbacks Aotourou encountered in adapting to French society, B cites that the native was unable to fully communicate with his hosts. B postulates that this is a result of letters missing from the Tahitian alphabet, allegedly because of a biological incapability to form these sounds:

> L'alphabet tahitien n'ayant ni *b*, ni *c*, ni *d*, ni *f*, ni *g*, ni *q*, ni *x*, ni *y*, ni *z*, il ne put jamais apprendre à parler notre langue qui offrait à ses organes inflexibles trop d'articulations étrangères et de sons nouveaux. Il ne cessait de soupirer après son pays, et je n'en suis pas étonné.[278]

B's hypothesis corresponds to Bougainville's assessment of the Tahitians' linguistic incapabilities, but in the case of the *Supplément* there are other implications to consider. If Aotourou had a biological impediment to producing the sounds that made his spoken language comprehensible to his European friends, then the possibility of producing an accurate transcription of the vieillard was a virtual impossibility.

A raises this question regarding the voyager's comprehension of the Tahitian language in the first segment of the *Supplément*. A asks, "Comment Bougainville a-t-il compris ces adieux prononcés dans une langue qu'il ignorait?"[279] To this B replies

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[277] Bougainville, *Voyage* 269-70. Bougainville explains that an interpreter of the king has evaluated Aotourou and concluded that the Tahitian was not biologically capable of producing certain consonant sounds.

[278] Diderot, *Supplément* 545.

[279] Diderot, *Supplément* 546.

simply, “Vous le saurez."[280] It is not until after the old man completes his tirade that B resumes the explanation of how the communication barrier between the natives and the Europeans was overcome:

> Pensez donc que c’est une traduction de l’otaïtien en espagnol. et de l’espagnol en français. L’Otaïtien s’était rendu la nuit chez cet Orou qu’il a interpellé, et dans la case duquel l’usage de la langue espagnole s’était conservé de temps immémorial. Orou avait écrit en espagnol la harangue du vieillard, et Bougainville en avait une copie à la main, tandis que l’Otaïtien la prononçait.[281]

Diderot’s far-fetched explanation further elucidates the fictional aspect of the old man’s speech. It could be argued that the issue of language was addressed as yet another means of linking the *Supplément* with Bougainville’s text, and not necessarily as a plausible proposition. Moreover, reconciling how the language barrier was resolved offers Diderot an opportunity to explain the significance of the character of Orou, a “typical” Tahitian who happens to be able to communicate like a European. Marie-Jeanne Boisacq recognizes the contrast Orou poses to the real-life visitor to France, Aotourou, “Au sauvage réel, Aoutourou qui ne peut communiquer en français, il substitue un sauvage imaginaire, éloquent, raisonneur, critique, pour l’opposer à l’homme civilisé.”[282] The fact that the philosopher would intentionally manipulate the Tahitian “voice” in his work illustrates that while it may have been important to convince the reader that a factual source was at the foundation of the *Supplément*, the overarching goal of Diderot’s work was that of a fictional social satire.

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[280] Diderot, *Supplément* 546

[281] Diderot, *Supplément* 551.

[282] Boisacq 27.

The "mini-supplement": A text in flux

The idea that Diderot's texts enter into dialogue with one another and even set forth their own literary agendas makes them an appropriate choice for the study of literary supplements. The difficulty arises, however, in the fact that interpretations of Diderot's sources will never remain constant and the dialogue will always be in a state of *flux*.[283] This is because the sources are dependent on their relational nature to other works by Diderot in order to derive meaning. This instability of meaning is further exacerbated by the differences in readers' sensibilities and experiences. The lack of an authentic or "pure" interpretation introduces the problem of identification of absolute source texts for the philosopher's "supplements." While Diderot appears to encourage the confounding of sources, the philosopher does deem it necessary to reveal hints about which texts should be considered in the reader's quest for meaning.

Dialogue is the main strategy Diderot uses to indicate crucial source texts through information gathering lines of questioning by the main characters. The philosopher's technique of incorporating "mini-supplements" is the other. Diderot achieves this through tangential inserted texts, such as the story of Polly Baker, as well as through creating "Suites" to several of the *Supplément*'s sections. The result is that these "supplements" make explicit the implicit tensions in the text and force the reader to consider them. The greatest manifestation of this is seen in A and B's reactions to the text they are "reading" as representative of Diderot's thought and of the cultural discourse that surrounded the *Supplément* at the time.

[283] Furbank discusses the example of the philosophical reverie in which d'Alembert engages related to his sperm, conceiving of the universe as a "universe in flux, producing ever-new combinations and transformations and in which all separate identities are resolved or prove illusory" (337).

Intertextuality

One unique aspect of the *Supplément* is Diderot's insertion of unrelated stories or works, which upon closer inspection, reinforce the argument being presented. A notes that the story of Polly Baker appears in the margin of the text that he and B are reading, which reflects the philosopher's desire to keep the anecdote on the periphery of the main text. The perceived externality and alleged randomness of stumbling upon the story render the inclusion acceptable, as it would otherwise not be a logical segment in the dialogue between the two men. Laurent Versini notes in his edition of the *Supplément* that this anecdote was initially a fabrication of Benjamin Franklin that had been published originally in 1747 in *London Magazine*.[284] Versini also mentions that this theme is one of several that form part of Diderot's contributions to Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes*.

After learning that B has not invented this anecdote, and that it is originally attributed to l'abbé Raynal, A states, "Ouvrage excellent et d'un ton si différent des précédents qu'on soupçonne l'abbé d'y avoir employé des mains étrangers."[285] This is a clear and clever revelation of Diderot's collaboration on the work, rather than a reference to Benjamin Franklin. Interestingly, Dena Goodman points out that the story of Polly Baker did not appear in the 1772 and 1773 versions of the *Supplément*, nor in the subsequent copies in print at this time.[286] Goodman postulates:

[284] Diderot, *Supplément* 561 n.1.

[285] Diderot, *Supplément* 562.

[286] Goodman 202-03 n.22.

> Diderot probably rediscovered the Polly Baker story in 1778 as he went over the *Histoire* to prepare an expanded edition, which was to appear in 1780. As Diderot recalled the Polly Baker story, he was reminded of his own *Supplément.* He then simply reversed this mental process by having A be reminded of Miss Polly's story when he read the dialogue between the Aumônier and Orou.[287]

Diderot's inclusion of this story in the last edition of the *Supplément* offers a confirmed victim to the conflicts between the laws of nature and civic laws embedded in the *Supplément*'s dialogues. It is also a bridge between the utopian elements being hypothesized on Tahiti and a "real-life" manifestation of how societies that shun the laws of nature do not work. The reader senses that Polly Baker's ordeal would not have happened on Tahiti and that her guilt was only relative to societal norms.

During the course of A and B's discussion, the description of Polly Baker with which the reader is first presented is that of a woman pregnant with her fifth child who must face charges in a Connecticut court for her *libertinage*. In pleading her case she contends that she is the victim, not only of a libertine magistrate serving the court, but also of a system of civic laws that "...changent la nature des actions et en font des crimes...", a problem that has already been identified in the *Supplément*'s subtitle.[288] She laments her current situation, claiming not to have committed any crime other than trusting the wrong man. Polly also references her responsible role in raising her children and questions the court, "Est-ce un crime d'augmenter les sujets de Sa Majesté dans une nouvelle contrée qui manque d'habitants?"[289] This argument resembles the same line of

[287] Goodman 203-03 n.22.

[288] Diderot, *Supplément* 562.

reasoning that Orou had just presented to the chaplain as to how they count their island country's wealth: "Un enfant qui naît occasionne la joie domestique et publique. C'est un accroissement de fortune pour la cabane, et de force pour la nation."[290] Polly Baker's defense, which reflects the same virtues of reason and truth as Orou's explanation, is impossible to dismiss lightly. At the conclusion of the anecdote, the reader learns the judges were equally taken by Polly Baker's argument when they lift her fines and punishment. In fact, we learn that the "libertin" who is was the source of her first misfortune "sentit le remords de sa première conduite" et "voulut la réparer" by marrying her two days later and making her "une honnête femme."[291]

The insertion of this anecdote gives Diderot another compelling example that the reader may employ in order to reevaluate their current system of laws. For those who considered the notion of an island society such as Tahiti to be too far-fetched, the story of Polly Baker was a plausible occurrence given the stringent and conflicting nature of the civic and religious laws and mores that guided European society at the epoch. In fact, many critics believe Diderot himself may have erroneously taken this story as fact.[292] In spite of the message Diderot is promulgating, it is important albeit ironic, that Polly Baker finds exoneration from her "crimes" by respectfully subscribing to one of the institutions she denounced in order to be pardoned.

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[289] Diderot, *Supplément* 561.

[290] Diderot, *Supplément* 558.

[291] Diderot, *Supplément* 562.

[292] In his article, "Note sur le discours de Miss Polly Baker et la mystification dans le *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*", Jean-Christophe Rebejkow cites: "B. Didier, dans son édition des *Contes* de Diderot parue récemment, pense que Diderot a été victime d'une mystification de B. Franklin, à propos de P. Baker. Nous pouvons émettre quelques réserves à propos de cette hypothèse. En effet, Diderot nous invite à y regarder de plus près, en suggérant une mystification possible." *Studi Francesi* 48.3 (2004) 534.

Suites...

As the title indicates, the *Supplément* has a hybrid subject, and consequently, a hybrid structure. McDonald argues, "The fragmentation of the dialogues, alternating between the conversation of 'A' and 'B' and the inner or interspersed dialogues (between the Old Man and his implicit addressees, Bougainville, on the one hand, and Orou and the Almoner, on the other), puts into question any cohesive thematic meaning of the work."[293] Perhaps more significant than analyzing the fragmented dialogue for themes is structural assessment of how these fragments work together in the text. For instance, one structural peculiarity is the presence of several "Suites" within the body of the *Supplément*. These two sections identify themselves as a supplement to the dialogues between A and B and those of Orou and the chaplain. Close study of these two sections reveals other functions, however. In the "Suite" to Orou and the chaplain's dialogue, Diderot manipulates reader perspective in interesting new ways that enhance the perception of Tahitians as rational and innovative counterparts. By calling into question European laws and citing logical Tahitian mores, one is left to wonder who the savages are. In the "Suite" to A and B's dialogues, Diderot cleverly chooses excerpts from Bougainville's sojourn to Tahiti that will act as a springboard for the philosopher's own point of view. Here the reader remarks that a large portion of the dialogue can be read as a supplement to Bougainville's voyage, whereas there is another aspect that simultaneously supplements Diderot's philosophical discourse with the debates between A and B.

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[293] McDonald 66.

Suite de l'entretien de l'aumônier avec l'habitant d'Otaïti

This "Suite" is the fourth of the five sections of which the *Supplément* is comprised and immediately follows "L'entretien de l'aumônier et d'Orou." The preceding section, also a dialogue between Orou and the chaplain, closes with an inserted text about Polly Baker that takes up the theme of bad laws making criminals of victims. What is carried over to the "Suite" is the Europeans' purported erroneous judgment regarding procreation, as well as a questioning of taboos such as infidelity and incest. Over the course of these dialogues, the seemingly outrageous societal norms of Tahiti begin to reflect a civilization with a capacity for higher order thinking and reason. For instance, after explaining the justifications for celebrating the birth of new citizens, Orou explains that though the Tahitian may appear savage, he is as rational, if not more so, than his European brother:

> Nous avons tiré de toi et des tiens le seul parti que nous en pouvions tirer; et crois que, tout savages que nous sommes, nous savons aussi calculer. Va où tu voudras, et tu trouveras presque toujours l'homme aussi fin que toi. Il ne te donnera jamais que ce qui ne lui est bon à rien, et te demandera toujours ce qui lui est utile. S'il te présente un morceau d'or pour un morceau de fer, ce qu'il ne fait aucun cas de l'or et qu'il prise le fer.[294]

To show the Tahitian as a rational being who is possibly superior to the European visitors in his reasoning supports the image of the "noble savage" whom civilized society should admire and emulate. This establishes Orou's credibility in pointing out the utilitarian benefits of procreation. The islander's pragmatic and thought-provoking discourse at the

[294] Diderot, *Supplément* 568.

close of the "Suite" pushes the *Supplément* to its farthest point of deconstructing European ideologies.

From a structural perspective, this "Suite" is unique in that it is the only section of the five which compose the *Supplément* that does not feature dialogue between A and B. The preceding dialogue between Orou and the chaplain unfolds as B begins to read from the *Supplément* that appears in the first part. As B reads, the narrative dissolves into the dialogue that follows and concludes when A and B are distracted by the Polly Baker anecdote in the margin. Meanwhile, the reader is aware that he is a part of a reading process, as evidenced by the "book-ended" dialogue between the native and the religious figure. In the "Suite," reader perspective shifts. Whereas the reader witnessed A and B discussing the dialogue between Orou and the chaplain as a spectator of their reading experience in the previous section, in the "Suite" the reader claims a more intimate third person point of view that engages them more closely in the dialogue. Here the reader is set up to draw their own conclusions about the dialogue that ensues, rather than relying on A and B to assess and critique what has been read. In a way, Diderot has "trained" the reader to tackle the fourth section on their own without the philosopher's intervention.

The only interruption in the illusion of reader autonomy is the presence of a narrator at the end of this "Suite" who is not able to be identified with certainty as A, B, or Diderot. The final section of the *Supplément* will begin with A and B discussing what the narrator in the "Suite" has revealed. However, there is no direct indication that B was reading the text in the role of the narrator at this juncture as was seen at the beginning of the third section. The "Suite" concludes with the reader learning that the chaplain had finally succumbed to his human nature and accorded Orou with the privilege of spending

the night with each of his daughters and his wife in spite of his religious protestations.[295] It is significant that Diderot has chosen to confound the identity of the narrator when recounting the chaplain's indiscretions, perhaps as a means of avoiding an overt association with the description of the libertine fate of his character. McDonald comments on the appearance of this narrator and the confusion that results from his interruptions in dialogues among identifiable speakers. She argues, "From time to time the voice of an anonymous narrator intrudes, but far from the surreptitious intervention of a unifying authorial voice, these fragmentary interruptions only further weaken the coherence of the dialogues."[296] What McDonald does not address here is whether or not the lack of coherence is purposeful on the part of Diderot.

Suite du dialogue entre A et B

In order to interpret fully this section's place in the *Supplément*, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of its chronological and structural characteristics. Curiously enough, the "Suite du dialogue entre A et B" immediately follows the "Suite de l'entretien de l'aumônier avec l'habitant d'Otaïti," the latter being the only section of the *Supplément* that does not contain dialogue between A and B. However, the reader notices in the first few exchanges between A and B that their commentaries make reference to the events discussed between Orou and the chaplain in the preceding section. This creates the effect that this "Suite" is in fact a continuation of the section that came before, in spite of the absence of the two Europeans in the prior dialogue.

[295] Diderot, *Supplément* 569.

[296] McDonald 66.

Why would Diderot choose to open the "Suite" in this manner after the title identifies the section as a follow up to A and B's dialogue? Is this a misidentified supplement? One possible explanation is that the "Suite" is in fact a "mini-supplement" to all of the dialogues between the two Europeans until this point, rather than a continuation of any one segment of the *Supplément*. Throughout the "Suite," this idea is reinforced through the repetition of various themes and questions from earlier sections, such as the existence of marriage and the efficacy of natural laws on Tahiti. This concluding "Suite" may also be considered a "mini-supplement" to the *contes* that will be discussed below. The ending dialogue between A and B makes mention of the main characters found in these stories, such as Reymer, Gardeil, and Tanié, among others. Finally, the "Suite" closes with A's acknowledgement that the fog has rescinded. As we will see, weather is a theme that provides a link amongst the 'contes' and the *Supplément*.

A closer look at the themes and content of the discourse between A and B offers clues as to why Diderot may have included a "mini-supplement." At the opening of the "Suite," B decides that the chaplain was polite to surrender to his host's pleas to spend the night with his female family members. Furthermore, B asserts that the Tahitian customs and Orou's verbal exchange also reflect such a courteous nature that one could claim them to be "un peu modelé à l'européenne."[297] By establishing Tahitians as savages worthy of consideration, Diderot has completed the illusion necessary for the reader to make comparisons between the two cultures.

As the dialogue progresses, it becomes obvious that the two men become increasingly convinced that Tahiti could be regarded as superior in its construction of laws, or rather, respect for human nature. The postulated parallel between the Tahitians

[297] Diderot, *Supplément* 569.

and Europeans proves to be essential for the cultural discussions that lead to an examination of each society's mores and laws. Guillaume Ansart attests that "...Modern ethics cannot achieve universality simply by generalizing the reasoning of an abstract rational subject, it must also involve dialogue and a process through which consensus can be reached."[298] As mentioned earlier, Diderot's notion of a society based on the "laws of nature" implies that universal values exist between these two civilizations. Diderot is able to successfully maintain this construct through the characters A and B in the "suite" by allowing them to reach the conclusion in their dialogue that France and Tahiti appear to share similar human needs and wants, even if the reasons why each action is valued in its respective culture differ.[299]

The last section of this chapter will look more closely at the links Diderot creates between the *Supplément*, surrounding cultural discourse, and the philosopher's own ideas. However, it is important to note here that the final "Suite" is also another strategy to alert the reader that the conversations about societal conventions and natural laws are not finished. Whereas it seems the reader has found some resolution on several key issues brought about in Bougainville's work, the philosopher is also keen to add that there were parts of Tahiti that had not been addressed at all in the *Supplément.* For instance, there is the mention of a third section that did not make the cut into the work the two men are perusing together. While in the midst of discussing vices and virtues, B reveals that there are parts of the *Supplément* that he has not read to A:

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[298] Guillaume Ansart, "Aspects of Rationality in Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville,*" *Diderot Studies XXVIII* (Bloomington: Librairie Droz S.A., 2000) 14.

[299] Boisacq refutes the possibility of establishing universal values based on an unequivocal parallel between the two cultures: "Il ne faut donc pas juger les moeurs de Paris par celles de Tahiti, ni l'inverse car les besoins pratiques ne sont pas les mêmes. Le vrai danger est que la morale se fixe au lieu d'évoluer avec les besoins et les modifications de la situation démographique, économique et politique" (28).

> L'aumônier remarque, dans un troisième morceau que je ne vous ai point lu, que l'Otaïtien ne rougit pas des mouvements involontaires qui s'excitent en lui à côté de sa femme, de ses filles, et que celles-ci en sont spectatrices, quelquefois émues, jamais embarrassées.[300]

Such a daring example serves Diderot's philosophical plan well as debates about false moral constructs and contrived institutions mount. It is significant to note that Diderot again reflects a consciousness of the propriety of the reading audience with his character's decision not to read this section. This is particularly important since, as Anthony Strugnell indicates, "Diderot, à travers son interlocuteur B, ne cache guère le fait que le 'supplément' n'est pas de la main de Bougainville, mais une invention où on flairerait plutôt la main de B.," which in turn would imply Diderot.[301] However, as typical of the philosopher's style, the disclosure of its exclusion still allows for its mention. In doing so, A and B are able to use this example as a springboard to push their remaining dialogue even further. The two Europeans' closing commentaries culminate in an overt critique of a society whose laws create the crimes it seeks to eradicate. At the end of the "Suite," the reader is compelled to at least consider the consequences of deliberately ignoring the code of nature in the construction of civic and religious laws, and therefore ponder whether Tahiti's social conventions are a valid option.

A supplement, or continuation, of Diderot's 'contes'

[300] Diderot, *Supplément* 572.

[301] Anthony Strugnell, "Fable et vérité: stratégies narrative et discursive dans les écrits de Diderot sur le colonialisme," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 30 (2001) 39.

One widely accepted origin of Diderot's *Supplément* is a series of short stories that debated similar philosophical issues pertaining to civic laws, human nature, and the problematic possession of personal property. "Ceci n'est pas un conte," "Madame de La Carlière," and the "Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville" formed a "connected trilogy," a fact that was outlined in the *Correspondance littéraire* when the short stories appeared between 1773 and 1774.[302] In his analysis of the *Supplément*'s place among Diderot's related *contes*, Proust indicates that the "Avertissement" to *Ceci n'est pas un conte* (found in the Correspondance littéraire and Bibliothèque royale de Stockholm versions) proposes that the conclusion to the story is put off until another work. Proust cites that the aforementioned sources indicate this conclusion is found at the end of the trilogy of stories: "'Le Conte qu'on va lire est de M. Diderot, il sera suivi de plusieurs d'autres du même auteur. On ne verra qu'à la fin du dernier la morale et le but secret qu'il s'est proposé.'"[303] It stands to reason that the *Supplément* is a conclusion, and supplement, to the preceding works and that the reader should consider the two preceding short stories as origins of the *Supplément*. Many other critics have also noted the links among these texts and have sought to piece together the overarching message Diderot strived to convey. Peter Jimack argues that the *Supplément* is "intended to complement the two *contes*, with the Tahitian utopia and the discussion of its implications counterbalancing the disasters narrated in the other two works."[304]

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[302] Furbank 361. In this passage he refers to "Madame de la Carlière" by an alternate title, "On the Inconsistency of Public Opinion Regarding our Private Actions" (*Sur l'inconséquence du jugement public de nos actions particulières*).

[303] Jacques Proust, *Denis Diderot: Quatre Contes*, Textes Littéraires Français (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1964) 71-72.

[304] Jimack 13.

The text lends itself well to the theory of a trilogy. Close study of the *contes* in conjunction with the *Supplément* reveals clear structural similarities with regard to the form and themes. Additionally, in spite of differences in class or origin, interesting parallels exist in the characterization Diderot uses in each short work. In analyzing these aspects, it is evident that these texts represent a similar progression of ideas that manifest themselves differently amongst the texts. "Ceci n'est pas un conte" recounts the unfortunate fates of the virtuous, but tragically naive Tanié and Mlle de la Chaux, "Madame de La Carlière" offers a cautionary tale about the dangers of the subjugation of human love to societal expectations, and the *Supplément* provides the reader with a utopian alternative where the aforementioned problems did not appear to exist.[305]

Formulaic commonalities

Form is a parallel that the two *contes* share with the *Supplément*, namely in the use of dialogue. For example, Diderot explains to us at the beginning of "Ceci n'est pas un conte" that it is rare for a storyteller to not be interrupted by his audience when in the midst of recounting a tale: "Lorsqu'on fait un conte, c'est à quelqu'un qui l'écoute; et pour peu que le conte dure, il est rare que le conteur ne soit pas interrompu quelquefois par son auditeur."[306] This introduces the dominant structure of how the cases of Tanié and Mlle de la Chaux are developed and revealed to the reader. The interlocutor is hearing the tales for the first time, as is the reader. In recognition of this, Diderot inserts

[305] The lesson in *Ceci n'est pas un conte* is revealed at the end, after the recounting of two pathetic situations involving both a naïve female and a gullible male: "S'il y a un bon et honnête Tanié, c'est à une Reymer que la Providence l'envoie. S'il y a une bonne et honnête de La Chaux, elle deviendra le partage d'un Gardeil, afin que tout soit fait pour le mieux," Denis Diderot, *Ceci n'est pas un conte*, *Diderot: Oeuvres.* Tome II. (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1994) 519.

[306] Diderot, *Ceci n'est pas un conte* 503.

anticipated reader reactions into the telling of the stories. This is marked in requests directed at the narrator-storyteller at various points in the stories such as "Continuez votre récit," and in clarification questions, "De qui parlez-vous?"[307] It appears that this is "not a tale" in that the events are purportedly true, but moreover, it refers to the dialogic structure which shifts the reader's experience from an active to a passive one.

Dialogue once again serves as a tool for Diderot to reveal his philosophy, as well as a strategy to advance the story. Laurent Versini elaborates on this textual dynamic: "Dans la série, *Ceci n'est pas un conte*, *Madame de La Carlière*, le *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, les récits sont introduits dans le cours d'une conversation qui les encadre, et superpose l'amorce d'autres récits à ceux qui sont faits."[308] Therefore, it is possible to conclude that "Ceci n'est pas un conte" is only a *conte* because Diderot defines it as such within his unique stylistic parameters from the onset.[309] What the reader is experiencing in reality is an ongoing conversation that continues into the texts that follow.

"Madame de La Carlière" resembles "Ceci n'est pas un conte" in structure and begins with the narrator, presumably from "Ceci," asking his companion, "Rentrons-nous?"[310] As the question comes at the beginning of the story, the reader is aware that the two characters have not yet grown weary of their conversation. This is a clear indication that there must be something that has come right before. Once again, as the storyteller narrates, this time the tale of Madame de La Carlière and Desroches, the listener

[307] Diderot, *Ceci n'est pas un conte* 506, 510.

[308] Laurent Versini, ed., *Diderot: Oeuvres*, vol.2 (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1994) 468.

[309] It is interesting to note that the specific mention of dialogue is absent from the definition of *conte* presented in the *Encyclopédie*.

[310] Diderot, *Supplément* 521.

interjects with questions and commentaries on what he is hearing. The interjections elicit more information about the story and aid in the progression of the tale. One new addition to this *conte*'s structure, however, is the inserted dialogue between Madame de La Carlière and Desroches within the dialogue between the narrator and his interlocuter. This makes for an eclectic mix of dialogue and narration, something that is seen to an even greater extent in the *Supplément*, where the natives being discussed give speeches and participate in entire conversations of their own. While a storytelling narrator and the use of dialogue are techniques witnessed in a number of Diderot's *contes*, what sets these three tales apart from the philosopher's other works is that the conversations between the two main characters are carried over into the next work in the trilogy.[311]

Thematic and temporal commomalities

Laws of nature

One thematic commonality seen in this trilogy of texts is the notion of the false attribution of laws to human nature. For instance, a note at the end of "Madame de La Carlière" in Laurent Versini's edition of Diderot's *Contes* attests that the *Supplément* serves as a continuation of the conversations in this short story about the artificiality of natural laws.[312] The fidelity that Madame de La Carlière is seeking from Desroches in the form of a public declaration of love is symptomatic of the customs and morality she values and the expectations of her society. If this superficial promise to be faithful wasn't

[311] Furbank idenitifies the roles of the characters in Diderot's fiction as a "system": "The 'system' of a fiction of his will involve at the very least three interacting, and possibly conflicting, 'interests': those of the story-teller, of a listener, and of ourself as reader" (362). It is important to note that this is not the only time Diderot employs the trilogy-dialogue technique. It may also be seen in *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*.

[312] Versini, ed., *Diderot: Oeuvres* 539 n.1.

required of him, Desroches might still be in good graces with his wife at the end of the story. He proves himself to be a loving, caring partner whose behavior would not have been deemed so unforgivable if the laws and customs to which Madame subscribed didn't limit his biological propensities. Diderot reinforces the rigidity of these limitations in that the transgression truly does not merit the punishment. The reader has little reason to believe that Desroches had any physical contact with his mistress as his wife suspected, in spite of the temptation reflected in his letters.

Ultimately, the relationship between Desroches and Madame de La Carlière is set up for failure through his wife's desire to regard her husband as "property". She declares, "Demain, au pied des autels, vous jurerez de m'appartenir et de n'appartenir qu'à moi."[313] One observation about Tahiti that Diderot borrows from Bougainville is that the need to possess is a value that is eliminated in Tahitian society, thus rendering it altogether more idyllic. This is particularly the case in possessing a human being, as Andrzej Dziedzic comments, "La conception même du mariage comme un lien permanent entre deux personnes est contraire à la nature, car selon cette conception un être pensant, libre dans sa volonté et ses désirs est un objet de propriété et sa liberté d'accepter ou de refuser est détruite."[314] Marriage as an institution cannot succeed because it implies a possession that is not possible in nature. The conflict is averted on Tahiti, where as a result there aren't any squabbles over infidelities since the natives' sexual relationships are guided by the laws of nature and not a contrived, and biologically implausible, institution.

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[313] Versini, ed., *Diderot: Oeuvres* 525.

[314] Andrzej Dziedzic, "Liberté, propriété et sexualité dans le *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*," *Chimères* 25.2 (2001) 51.

The closing dialogue between A and B about good and bad laws in the *Supplément* reinforces the theory that the text was a conclusion to a trilogy of *contes*. As B delivers final discourse on how Tahiti's system of "natural" laws was superior to that of the Europeans, A begins to offer names of characters from each of the *contes* as a recognizable example of this stance. As long as Europeans steadfastly held to current civic, religious, and social laws, there would always be "femmes méchantes" (Reymer), "hommes atroces" (Gardeil), and "des infortunés" (Tanié, Mlle de la Chaux, le chevalier Desroches, and Madame de La Carlière).[315] A assures that, "Il est certain qu'on chercherait inutilement dans Otaïti des exemples de la dépravation des deux premiers et du malheur des trois derniers."[316] This ultimate link among the works at last gives insight into how Diderot may have expected the *Supplément* to be read, understood, and discussed. In order to create a social satire that will impact the reader, the reader must have a comprehensive understanding of the subject being satirized. The preceding accounts of the European characters in Diderot's short stories and the manner in which they victimize and are victimized by the product of "bad laws" sensationalize Tahiti even further. For instance, if ever there was a doubt as to whether a woman could fall prey to an unscrupulous man and suffer the consequences due to social conventions, the reader witnessed Mlle de la Chaux. When confronted with the fictional reality that Mlle de la Chaux's actions would not have constituted a crime in the island paradise, readers' interest would likely be more engaged after learning that this "crime" could have been avoided with better laws in place.

[315] Diderot, *Supplément* 577.

[316] Diderot, *Supplément* 577.

Meteorological continuity

Laurent Versini argues that a salient chronological link between these works exists in the analysis of meteorological conditions that appear to coincide among the *contes*: "La météorologie rappelle aux devisants et aux lecteurs la loi du déterminisme qui s'impose aussi bien aux hommes qu'à la pierre ou à la nuée, la loi universelle du changement qui en est un cas particulier."[317] Therefore, weather conditions that act as a constant and advance with the progression of each work further define the interdependence of the texts. Moreover, as Versini argues, the commonality also reinforces the presence of universality among the *contes*, which prove to be parts of a whole in spite of their seemingly different subplots.

As noted earlier, the story of Madame de La Carlière opens with the two characters from *Ceci n'est pas un conte* debating the weather. While the narrator's companion is concerned about the weather, "Voyez-vous ces nuées?", the narrator is able to put his mind at ease with a detailed scientific analysis of why he believes the weather will soon lift.[318] The narrator's character appears to be a reflection of Diderot thus far, and this detailed scientific approach adds to this speculation. After explaining the process by which the atmosphere will reabsorb the mist in the air to give way to clear skies, the reader is left to consider whether this is a metaphor for the story to come. Could the dissipation of the thick clouds correlate to a moment of enlightenment as the tale progresses? Following the narrator's meteorological explanation, his companion remarks with wonder, "Mais cela est vrai, car tandis que vous parliez, je regardais, et le

[317] Versini, ed., *Diderot: Oeuvres* 465.

[318] Diderot, *Madame de La* Carlière, *Diderot: Oeuvres*, vol.2 (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1994) 521.

phénomène semblait s'exécuter à vos ordres."[319] As the weather clears, the narrator promises his audience "une voûte aussi étoilée que vous l'ayez jamais vu."[320] This is the last that is mentioned of the weather until the pair arrives at the *Supplément*, now with the identities A and B.

At the start of the *Supplément*, the reader learns that the "superbe voûte étoilée" did not produce a clear, beautiful day after all.[321] A remarks that "Le brouillard est si épais qu'il nous dérobe la vue des arbres voisins."[322] After debating what the fate of the fog will be, B decides that they must wait to learn the outcome. During this time, he informs A that he will read Bougainville's *Voyage*. When B mentions the copy of the *Supplément* on a table at the end of the first segment and they decide to read it together, the thick fog begins to dissipate and the clear skies appear.[323] B insists they skip "ce préambule qui signifie rien," likely a strategy by Diderot to avert A and B reading their own opening dialogue about Bougainville, and the two men begin at the moment where the vieillard is delivering his speech. [324]

As the *Supplément* comes to a close, the discussion of weather resurfaces after an intensive dialogue revealing the detrimental effects of an artificially constructed morality. B asks, "Et ce brouillard épais, qu'est-il devenu?", to which A responds, "Il est

[319] Diderot, *Madame de La Carlière* 521.

[320] Diderot, *Madame de La Carlière* 522.

[321] Diderot, *Supplément* 541.

[322] Diderot, *Supplément* 541.

[323] Diderot, *Supplément* 546.

[324] Diderot, *Supplément* 546.

retombé."[325] The fog lifting appears to once again work in tandem with Diderot's enlightenment of his reader. Strugnell supports the aforementioned notion of an overarching metaphor between the weather conditions and the Europeans' newly acquired awareness: "...Dès que l'ignorance des Français sur le véritable état de leur sexualité sera balayée, tel le soleil qui balaye le brouillard dans la grande métaphore qui traverse l'ouvrage, alors commencera leur libération."[326] The meteorological observations also act as a "book-end" to the series of stories and identifies that anything that came before belonged to the same philosophical contemplations about morality, nature, and society.

A Supplement to Enlightenment Discourse: "Dialogue entre A. et B. sur l'inconvénient d'attacher des idées morales à certaines actions physiques qui n'en comportent pas"

As the subtitle suggests, the *Supplément* is a supplement to ongoing debates, both in Diderot's works and in Enlightenment culture, which call into question the role of religion and morality in creating civic laws and standards of virtue. Diderot specifically challenges these institutions with philosophical discourse that supports the idea of "natural laws." The philosopher argues that laws that are rooted in human biological propensities and that emphasize universal needs and wants foster a more peaceful, law-abiding society. After all, one could not expect human beings to adhere to restrictions that attempt to limit or restrain their nature-the reason for which vice is rampant in European society. In the *Supplément*, B explains to A the importance of creating "good" laws that

[325] Diderot, *Supplément* 578.

[326] Strugnell 42.

will in turn create upright citizens and have a positive impact on the customs of a culture. When A asks B how he conceives of *moeurs*, B answers:

> J'entends une soumission générale et une conduite conséquente à des lois bonnes ou mauvaises. Si les loix sont bonnes, les moeurs sont bonnes. Si les loix sont mauvaises, les moeurs sont mauvaises. Si les loix, bonnes ou mauvaises, ne sont pas observées, la pire condition d'une société, il n'y a point de moeurs.[327]

Thus the *Supplément*'s hedonistic and paradisiacal portrayal of Tahiti is not a testament to an absence of laws or a barbarous people, but rather an absence of "bad laws" against human nature like those that one would find in Europe. In light of the above definition of what defines a society's customs, Tahiti emerges as the superior civilization.

The predilection of natural laws over civic laws that comes to light in the *Supplément*'s dialogues speaks to the colonial dilemma of whether the civilization of a primitive culture such as Tahiti would be a benefit or a misfortune. However, the assumption that drives this dilemma is that the primitive culture is indeed a reflection of the virtuous state of nature. As argued earlier, Tahiti was not a true utopian society. Festa highlights the artificiality of Diderot's Tahiti citing the unsavory factual reports about the island society released at time:

> Visions of the Tahitians as the prototype for the man of nature did not, however, survive closer relations with the islanders. As more nuanced reports trickled back-including revelations of human sacrifice, a rigid class structure, internecine warfare, infanticide, and prostitution-the tenuous myth of prelapsarian purity

[327] Diderot, *Supplément* 570.

collapsed. The utopian version of Tahiti was supplanted by bleaker visions of its liberties.[328]

Even worse, it appears that the old man's lamentations about the atrocities of "civilization" did in fact ring true, as Festa claims, "By the late 1770s, the disclosure of the devastation wrought by the Europeans (venereal disease, competition, warfare) had undermined any illusions about the "civilizing influence" of the West."[329] In spite of these reports, Diderot was able to exploit both the tantalizing details surrounding Bougainville's voyage, as well as the interest in voyages of exploration at the epoch, in order to create a convincing fantasy to contrast with France.

By portraying Tahiti in a positive light as a near-utopian society, the philosopher could then expose the negative impact France's societal ills would have on such a pristine culture as an argument against colonization. Diderot hints at his stance on the deleterious effects of civilization in the final dialogue between A and B. When A asks B if man should be civilized or left to his own instinct, B responds candidly:

> Si vous vous proposez d'en être le tyran, civilisez-le; empoisonnez-le de votre mieux d'une morale contraire à la nature; faites-lui des entraves de toute espèce; embarrassez ses mouvements de mille obstacles; attachez-lui des fantômes qui l'effraient; éternisez la guerre dans la caverne, et que l'homme naturel y soit toujours enchaîné sous les pieds de l'homme moral.[330]

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[328] Lynn Festa, "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Tahitian *Jouissance*", *Romance Quarterly* 54.4 (2007) 304.

[329] Festa 304.

[330] Diderot, *Supplément* 575.

After A and B conclude their discussion on the evils of civilization, the reader is left to reflect on the motives and purposes of exploratory voyages at this time of rapid colonial expansion. Furthermore, this dialogue between A and B reveals that the philosopher did not have favorable sentiments toward European colonization, in part due to his opposition of promulgating certain institutions which had proven problematic in France.[331] Concerning Diderot's view of the goals of Bougainville's voyage and subsequent glorifying account of Tahiti, Boisacq hypothesizes, "Derrière cette bienveillance apparente se dissimulerait, selon Diderot, un désir d'exploitation commerciale et politique."[332]

On an ideological level, several other Enlightenment philosophers addressed similar issues regarding conflicting laws and societal woes in their works. Specifically, the *Supplément* has often drawn comparisons to Rousseau's Second Discourse in *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* in its examination of the conflict between natural law and civic law, as well as in its comparisons between the natives of Tahiti and the natural state of man. McDonald claims, "It is possible to show the importance of Rousseau's *Second discours* as a 'source' of the *Supplément*, since Diderot takes over, in his own fashion, the hypothetical history of primitive man."[333] Dieckmann also acknowledges the parallel between the two works in the introduction to his edition of the

[331] The reader already informed of Diderot's contributions to Raynal's censured 1780 edition of *Histoire des deux Indes* will recognize this anti-colonialism sentiment. As stated earlier, this text is indicated to the reader in the *Supplément* during a dialogue between A and B.

[332] Boisacq 15.

[333] McDonald 65.

Supplément, "Dans les deux ouvrages, l'état de la nature est opposé à l'état de société et la condition malheureuse de l'homme est critiquée au nom de la nature."[334]

Rousseau's famous claim that opens *Du contrat social* attests to the burden man encumbers when he becomes part of society: "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers. Tel se croit le maître des autres, qui ne laisse pas d'être plus esclave qu'eux."[335] From the moment man is born, he is required to adhere to the laws and obligations of his society for the common good. However, from Diderot's perspective, when the laws are good for no one, citizens become disenfranchised and society degenerates. This is why a return to the basic laws of nature which emphasize universal human needs would be preferable. At one point in the *Supplément*, A exclaims, "Que le code de nations serait court, si on le conformait rigoureusement à celui de la nature! Combien de vices et d'erreurs épargnés à l'homme!"[336] Unfortunately, even though A and B struggle with the notion of savagery versus civilization in their many dialogues, they generally accept that it is not possible to return to an innocent state of nature once "civilized." Comparisons to Tahiti are an exercise after all, not a model that may be recreated and followed. The cultural critique that ensues from these comparisons, centering largely on morality, personal property, and religion, indicate that Enlightenment thought in general can be considered a source of the *Supplément.*

Women and morality

[334] Herbert Dieckmann, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1955) 78.

[335] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat social* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992) 29.

[336] Diderot, *Supplément* 574.

Eighteenth-century French society reflected a stringent set of moral conventions to which women were expected to adhere. Women's education was the prominent sphere in which these ideologies were instilled. It was generally accepted that women were not equipped to receive the same type of education as their male counterparts. Douthwaite explains: "Although the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw improvements in women's education...the emphasis was largely on the practical arts necessary to form good wives- sewing, knitting, religion, rudimentary mathematics and writing."[337] In addition to this "feminine education," there was a necessity to instruct the weaker sex on the importance of virtue and chastity until marriage. Convents emerged as a popular form of education, where young women would be sequestered from male seducers. Diderot largely criticized this institution in the formation of young women in his novel, *La Religieuse*, largely for the hypocrisy and inefficiency of such an education. Convent life prevented women from fulfilling their biological desires, while at the same time made women unfit to master these desires by cloistering them away from the opposite sex. Marriage only served to minimize women's liberties further, as their status depended largely on their husbands, in many ways as a form of property.

In spite of the preparations women faced in order to maintain their virtue, Enlightenment discourse proposed that man's biological nature will always be predisposed to make advances on the opposite sex. However, where this has proved to be a problem in the European society Diderot depicts, the act is not considered criminal on Tahiti. B cites: "On a consacré la résistance de la femme; on a attaché l'ignominie à la violence de l'homme, violence qui ne serait qu'une injure légère dans Otaïti, et qui

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[337] Julia V. Douthwaite, *Exotic Women: Literary Heroines and Cultural Strategies in Ancien Régime France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992) 13.

devient un crime dans nos cités."[338] This is largely due to the contrived standards of morality that arise from institutions such as education and religion. B explains that women are programmed to recognize and thwart seduction: "Mais lorsque la femme a connu, par l'expérience ou l'éducation, les suites plus ou moins cruelles d'un moment doux, son coeur frissonne à l'approche de l'homme."[339] The Tahitian woman's reputation does not suffer for her encounters with many different men since the fruits of these encounters are regarded in a positive light. This is not the case for the European woman who is acutely aware of what is at stake in a libertine encounter, her social standing. Dziedzic illustrates that the customs of Tahiti offer an erotic fantasy for European men because cultural expectations in their own society restrict women from seeking casual sexual encounters:

> Si l'image de Tahiti représente un état utopique, imaginaire et irréalisable, c'est d'abord parce que ses habitants sont heureux, car ils vivent dans des conditions géographiques et climatiques exceptionnelles, ensuite et surtout à cause de la liberté des rapports sexuels. Pourtant, à y regarder de près, ce n'est que dans l'esprit masculin européen que l'île évoque une vision de la liberté sexuelle; la résistance des femmes aux désirs de l'homme est considérée, dans une large mesure, comme le résultat des craintes et des conventions artificielles créées par la société.[340]

[338] Diderot, *Supplément* 573.

[339] Diderot, *Supplément* 573. Versini notes in this edition that this view is linked to another of Diderot's texts, *Sur les femmes*.

[340] Dziedzic 46.

This view offers interesting implications to consider from the perspective of female liberation, even if the hedonistic customs of Tahiti are driven by the woman's role in procreation. One could imagine that the idea of a respite from the prejudice and judgments of French society would offer the European woman a complementary fantasy of sexual freedom to that of the men.

This is not to say that the Tahitian woman does not face her own plight in the context of the island's social conventions. For example, women who are sterile who continue to pursue procreative relations will be punished for their indiscretions. And like their European sisters, Diderot does acknowledge that libertinage also exists on Tahiti among women who knowingly go against the island's customs and seek sexual relations without the goal of adding to the economy. However, the difference lies in the fact that the prohibition of select behaviors on Tahiti is based on practicalities that are for the common good of their society, rather than rules without a rational purpose. Lynn Festa argues that pleasure and productivity work hand in hand on Tahiti to create a utopian-like environment for its inhabitants: "Among the Tahitians, what is "good" (pleasurable) for individuals is also "good" (productive) for the whole: no surveillance or coercion is necessary to direct their desires toward or away from particular objects."[341]

While this may be a generally accurate portrait of Tahiti, one cannot ignore the instances of libertine conduct on the part of the natives, particularly women. For a Tahitian woman to enter purposefully into sexual relations that will not lead to procreation when she knows there will be repercussions, one must assume that she desires this contact and finds it pleasurable. Festa cites this discrepancy as well, "In Diderot's account, the emphasis on fecundity that allows Tahitian sex to be a pleasantly

[341] Festa 307.

public act harnesses all desires to reproductive ends. Yet, the need for interdictions on nonreproductive sexual activity betrays that the purportedly self-directing procreative instincts of nature are not all they are cracked up to be."[342] In this case, the "good" laws are not indeed "good" for all, but for most. Does the outcast Tahitian woman come to grips with the limitations on what is pleasurable for her by focusing on the success of the island economy? Perhaps the "laws of nature" are not a perfect platform for Diderot's representation of female sexuality? William E. Edmiston attempts to reconcile this disparity with the explanation that in the philosopher's state of "nature" some of the islanders are exempt from partaking in hedonistic acts, "Diderot does not believe that there should be no restrictions on sexual behavior, but that any such restrictions should result from the limitations imposed by nature, namely those applied to sexual acts that cannot increase population."[343] Nevertheless, Diderot's *Supplément* serves as a biological deterministic response to societal restraints on human nature and sexuality, and female sexuality in particular.

The portrait of the European woman in the *Supplément* offers further insight into the philosopher's conception of women. For instance, what could easily be interpreted as a derogatory comment in the conclusion of the final dialogue between A and B may also cast women in a positive light. After suggesting their evening plans would remain subject to the will of their wives, the two men speculate on what they thought would happen when they showed them the *Supplément*. A postulates: "Peut-être le contraire de ce

[342] Festa 317.

[343] William E. Edmiston, *Diderot and the Family : A Conflict of Nature and Law*, Stanford French and Italian Studies 39 (Saratoga, CA : Amna Libri, 1985) 104.

qu'elles en diraient."[344] This anticipated reaction on the part of their wives reflects the greatly debated notions about female sensibility that Diderot has set forth in previous texts. However, it also implies the woman is a sentient being, capable of forming her own opinions on an important issue, and clever enough as not to be entirely predictable in her reaction, which causes pause from the men. Clearly their wives' reactions interest them, if not for their opinion, at least for their incredulity toward this tale. Moreover, this exchange illustrates A and B's wives who are destined to receive the *Supplément* as active participants in the reading public.

The above example of Diderot's views on women in the *Supplément* reflects an emergent feminism. This is to say that the philosopher recognizes the value of women's contributions to society and considers that while their role is different than that of men, it is equal in its scope and importance. Female characters in other works by Diderot have also substantiated an underlying feminism, such as Mirzoza in *Les bijoux indiscrets* and Mlle de Lespinasse in *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*. In addition, Diderot specifically recognizes the primitive woman's role in the advancement of her community in texts outside of the *Supplément*. One example, as Douthwaite cites, is Diderot's essay "Sur les femmes," where she explains that the philosopher, "...Denounced the myth of primitive indolence in the name of women. Far from enjoying a life of case, Diderot argues, primitive women must work twice as hard as women in civilized societies."[345]

The alleged burden on primitive women is an important consideration in light of what is witnessed on Tahiti. The appearance of the sexually liberated, hedonistic women that enticed European readers begs a new interpretation when it is learned that the

[344] Diderot, *Supplément* 578.

[345] Douthwaite 145.

Tahitian woman's role in the island society was to procreate copiously in order to ensure the future existence of their civilization. The erotic imagery no longer seems savage, but rather practical, and the Tahitian woman is seen as fulfilling her equitable share of the burden of maintaining the island society. In light of this new perspective, one may argue that the case of the Tahitian women serves as a supplement to Diderot's European social critiques centering on the detrimental consequences of enforcing a contrived morality. Women on Tahiti follow the laws of nature and their society appears to be happier and more prosperous because of this.

Personal property and public good

In the last section of the *Supplément*, B relates the chaplain's final thoughts regarding Tahiti to A, which include how he conceives of Tahiti as a society that does not stake claims on that which cannot be claimed as personal property. In response to the chaplain's musings, the European interlocutors suggest that personal property has no place on Tahiti since the island community focuses on what is in the best interest of the collective good. B details to A the observations on personal property gathered by the chaplain during his stay:

> Les travaux et les récoltes s'y faisaient en commun. L'acception du mot propriété y était très étroite. La passion de l'amour, réduite à un simple appétit physique, n'y produisait aucun de nos désordres. L'île entière offrait l'image d'une seule famille nombreuse, dont chaque cabane représentait les divers appartements d'une de nos grandes maisons.[346]

[346] Diderot, *Supplément* 569-70.

At the conclusion of this idyllic description, B adds that the chaplain was so taken by the utopian elements of the Tahitian society that he wished to remove his clothing and live amongst them.[347]

In particular, the chaplain's account demonstrates a distinct interest in the lack of social institutions that seek to transform human beings into a form of property, such as the institution of marriage as it is seen in France. Marriage on Tahiti, which only lasts one moon, is not subject to the same expectations of constancy, nor is it linked to religion, but rather serves a primarily utilitarian function. Over the course of his dialogue with the chaplain, Orou asserts his position against marriage as an institution that seeks to divide man from his biological nature and disrupt the natural relationship between men and women. It is this false monogamy that has cursed civilized society, as marriage is predicated on the possession of wives as property. Boisacq contends, "Selon lui, le mariage chrétien est une conquête déguisée de la femme, un viol déguisé du droit sexuel de tous à disposer de toutes."[348] To make matters worse, the chaplain readily admits that these unions are greatly unsuccessful in his society, a theme that the reader will recognize from *Madame de la Carlière*.

As previously mentioned, one striking divergence between Tahiti and France as far as personal property is concerned is the possession of children. Through the exchanges between Orou and the chaplain, the reader learns that children are not the property of their parents, but rather a communal source of prosperity in the island society. In light of the benefits the natives recognize in the form of new additions to their population, children are shared and paternity claims are not constant. Contrary to the

[347] Diderot, *Supplément* 570.

[348] Boisacq 22.

European woman, a Tahitian mother may have many children by different fathers and it will only augment her fortune and reputation when she takes up with a new "husband." Orou proudly explains that when his eldest daughter who already has three children marries, "Son mari les recevra avec joie, et sa femme ne lui en serait que plus agréable si elle était enceinte d'un quatrième."[349] The new "husband" assumes paternity and welcomes the children as a sign of good fortune.

Ultimately, as Turnstall cites, "Le discours de l'amour naturel est ainsi un discours populationniste."[350] The depiction of sexual freedom thus far turns out to be somewhat misleading when it is made apparent that Tahitian sexual prowess is not without intent. The native woman is not looking for amorous sex, but rather a means of increasing her value to the community. Orou explains that children will help replenish the island population lost due to epidemics, meet the demands of fighting a war with neighboring enemies, provide manpower to the island, and repay a debt to a neighboring oppressor. For these reasons, the Tahitian concedes how valuable the European visitors' contributions are to the island economy:

> Quand tu t'éloigneras, tu nous auras laissé des enfants; ce tribut levé sur ta personne, sur ta propre substance, à ton avis, n'en vaut-il pas bien un autre ? Et si tu veux en apprécier la valeur, imagines que tu aies deux cent lieues de côtes à courir, et qu'à chaque vingt milles, on te mette à pareille contribution.[351]

As tangible proof of the necessity of European contribution to the Tahitian gene pool, Diderot assigns the predicament of finding suitable sexual partners to Orou's own family.

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[349] Diderot, *Supplément* 559.

[350] Turnstall 27.

[351] Diderot, *Supplément* 567.

The Tahitian's youngest daughter, Thia, does not have the same fortune as her fertile older sisters. She has been unable to conceive any children in spite of her efforts, which prompts both Orou and the young girl's appeals to the chaplain to share her bed in the hopes of bearing a child with the rationale that perhaps her luck will be different with a European partner.

From Orou's dialogue, the reader is confronted with a different, passive view of the colonial visitors to Tahiti. Turnstall argues, "Selon Orou, les Otaïtiens voulaient la colonisation; ils l'ont tentée, calculée. C'est même à se demander qui a colonisé qui..."[352] Turnstall challenges the notion of European colonial exploitation, highlighting Thia's willful desire to tattoo the chaplain's name on her arm following their tryst. She believes this example serves as analogous to the moment when the voyager and his crew put a stake in the ground upon their arrival on Tahiti as an impudent attempt to claim proprietorship. [353] From the islanders' perspective, the attempt to claim their island may be avenged by assuming ownership of the children born from unions between European men and avaricious native women. Festa supports the idea that the crewmembers' interactions with native women were not characterized by a one-sided victimization, "...It is not accurate to say that sexual activity in Diderot's Tahiti requires no incentive; it is the wealth to be gleaned in the form of children that drives the Tahitian women into the arms of the European sailors."[354] This exchange between the natives and visitors to Tahiti complicates claims that personal property does not exist on Tahiti. It is apparent that even though children are collective property, their mothers still enjoy individual recognition

[352] Turnstall 31.

[353] Turnstall 31.

[354] Festa 317.

for their contributions, thus prompting women to seek out as many procreative encounters as possible.

It should be pointed out that while the Tahitian woman's role in the island economy is identified as detrimental, Diderot's generous depictions of sexual encounters negotiated by men have earned the philosopher his share of critics due to the implicit possession and subjugation of women these acts represent. The sexual negotiations into which the Tahitian women enter have been likened to exploitation on a basic level, and even rape by some theorists. In place of the initial impression that women and men alike enjoyed sexual freedom, Dziedzic summarizes that "Pour la femme donc, l'acte sexuel est aussi un devoir qu'elle ne peut pas refuser de remplir."[355] There is evidence that much like the children they bear, women are commodified and traded as property. Festa asserts:

> The 'jouissance furtive' of a girl becomes a theft ("un vol") because sex ceases to be a transaction between the parties physically involved, and instead mediates relations between the proprietor of the woman (her father or brother) and her prospective partner. No longer a question of pleasure, sex becomes the taking and giving of proprietary possession in persons.[356]

The status of women as property on Tahiti is at first glance disturbing, but is it a relativistic glance? Is it possible that women rise to occasion in this "natural" role that ultimately advances the well-being of their society?

Overall, Diderot's stance in the *Supplément* conveys the detrimental effect of personal property on societal harmony and the common good. In this context, the position of women is a powerful one. Moscovici conceives of a "fraternal patriarchy" where "both

[355] Dziedzic 50-51.

[356] Festa 316.

the French and the Tahitian cultures define ethics in terms of how women are exchanged among men for the purposes of sexual and cultural reproduction."[357] The difference between France and Tahiti, however, is that there is sound logic at the base of Tahitian ethics. Women are integral to the subsistence of the island civilization through procreation, thus gender relations are a rational reflection of their economy's needs.

Religion

The exchanges between Orou and the chaplain, particularly over the latter's resistance to his host's daughters and wife, bring to light provocative critiques about religion and how its precepts govern the actions of those who subscribe to it. Orou finds that in creating moral standards that limit the pleasure that man is ultimately due, Europeans have "rendu la condition de l'homme pire que celle de l'animal."[358] Orou pointedly asks the chaplain, "Tu sais au moins par quelle raison, étant homme, tu t'es librement condamné à ne le pas être?", to which he replies that it is too long and difficult to answer.

Nevertheless, Orou does learns that in addition to the lengthy list of restrictions religion poses is compounded the dilemma that almost no one appears to be following them. The chaplain confirms that religious men do not adhere to their vows of sterility and cites that there is a female counterpart to his situation as well.[359] After it is revealed that nuns "sèchent de douleur, périssent d'ennui" as a result of their cloistered lifestyle, Orou seizes the opportunity to point out that European religious laws clearly do not align

[357] Moscovici 299.

[358] Diderot. *Supplément* 555.

[359] Diderot, *Supplément* 568.

with those of nature.[360] B supports Orou's position in the next section where he argues that one of the ways European laws contradict nature are, "Par les institutions religieuses qui ont attaché les noms de vices et de vertus à des actions qui n'étaient susceptibles d'aucune moralité."[361] He laments, "Combien nous sommes loin de la nature et du bonheur!"[362]

After interrogating the chaplain about his religion, Orou is incredulous at the discrepancies present in the faith and practice of religion as Europeans know it. The ineffectiveness of the institution, the blind faith in an unknown Creator, and a set of beliefs that conflict with actions found in nature, prompt the Tahitian to mock what he has come to learn about the "Other":

> Ces préceptes singuliers, je les trouve opposés à la nature, contraires à la raison, faits pour multiplier les crimes et fâcher à tout moment le vieil ouvrier qui a tout fait sans tête, sans mains et sans outils; qui est partout et qu'on ne voit nulle part; qui dure aujourd'hui et demain et qui n'a pas un jour de plus; qui commande et qui n'est pas obéi; qui peut empêcher, et qui n'empêche pas. Contraires à la nature, parce qu'ils supposent qu'un être sentant, pensant et libre peut être la propriété d'un être semblable à lui. Sur quoi ce droit serait-il fondé?[363]

Orou's appeal to reason and rationality cannot be overlooked in his assessment of what he cites to be the inconsistencies of the chaplain's religion. Diderot's cleverly satirized portrait of religion depicts Orou to be the more "enlightened" of the two men. The

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[360] Diderot, *Supplément* 569.

[361] Diderot, *Supplément* 569.

[362] Diderot, *Supplément* 574.

[363] Diderot, *Supplément* 555.

philosopher's critique of religion as an institution is not a new target as mentioned earlier with *La Religieuse.* Whereas Diderot has expressed critical views of religion in other texts, the *Supplément* plays out the alternative to oppressive organized religion with the supposed return to a "natural state" of man.

Conclusion: Postmodern implications for the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*

Throughout this analysis of the *Supplément*, it has been essential to reconcile Diderot's hybrid aesthetic with authorial intention as related to locating source texts and transmitting the philosopher's stance on key cultural and moral issues to an active reader. Dialogic transformations of Bougainville's *Voyage* have played an integral role in the metamorphosis from the original text to "supplement" and have in the process created several "mini-supplements." Generally speaking, the postmodern complication of the representation of speech in writing is at the heart of one of the greatest conflicts of travel writing. A moment where non-verbal, pure speech is observed first-hand degenerates into a bastardized form of meaning as a result of a voyager's desire to gain acclaim and interest from a curious reading sphere. For instance, Diderot's example of the old man is intriguing. The non-verbal cues Bougainville observed from this man are developed into a passive description that Diderot reinstates into speech. But is this reinstatement valid and what purpose does it serve?[364] Answering this question would be tantamount to creating an exclusive list of origins for a particular supplement. Finally, the discussion of

[364] Derrida takes up the notion of an "economy of signs" while citing Rousseau's *Confessions*. Derrida proposes that "au moment où Jean-Jacques tente d'expliquer comment il est devenu écrivaint, il décrit le passage à l'écriture comme la restauration, par une certaine absence et par un type d'effacement calculé, de la présence déçue de soi dans la parole" *De la grammatologie* 204. This is where the notion of authorial intention becomes burdensome. Certainly, in the absence of whatever "speech" the natives employed, the voyagers, naturalists, and crew members wrote their accounts. But was this by necessity or motivation? Perhaps the answer lies in the numerous rewritings and supplements that followed many voyages of discovery.

"supplement" is not the only Derridean notion that is germane to what may be considered the "postmodern" supplement. A deconstructive reading of Diderot's text brings to light the contradictions present to the reader in a way that is telling of authorial intentions or preconceptions, as well as of the cultural impact on travel writing that this thesis has been working to identify.

One of the most pertinent tensions that is exposed is the focus on the identity of the "Other," and how this entity is used as a foil to create the identity of a corrupt European society. In a sense, Diderot patronizes this ideal society, as Bougainville and other voyagers have already noted vices and disease in their accounts. But Diderot chooses to represent only the good, as his predecessors did, and lauds them for a society based on the laws of nature. This highlights the superficiality in the travel accounts of Bougainville, and even Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, which were overwhelmingly positive in spite of their informed perspectives.

One critique of Diderot that can be made in light of postmodern theory is the belief that a universal nature of man exists. Like Demeunier, there is the idea that "we" the Europeans and "they" the "Other" have polarized and consistent identities. Derrida points out that even within cultures there exists a disparity, where no two people can have the same experiences with culture. This idea leads to his thoughts about how the roles of "colonizer" and "colonized" may be interpreted, as he believes that we all belong to the first group in some form. However, most problematic for Derrida, and most crucial to Diderot's cultural comparison, is the fact that these roles imply a hierarchy. Nevertheless, Diderot does eventually succeed in deconstructing this hierarchy by reversing the roles of the European "colonizer" and the Tahitian "colonized." At the end of the *Supplément*,

one is not certain what society has the privileged position: the "savage civilized man" or the "uncivilized savage." Equally disruptive to Diderot's utopian paradigm of a perfect state of nature in light of Derrida's philosophy is the question of whether this condition can possibly exist. Once man is aware that laws are needed to protect his property it is no longer possible to revert back to a prior state of consciousness when he had no knowledge these rules existed.

Derrida's arguments with regard to the corruption of Nature with Reason lend support to the notion that Diderot's adherence to a society based on "laws of nature" is in practice, a society based on the philosopher's contrived and self-serving ideas about humanity. Transforming what is "natural" into a written set of laws supplants the purity of the origin, Nature. This may not be a conscionable fault of Diderot, since the logical alternative to an "over-civilized" and corrupt state of man would be that of the noble savage untouched by man. The "laws of nature" arise from biological determinism and righting society's wrongs with actions that contradict the current state and offer justification for its demise.

Lastly, we are considering Diderot's *Supplément* in terms of a "postmodern" supplement in that it embodies many of the debates Derrida entertained regarding speech and the written word. Diderot's use of dialogue, a technique for which he is known, gives a voice to a passive character in Bougainville's account: the Tahitian. Once we learn what the Tahitians presumably think of their European visitors, they are really no better than the Europeans. They have been decoded, understood, and no longer hold the mysterious possibility of emerging as a superior civilization in terms of virtue and

humanity. They have entered into conversation with the European, and are tainted by that, rendering them equally depraved. This is the ultimate European colonial victory.

CONCLUSION

TRAVEL "SUPPLEMENTS" FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

This thesis has illustrated four types of literary supplements in Enlightenment French travel literature: narrative, eyewitness, anthology, and post-modern. Through a careful analysis of the relationships between source and supplement, the textual interactions that these four types of travel "supplements" represent serve as artifacts of the cultural discourse surrounding their publication and readership. The categories set forth are by no means exclusive, but are rather intended as springboard for future considerations of how to define what is meant by a travel supplement. For instance, paratextual elements, including those that are non-literary, are a possible category for further study. Imitation supplements are those travel texts which contain commonplace elements of Enlightenment travel accounts, but are entirely fictional in spite of whatever factual information they borrow from other sources. And finally, voyages of exploration, and the geographic and anthropological data resulting from them, give rise to the notion of a pedagogic supplement that combines voyagers' discoveries with the goal of diffusing useful information in a practical context.

Manuscripts, Translations, and Paratextual Supplements

Manuscripts

Many travel notes and logs written in manuscript form may be conceived of as a supplement because these texts often add a subjective element to the factual data that is

being represented. In place of an unbiased account of the places visited, an unpublished manuscript of travel notes and data often reflects the sentiments and opinions of the author, either as a participant in the voyage, or as a second-hand reaction. The degree to which the manuscript author's perspective impedes the transmission of objective travel data depends largely upon the type of manuscript.

At first glance, the best type of authorship for a document with a scientific goal is that of an anonymous manuscript. Just as the author of a manuscript may add personal reflections to his work, the anonymous manuscript could be charged with the opposite. François Moureau indicates that, "l'anonymat autorise le texte lui-même à circuler, puisqu'il est moins un document personnel qu'une expérience singulière mais reproductible."[365] The technique of the anonymous manuscript copier was especially prevalent with travel accounts because it highlighted the importance and role of the voyager, rather than the unknown scribe. However, Moureau also acknowledges that the anonymous guise under which the manuscript is produced is in many cases able to be decoded. He argues:

> La discrétion du voyageur pouvait aussi se comprendre pour des causes liées à sa situation personnelle: exclusion d'un groupe social qui expliquait la décision de voyager, mission secrète sous le couvert d'un voyage "pour plaisir", etc. Mais dans la plupart des cas, cet anonymat ne se justifie pas et peut être facilement levé.[366]

[365] François Moureau, *Le Théâtre des voyages: Une scénographie de l'Âge classique*, Imago Mundi (Paris: PUPS, 2005) 54.

[366] Moureau 53-54.

If this claim is true, the traceable anonymous manuscript may be more telling as a supplement than one for which the author is identified because of the writer's motive to remain unknown.

Another type of manuscript to consider as a supplement is one that identifies a writer with the purpose of bringing the author's own experience to the text. This was prevalent in many travel texts where the author's background and expertise in an area add scientific value to a manuscript travel account. Once such example of a scientific manuscript is the unpublished transcription, *Prise de note de Jean Nicolas Buache de la Neuville sur ses lectures de Carteret et de Bougainville*. Jean Nicolas Buache de la Neuville, nephew of respected geographer Philippe Buache, served as a geographic hydrographer, as well as taught geography at the École normale.[367] The geographer produced a manuscript that acts as a "supplement" to travel reports of Carteret and Bougainville by verifying the latitudes and longitudes, cartography, and anthropological observations of the voyagers. This particular manuscript is meticulously conserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut among other personal travel manuscripts.

Translations

Translations of popular travel journals, fictions, and encyclopedias were in high demand during the middle of the eighteenth-century. This was particularly true for English texts translated into French and vice-versa as readers became increasingly interested in consuming texts about colonial voyages of exploration and the seductive myths of primitive civilizations that resulted from them.

[367] Godlewska 66. Godlewska explains that in light of his work in geography and appointments to the Dépôt de la marine, the Bureau of Longitudes, and the Academy of Sciences, Buache was "considered by both the ancien régime and Revolutionary France to be the country's premier geographer" (60).

Perhaps one of the best known undertakings in the translation of travel texts and findings was l'abbé Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*. Prévost's contributions to the *Histoire générale* included the first fifteen volumes after which other editors are credited with the remaining five. Prévost's later volumes would contain more personal reflection and notes on the part of the author, but Edna Hindie Lemay indicates that the multi-volume work began strictly as a translation project:

> En 1746, encouragé par les ministres d'Aguesseau et Maurepas, et à l'instigation de François Didot qui avait réuni de nombreux souscripteurs pour une édition en quinze volumes in-quatro, Prévost accepte de traduire les récits de voyages qui arrivent régulièrement d'Angleterre, malgré la guerre...Les sept premiers volumes sont une traduction fidèle de l'oeuvre anglaise compilée par J. Green et éditée par Thomas Astley: *A new general collection of voyages and travels, consisting of the most esteemed relations which have been hitherto published in any language; comprehending every thing in its kind, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America* (1745-1747).[368]

After the English resigned the project, Prévost continued the *Histoire générale*, employing their method until volume XII where, "Prévost modifie le plan d'ouvrage pour faire d'abord un exposé général sur les connaissances de chaque région de l'Amérique hispanique, examinant les sources historiques (Oviedo, Gomara, etc.) et présentant ensuite les récits des voyageurs (Colomb, Vespucci, etc.)"[369]

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[368] Edna Hindie Lemay, "*Histoire générale des voyages:* Démeunier et l'abbé Prévost" *SVEC* 11(Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000) 347. Lemay notes that certain abridgements were made to the original text in order to fit space constraints.

[369] Lemay 347.

Prévost had undertaken English translations prior to the *Histoire générale* and "semblait être qualifié pour mener à bien le projet, puisqu'il connaissait bien l'anglais...."[370] In his "Avertissement du Traducteur" which begins the first volume, Prévost addressed the challenge of such a translation, particularly in instances where he was called upon to translate Green's perspective which asserted English predominance and marginalized French conquests in colonial pursuits. Prévost claims, "C'est ici néanmoins que je ne suis pas libre de cacher mes regrets sur la nécessité où je ne trouve de suivre pas à pas des compilateurs étrangers, et de m'assujettir servilement à leur plan."[371] This is perhaps a moment that announces a future intention to supplement the translation of the English volumes with a system he has created himself. The absence of notes on the featured travel accounts, the difficulty with the spelling of proper names and places, and the inclusion of information superfluous to the description of the voyages, all incited criticism on the part of Prévost. He conceded to leave the English author's introduction as is, but explained that was "parce que à chaque partie j'aurai soin d'expliquer mes propres vues par d'autres introductions."[372] Ultimately, Prévost's undertaking was poised as a powerful tool for French colonial propaganda. In particular, Sgard contends that the work suited Maurepas, who held the office of "Ministre de la Marine" at the time, "La publication d'une *Histoire des Voyages* pouvait évidemment servir ses vues auprès de l'opinion publique en suscitant sa curiosité et son intérêt pour de futures expéditions commerciales."[373]

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[370] Jean Sgard, *Oeuvres de Prévost VII* (Grenoble: PU de Grenoble, 1985) 398.

[371] Prévost, *Histoire générale* (Grenoble: PU de Grenoble, 1985) 411.

[372] Prévost 413.

Maps and geographical notes

Maps and their corresponding geographical notes have been cited as tools to supplement voyagers' observations as a means of edifying the accuracy of their findings. Moreover, maps may supplement and replace one another when indicating and correcting "errors" and omissions. Oftentimes, what the mapmaker had chosen to represent, alter, or exclude is tied more to the subjective goals of the cartographer than the noble project of accurate map-making. This element of subjectivity may be reinforced by an accompanying text or notes by the cartographer.

Once such example may be found in the opening of the fifth volume of Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*. Here Prévost has included a letter from M. Bellin, who served as ingénieur de la Marine et du Dépôt des Cartes. Bellin explains that after reviewing the maps that were part of the original English edition, he finds in many cases that they are insufficient or poorly composed:

> Ils n'ont pas même remarqué qu'il leur manquoit beaucoup de Cartes pour l'intelligence de leur Collection, & qu'il étoit impossible, avec celles qu'ils donnoient, de suivre les Navigateurs dans toutes les parties de leurs Voyages; que ces Cartes étoient mal distribuées, & fatiguoient un Lecteur attentif qui veut tout avoir sous ses yeux.[374]

For this reason, Bellin stated that it was necessary for him "donner un Supplément de Cartes pour le premier Volume."[375]

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[373] Sgard 398. Sgard notes that John Green did not give Prévost authorization for his translation, but was flattered to see that it has been traslated by Prévost. However, Sgard does note that Green "accepte mal les additions et omissions opérées par Prévost dans sa traduction, sans compter les contresens qu'il l'accuse d'avoir commis" (402).

[374] Prévost, *HGdeV* (II) ii.

In his letter, Bellin apprised Prévost of the additions and revisions of maps from the first volume that were to become part of the fifth. For instance, Bellin added the maps that were believed to be overlooked in the English version. Bellin also credited himself with the correction of various errors, claiming that Prévost would be "étonné des erreurs dans lesquelles leurs Auteurs sont tombés."[376] Among these errors, he cited: "Ils n'ont pas placé ces Isles [Canaries] dans leurs lattitudes. On ne trouve aucune vérité dans les distances & les gissemens. Les contours & la grandeur des Isles sont sans aucunes proportions."[377] These observations deliver blows to the credibility of English map-making and paint Prévost's version containing the revised maps in a superior light. After listing other examples that were in need of his revision, or which begged more detail of the villages and oceans depicted, Bellin used the example of a map of the Island of Gorée to support the validity of his revisions with the claim that, "On peut y avoir quelque confiance. Il m'a été communiqué par Messieurs les Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes. On le trouvera différent de celui que les Anglois ont donné, que j'ai laissé subsister dans le même comparaison dont je viens de parler."[378] Once again, the identification of a first-hand source for the revised map places Bellin's version in a higher position of authority.

At the close of the letter, Bellin informed Prévost that the detail of his work was not exhaustive, but hopefully sufficient enough to convince his recipient that he would

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[375] Prévost *HGdeV* (II) ii.

[376] Bellin, *HGdeV* (V) vi.

[377] Bellin, *HGdeV* (V) vi.

[378] Bellin, *HGdeV* (V) vii.

"n'épargne ni travail ni soins pour approcher de ce degré de perfection si desirable..."[379] Overall, the cartographer's testament of his commitment to accuracy and perfection in order to parallel the text of which the maps are a part portrayed Prévost's translations in a positive light.

"Imitation" Supplement

One unique type of supplement that emerges in the travel literature tradition during the eighteenth-century is that of an "imitation supplement" that mimics the style and tone of its genuine counterparts. The imitation supplement employs a set of formulaic guidelines and cues with which to convince the reader that the text they are reading is a true voyage. Imitation travel supplements did vary with the degree of truth they incorporated into the text. Some may have had some identifiable sources, but the events, locale, and narrative are entirely fantasy. Other imitation supplements intertwined factual events with a fictional narrative to create a "fantasy voyage," which served to strengthen the illusion that the voyagers, and the experiences they recounted, did in fact actually exist.

L'abbé Prévost's *Voyages du Capitaine Robert Lade* is a consummate example of this second form of an imitation supplement. Published in 1744 in advance of the writer's multi-volume masterpiece, the *Histoire générale des voyages*, Prévost borrowed factual travel accounts from other voyagers to use as a backdrop for his imaginary narrative about a bourgeois businessman who is forced to set sail with his family in search of fortune after his financial ruin. In addition to the real-life sources Prévost employed in constructing his narrative, the author also implemented similar stylistic characteristics to

[379] Bellin, *HGdeV* (V) viii.

those of travel accounts written by actual voyagers, such as journaling, anthropological observations, memoires written by crew members, and even a supplement that concludes the work. Moureau argues that Prévost is one of "les premiers parmi les plus éminents à s'inspirer, fût-ce par des faux mémoires, des aventuriers de la mer et de leur univers si contraire aux bienséances et à la 'belle nature.'"[380]

It stands without question that the prefaces of the *Histoire générale des voyages* and *Voyages of Capitaine Lade* bear significant resemblance to one another. If one proved to be fact, than the other followed behind it. Considering the breadth and number of well-known voyagers that appeared in the *HGdeV*, it is more likely to believe that Capitaine Lade's story is a real one, rather than the other way around. In fact, in his checklist of 18th century voyages, Gove points out that Prévost even cited Capitaine Lade's findings in the *Histoire générale des voyages*, lending more factual authority to a fictional character.[381]

In addition to *Lade*, there are several other texts that could be studied from the angle of an "imitation" supplement. For example, Louis-Balthazar Néel's *Voyage de Paris à Saint-Cloud* was published in 1748 and served as a parody of a travel account. Moureau describes the work as an "encyclopédie burlesque de tous les *topoï* de la littérature des voyages mis en place pour un simple aller-retour dans la banlieue parisienne."[382] *Retour de Saint-Cloud à Paris par terre* by Augustin-Martin Lottin

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[380] Moureau 64.

[381] Philip Babcock Gove, *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction: A History of its Criticism and a Guide for its Study with an Annotated Checklist of 215 Imaginary Voyages from 1700 to 1800,* Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature 152 (New York, Columbia University Press, 1941) 311. The *HGdV* reference Gove offers is Volume XII, 1754, 512 n.6, where Prévost claims that a detail of Lade's voyage could be verified through reading Dampier.

[382] Moureau, *Théâtre* 21.

followed in 1753 and was essentially a "parody of a parody." In 1752, L'abbé Coyer's offered a satire of French society in *A Supplement to Lord Anson's Voyage Round the World Containing a Discovery and Description of the Island of Frivola.* In the fantasy civilization Coyer has created, Moureau points out that the inhabitants of the island are "des Français expatriés au moment de la Régence et du Système (p.173-174, 189) pour perpétuer un air de folie, d'extravagance et de légèreté qui sied bien au génie national."[383] In this case, the imaginary context hints at some of the very same techniques and themes Diderot would employ in the *Supplément.*

The Pedagogic Supplement

Buache de la Neuville and fellow geographer Edme Mentelle taught geography at the École normale, where Godlewska explains that, "In their lectures, Buache and Mentelle introduced geography as a vast subject-as vast as the universe-and daily growing in both detail and extent thanks to the tools provided explorers and astronomers by both the physical and pure sciences."[384] Earlier in his career, Buache had developed a set of manuals based on data gathered during past voyages of exploration "pour l'usage d'une pension de l'université de Paris."[385] Published in 1772, *Géographie Élémentaire: Ancienne et Moderne, Contenant Les Principes de la Géographie, une Description générale du Globe, & un Détail particulier de l'Europe & de la France*, was a two-volume general description of geographical knowledge.

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[383] Moureau, *Théâtre* 409.

[384] Godlewska 61.

[385] Jean Nicolas Buache de la Neuville, *Géographie Élémentaire: Ancienne et Moderne, Contenant Les Principes de la Géographie, une Description générale du Globe, & un Détail particulier de l'Europe & de la France* (Paris: D'Houry, 1772) xi-xii.

Buache's course was to provide accessibility of geography to the masses for the common good of society. The geographer believed that, "La géographie est une des connaissances qui contribuent le plus à orner l'esprit humain, & qui font depuis longtemps partie de la belle éducation. Elle est nécessaire & indispensable dans plusieurs états de la vie, & elle est généralement utile à tous les hommes."[386] For Buache this goal was met through a cataloguing of different regions on each continent. The geographer's collection also referenced various voyages around the world, as well as anthropological observations about several regions, including "Barbarie" in Africa, and miscellaneous accounts of the inhabitants of the South Seas. *Géographie élementaire* also contained an appendix with the latitudes and longitudes of Europe and all the principal cities of the world at the time, including Rome, Berlin, and New Orleans.

In constructing his course on geography, Buache explained how the sedentary study of geography could be analogous to a voyage of exploration, and in some instances may be regarded as preferable:

> On entreprend tous les jours des voyages pénibles & à grands frais, par simple curiosité, pour voir les beautés d'un pays, & connaître les mœurs d'un peuple. Mais, avec la géographie, sans sortir de son cabinet, sans s'exposer aux fatigues & aux dangers des routes, on parcourt un peu de tems toutes les parties de l'univers: on voit tous les hommes tels qu'ils sont, avec leurs défauts et avec leurs vertus: on découvre l'étendue de tous les pays, on connait les différentes productions, leurs richesses, & généralement tout ce que la terre a de plus rare & de plus curieux.[387]

[386] Buache, *Géographie* aiij-v.

[387] Buache, *Géographie* ix-x.

Buache also acknowledged the importance of voyages to geography in the drawing, naming, and renaming of places in colonial Europe since territories frequently changed hands:

> Ceux qui étudient les auteurs anciens, comme les élèves pour qui cette géographie est particulièrement destinée, ont besoin de connaître l'ancien monde, pour l'intelligence des ces auteurs. Les terres sont les mêmes aujourd'hui qu'autrefois; mais les pays ont changé de nom: & ce ne sont plus à présent les mêmes peuples, les mêmes villes, & les mêmes divisions.[388]

For this reason, the course on geography stood as a supplement to the political and colonial history at the time since territorial tensions were cartographically depicted and responded to through Buache's descriptions.

Imitation, pedagogic, and paratextual supplements would add to the study of supplements by considering works in the travel literature tradition that are lesser known or non-literary. It is interesting to compare how the popularity of Enlightenment voyages of exploration trickled down from canonical literature to more obscure or non-traditional types of texts and ancillaries as a reflection of the tastes of the reading culture at the epoch. The inclusion of these types of texts would be necessary as part of a larger future project aiming to provide a consummate portrait of how the 18th-century travel supplement was a culturally driven phenomenon.

[388] Buache, *Géographie* xiv-xv.

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